

2020 Results: Thank you for Supporting Questa Farmers Market and Shopping Local

BY GAEA MCGAHEE, QUESTA FARMERS MARKET ORGANIZER

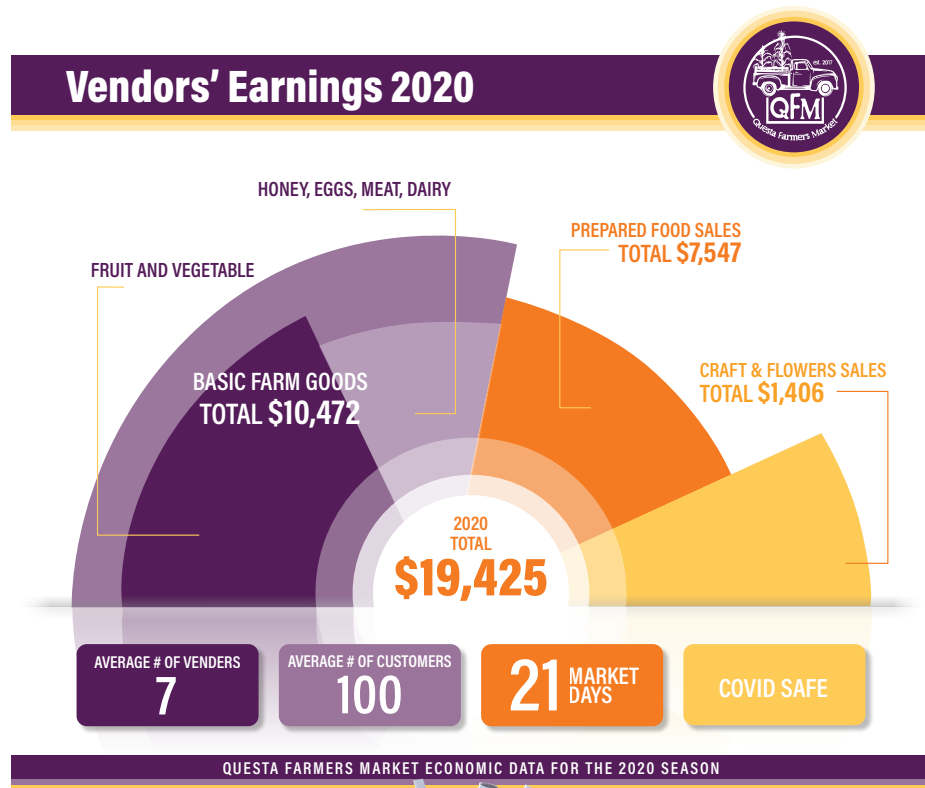
It's mid-February as I reflect on all we did at Questa Farmers Market during the 2020 season. Now that those busy months are settling into memory, let's recall some of our accomplishments and grow inspired for the 2021 season, late May to Early October 2021!

The focus of QFM is to create a truly local market, welcoming to backyard gardeners and professional growers, people with family orchards, and young, ambitious farmers. We work creatively to accommodate the maximum number and variety of vendors.

This past season, we carried on under unusual conditions shaped by a global pandemic, brought people together, briefly and in the safety of the outdoors—each Sunday for 21 weeks from May 24 to October 11. We gained perspective in 2020 and we witnessed our resilience. During those five months of Sunday markets, neighbors supported each other by buying local products from farmers, gardeners, bakers, and craftspeople. On average there were seven vendors each Sunday and an average of 100 customers. And the market was a bright stopping place for visitors to our community.

We completed site beautification projects led by youth interns and volunteers, who planted vegetables and flowers, weeded and watered, and made sure that the marketplace supported the vendors and customers.

