

Welcome to Questa Farmers Market, 2020



Lorie Jaramillo tending a market garden

Photo by Gaea McGahee



Andy Jaramillo hard at work on the horno

Photo by E. Wilde

CONTRIBUTORS:
CAROLINE YEZER,
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AND BOOBOO GONZALEZ,
AND KAYLEE PIPER

Questa Farmers Market is blooming! Located near the busy intersection of NM Highways 522 and 38, the QFM greenery and flowers pull you in, just like a butterfly or a bee. And that's intentional. Creating beauty as well as a marketplace is the goal of the organizers, volunteers, and market interns. Their ambition is to support the vendors and to make a welcoming space for the community to come together. Visitors often remark that they hadn't necessarily planned to stop, but were drawn to the curious plantings, and the quirky 1960s truck that doubles as a raised bed for corn and flowers.

Market gardens, planted and cared for by market interns and volunteers, are an oasis of sunflowers, marigolds, corn, squash, cabbage, broccoli, lettuce, kale, chard, and herbs (cilantro, dill, and basil), and they are meant to be shared. Stop by and visit the gardens; harvest carefully, use with joy.

Market intern Booboo (Alianna) Gonzalez reflected on the market: "The Questa Farmers Market, to me, is a very

helpful place for people to meet up and sell vegetables – for not even a high price. There's a lot of fun stuff here; making coffee out of the horno, and lamb. There are a lot of gardens with fun stuff – so, yeah!" She and her sister, Amalia Gonzalez, plant and water the gardens along with Kaylee Piper. These three young women are the paid market interns this season (they are also teen members of the Active8, Vida del Norte Coalition). "They are 100% vital to the creation and care of the marketplace, which includes these gardens," says organizer Gaea McGahee. "You'll also see Lorie and Andy Jaramillo watering and tending. We've doubled the garden space since last season, and there will be more green when we begin to plant trees... very soon!" says Gaea. "I like working at the farmers market because it helps me make the community look a bit better than it already is," says Amalia.

Market interns contribute to QFM social media content and recently made a TikTok account. You can follow QFM on Facebook and Instagram too, where interns share photos and videos from every Sunday's market. You can pitch in any amount to support our interns' paid seasonal positions by donating to QFM on our website, [QuestaFarmersMarket.org](https://www.QuestaFarmersMarket.org).

Mission Statements:

QUESTA FARMERS MARKET
is a community-led effort to localize our economy by supporting agriculturalists and makers during the growing season in beautiful northern New Mexico.

LOR FOUNDATION:
Listening first, LOR works with rural communities in the Mountain West to enhance livability and prosperity while preserving the character that makes each community unique.

VIDA DEL NORTE COALITION:
Unite Northern Taos County communities in prevention and decreasing youth substance use. (Active8, the youth extension of the coalition is actively participating to reduce youth substance misuse.)

or by buying a T-shirt at the market. The Market's cheeriness is inspiring and needed after months of a difficult and isolating pandemic. So many of us have been socially isolated and physically distant, but we are social beings and need interaction and community to thrive. To slow the spread of COVID-19, the

best advice, if we are going to interact in community spaces, is to keep interactions outside, avoid enclosed places, and to wear masks when we are in public, sharing space. The vendors' booths are spaced far apart and offer shade in the summer heat; built to make life easier for a vendor. The greenness of the site promises what we need right now: relief, renewal, and hope. Most importantly, the people: those you may have known since you were born, your compadres and your primos. If you are new in town, the market is a social center, a place you can visit to find ways to help your community. Shopping local is a real form of support, not a trend, and it is how the world must work again.

If you come to Questa Farmers Market this Sunday, the social aspect, the safety of being outdoors with everyone masked, and the therapeutic benefits of growth and renewal are what you might immediately feel and appreciate. Less obvious but also beneficial are the ways neighbors can support each other at the market, by buying local products from farmers, bakers, and craftspeople. These exchanges and material support systems restore our communal ties. They are essential to our well-being after so much time apart.



The Questa Farmers Market is one of the most important things in my life. It has shown me so much and I don't know what I would do without it. It is one of the things that has helped turn my life around and helped me see the better in the world. And it is one of the things that has made me want to better myself as a person. I love the people and gardening. The farmers market has helped me through a lot of things and brings things into my life that I never want to lose. I am so thankful not only for the farmers market in my life, but also Active8, for that has changed my life in so many ways, too. The farmers market is a good place – it is filled with good. It really showed me that there is still good in the world and I thank all the people in it. I recommend getting into things like this because it is worth it. Also, the coffee here is amazing!!!

—Your fellow market intern, Kaylee Piper

**FARMERS,
DO YOU HAVE A SURPLUS
OF LOCAL VEGGIES?
QFM WILL BUY THEM
from you and donate them to our
local food pantry.**

CALL 575-224-2102

There is even more work being done by Market volunteers, interns, vendors, and organizers with an ambitious post-pandemic future in mind. In the past the market has been able to incorporate live music and dance. At the moment, neither are allowed due to the problems of social distancing. This has not stopped market organizers prepar-



Questa Farmers Market interns from left to right: Amalia Gonzalez, Kaylee Piper, and (Alianna) Booboo Gonzalez .

Photo by E. Wilde

ing for site expansion, though, so that when the pandemic allows, music and dance can resume. The Questa Economic Development Fund is sponsoring a concrete dance pad. The LOR Foundation has committed funding to support site development and beautification, including the creation of a larger horno, more gardens, and planting native fruit and shade trees.

Like similarly minded markets, Questa Farmers Market organizers are focused on bringing healthy food options to low-income food-insecure places, to make fresh produce more affordable, and to build local food networks. These goals have become even more urgent during the pandemic. Shortages and delays in getting our food and supplies remind us of how fragile our global supply chains are, and how easily our essential food supply could be put at risk.

A goal of the Market is to support a resurgence of agriculture in Questa that is sensitive to the needs of the local residents, local economies, and quality of life. QFM vendors accept EBT/SNAP, and the Market matches EBT/SNAP dollar for dollar with a federal grant, offering Double-Up Food Bucks. At least 50% of goods sold must be from local (80 miles) NM farms and gardens, and the remaining portion can be prepared

Questa Farmers Market
Day: Sundays
Time: 10:00-2:00 pm
Where: Visitor Center parking area
Contact: growersmakers@gmail.com
Website: [questafarmersmarket.org](https://www.questafarmersmarket.org)

foods and crafts. QFM is authorized to accept WIC, and Senior Nutrition farm checks; these circulate July to November.

On the supply side, the Market applied for a grant through the New Mexico Farmers Marketing Association and received funding to purchase food from local farms to contribute this local produce to the North Central Food Pantry for distribution to those in need. This effort is meant to help keep fresh produce a part of food pantry distribution (the second and fourth Friday of every month at the North Central NM Food Pantry, located by the Senior Center) and to support farmers who have lost markets (like restaurants and larger farmers markets).

Questa Farmers Market also serves as an incubator for small businesses and keeps vendors and other participants returning. This year Evelyn Treats, Cerro Vista Farms, Mesa Roots Garden, and several others, including 9-year-old farmer Gabby, are participating. COVID-19 rules may have disrupted the music, but it is still the best place to get a Frito pie on a Sunday, and to laugh with a neighbor and plant seeds for our future together.

Questa Farmers Market is a program of the nonprofit, Localogy. For more information: (575) 224-2102 or growersmakers@gmail.com or [QuestaFarmersMarket.org](https://www.QuestaFarmersMarket.org).