

Seasonal Availability Calendar for Placer County Produce

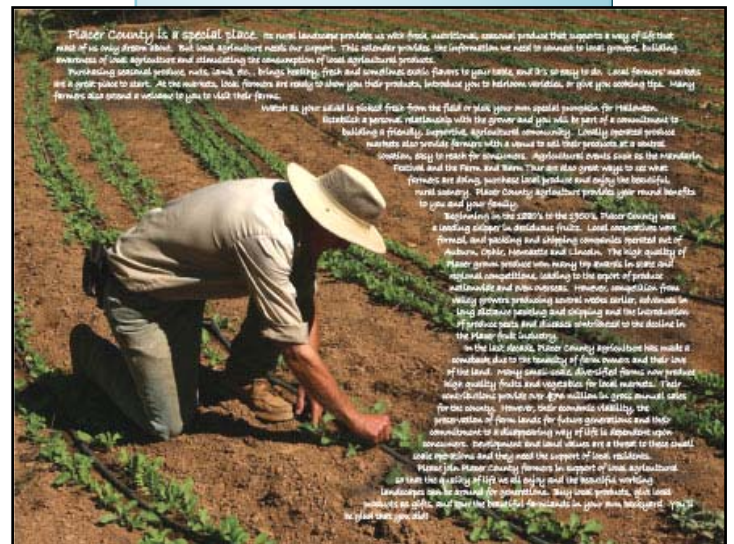
Consumers are less likely to seek out local produce if they do not have adequate information on the seasonal availability of produce and livestock products. The Placer County Tour Committee addressed this problem by creating a calendar containing specific Placer County information encouraging the purchase of local agricultural goods. The calendar includes information on seasonal availability of agricultural goods, local growers, agricultural events and market opening dates, and nutritional information on key agricultural products. The calendar is user-friendly and aimed at raising consumer awareness of local agriculture while serving as a marketing tool for local growers. It was released in time for the *Placer Farm & Barn Tour* in October 2006, and calendar sales continued through January 2007.

Project Impacts:

- More than 600 calendars were sold and the remaining 250 were distributed to local decision-makers as promotion and education pieces.
- A small survey of calendar purchasers revealed that 80 percent use the calendar regularly. These users also tended to buy local produce weekly. The general comments received were uniformly positive.
- Calendar profits were used to support the 2007 *Placer Farm & Barn Tour* and to publish the next informational product, a series of "Placer Produce" notecards.
- Some calendar customers reported that they attended a farmers market or other agricultural event specifically to purchase a calendar.
- Growers appreciated being able to buy the calendars as gifts for their loyal customers.
- Information compiled for the calendar has since been featured in other publications.

Lessons learned:

- Marketing the calendar took considerably more time than the committee anticipated.
- Potential customers were lost because they already had been given a calendar elsewhere and did not need another one.
- The project would have been more successful if it had started at a smaller scale to build interest.





Next Steps:

- Surveys conducted during the project led to an 'Eat Local First' campaign to educate consumers on how to incorporate more local foods into their diet. The campaign is working together with the Foothill Farmers Market.

More Information:

- Look for the 'How to Eat Local' Web site at <http://cnevada.ucdavis.edu/> for information on Placer and Nevada Counties' produce and helpful tips on eating seasonally.

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