We benefited from a grant from the New Mexico Farmers Marketing Association (NMFMA) to get local produce into the distribution chain. We purchased food from local farmers whose supply lines were disrupted by COVID-19, and brought the food to the North Central Food Pantry, where demand had increased. We worked with several farms and increased the connection between community members in Questa and agricultural projects across the county. Our teen interns and volunteers, as well as the Food Pantry volunteers were key to the project. Twice in the season, we harvested at Red Willow Farm and interns took the produce through the entire process; picking, washing, packing and delivery. QFM is seeking funding again to do a



Kaylee Piper (left) and Alianna Gonzales finish Cucui's head at the market, October, 2020

"I learned a lot this summer from working at the farmers market. I learned how to make a compost bin, build/make my own garden. I learned to do a lot of teamwork with my friends and even others I didn't know," —QFM intern Amalia Gonzalez.

"I'm excited for the market coming this season. And I can't wait to be back. God bless you all!" —QFM intern Kaylee Piper

similar project in 2021. We gained new vendors in 2020, including Mesa Roots Farm. They moved from Three Peaks to Sunshine Valley by the end of the season and are currently planning for a strong 2021 growing season.

THE NUMBERS

We track the financial impact of the market each year, and because 2020 was hard—we didn't host live musicians, we didn't encourage folks to linger and visit because of social distancing—I

wondered how the 2020 numbers would turn out. The 2020 season brought in \$2,300 less to the Questa area, with \$19,425, compared to \$21,737 in 2019. That total breaks down into three categories: 1.) \$10,472 in Raw Agricultural Products (fruits, vegetables, eggs, meat and honey), 2.) \$7,547 in Produced Food (hot food, baked goods, processed farm products like pickles, preserves and pesto), 3.) \$1,406 in Art and Craft (handmade items).

The Market is organized around several core ideas: that we must support all vendors, no matter how small, and contribute to local economics. We believe that building roles for youth makes QFM dynamic and unique. Our previous seasons have shown that supporting jobs for youth at our market is meaningful: our internships are flexible and teens have a choice of learning and service activities. We're committed to continue to offer these paid internships.

At the start of the 2020 season we employed two interns, then a third and a fourth joined: Amalia Gonzalez, Kaylee Piper, Alianna Gonzalez, and Ashlyn Rael, all of whom are in the Active8, of the Vida del Norte Coalition. There were projects and jobs to go around: "many hands make light work." The LOR Foundation provided much of the funding for the teen internship program.

Working together to build and care for the inviting outdoor market space was an important part of the internship in 2020. They built new garden areas and a new larger horno alongside our dedicated Andy Jaramillo. This coming season we expect to use the horno regularly and hope to have interns take on this project.

Did you know you can help fund the internship program by purchasing gear we sell at the Market, designed by market helper/freelance graphic designer Emily Wilde: shirts, aprons, and stickers! Email growersmakers@gmail.com, call or text (575) 224-2102 about these items.

SITE IMPROVEMENTS

QFM organizers, volunteers, interns, vendors, supporters (the Questa Economic Development Fund, The LOR Foundation, and several local businesses), and community members all contributed to site improvements last year.

- The Questa Credit Union donated one of their shipping containers, which is being turned into a market hub.
- Teen interns built a much larger horno, alongside Andy Jaramillo and others.
- The interns along with our steadfast volunteers, Andy and Lorie Jaramillo, extended the garden zones at the market and tended to their thriving all season long.
- The LOR Foundation provided funding in 2020 for extensive site

development and beautification work, including materials for the new larger horno, for more gardens, and in preparing more land to use in planting native fruit and shade trees. Their grant also supported QFM in a project that turned plastic waste into walls in collaboration with RYNO and TiLT.

- Once the COVID-19 health rules allow, live music and special events can return, and we will be able to enjoy our new concrete pad dance floor, which the Questa Economic Development Fund sponsored and Norman Garcia poured in November 2020.
- And we all built the unforgettable Cucui monster together for Cam-balache 2020!



Ashlyn Rael (left) and Amalia Gonzales at Red Willow Farm prepared fresh harvest for the NCFP distribution, September 2020

HOPES FOR THE COMING 2021 SEASON

- Grow gardens in our current locations, make new beds, plant trees, add tables
- Develop the land northwest of the current market area by adding parking, planting zone, and trees
- Ahead of the season, build out the market hub—transform the shipping container into a space for SNAP/EBT transactions, market merchandise sales, storage, and more
- Support youth entrepreneurs, and more vendors overall
- Host music and special events

- Seek funding to add local produce to the North Central Food Pantry distributions: this depends on surplus in the local food system as well as grant funding
 - Paint murals on some of the things we've built
 - Continue to increase support for local producers and regenerate agriculture in our communities
- To be a "farmers market," at least 50% of our vendors need to sell raw farm goods/unprocessed local foods (fruits, vegetables, honey, eggs, meat). "Local"



Alianna Gonzales (left), Kaylee Piper (center) and Amalia Gonzales working on the horno at QFM, July 2020

means mainly New Mexico-grown within 80 miles of the market. We are always looking for vendors, volunteers, and interns. You can find details about becoming a vendor on our website, questafarmersmarket.org/for-vendors/. We can arrange pickup at the farms or yards of anyone needing help with transportation.

When we keep our money and resources in our community and choose to spend our dollars at our local market and businesses, this adds to everyone's

wellbeing. Supporting Questa Farmers Market vendors by shopping local is doing something great in small ways. We look forward to the 2021 season and to working with our interns, volunteers, vendors and community.

We are a program of the local non-profit, Localogy www.localogy.org. To contact Market Organizer, Gaea, call (575) 224-2102 growersmakers@gmail.com QuestaFarmersMarket.org facebook.com/QuestaFarmersMarket instagram.com/questafarmersmarket

Cerro Vista Farm CSA Shares Now Available



Last year's (2020) beet harvest at Cerro Vista Farms.

By FARMER DANIEL

Have fun. Be in Nature. Meet new people. Take home the best quality fresh produce from a local farm! Cerro Vista Farm in Cerro, with Farmer Daniel steering the ship, has been growing fresh produce and flowers for local residents

for the past 22 years. To reserve some of this excellent produce for yourself, you can buy a CSA Farm Share.

If you purchase by March 10, you will receive additional "farm cash" credit that can be spent at the Cerro Vista Farm weekly Wednesday Market, which is open to the public. Most of the Farm's expenses happen February through June—to buy seed and fertilizer, repair farm equipment, and pay the labor force to get fields ready and greenhouse plants started. And most of the income from produce sales happens in July, August, and September—so if you can buy your share now, you're really helping, truly supporting local agriculture!

Once the growing season is in full swing, starting June 21, you can pick up your share at

- Cerro Vista Farm in Cerro
 - Arroyo Hondo Midtown Market
 - Arroyo Seco Sol Food Natural Market
 - In Lama at the "T"
 - Taos Farmers Market
- A summer full share costs \$520, with

8 or 9 fresh produce items per week. A half share is \$365, with 5 or 6 fresh produce. (Note: half shares are actually 2/3 as much produce for 2/3 the price of a full share.)

Daniel Carmona is a long-time farmer and founder of Cerro Vista Farm. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), supplies fresh produce to shareholders throughout the grow-

ing season. Cerro Vista Farm also sells food in the summer months to locals and at the Taos Farmers' Market, which Daniel helped start decades ago! You can reach him at cerrovistafarm@gmail.com or from his website www.cerrovistafarm.com, where you can buy a Farm Share by credit card; or email Daniel for other payment options, including five monthly payments. Thank you for your participation in Community Supported Agriculture!

DID YOU KNOW?

Taos County has 14 identified rodent species. The most common are the house mouse, deer mouse, voles, pack rats, field mice, pocket gophers, and beavers. They are generally nocturnal omnivores who come and go into our dwellings. The droppings and urine of mice are responsible for many diseases (i.e. typhus, hanta virus) and allergens and the fleas and ticks they carry are responsible for others (i.e. pox, plague). Deer mice are most responsible for hanta viruses. Deer mice are brown with white undersides. Most other mice are gray. "Gray is Good, Brown is Bad."

Control Methods: Seal every possible entry point to your dwelling, then use traps, baits, and glue boards. A mouse can get through a hole the size of a nickel. Mice follow walls at night with their whiskers. Place trap where baited end is next to wall. Place devices where droppings have been observed.

Good Riddance™
GOODRIDDANCE ENVIRONMENTAL PEST CONTROL

575.770.3297