



# Small Farm News

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SMALL FARM CENTER • COOPERATIVE EXTENSION • UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

## Hmong Farmer Puts Faith in HAC Coop

by Susan McCue, editor, *Small Farm News*

Standing in the middle of 10 acres in southwest Fresno, Hmong American Community (HAC) Cooperative member Cheng Thao points to his delicate long bean shoots peeking up from the dirt. As he points, he explains that he staggers his long bean plantings every five days to keep up with the cooperative's client demands.

Like most farmers, Thao is a busy man. Not only is he a founding farmer of the HAC coop, but he also serves as the organization's field man and quality control agent. His job takes him to the north, east and southwestern corners of Fresno County, where he visits with the far-flung HAC coop members on their leased acreage. Onsite, he advises members on farming topics including what crops they should grow for the coming season. Members generally produce a variety of Asian and American vegetables, but in the future will concentrate on refining the quality of five major crops: lemongrass, green beans, daikon, Chinese long beans, and Chinese eggplant.

Thao views his work as a weekend farmer and coop member as time well spent while he slowly builds his proficiency in American agricultural techniques.

"If I have the opportunity to go back to my country, that will be the skill to show my cousins," Thao says. "That will make a difference for our country."

Thao escaped from Laos with most of his family in 1975 to avoid persecution for aiding the United States in the Vietnam war. They fled to Thailand, where Thao spent the next 20 years in a Thai refugee camp. "I stayed till the last minute," he says, and when the camp closed, he came to America to join his brother, Nhiabee Thao, who was one of the first Hmong farmers in Fresno.

Although he and his brother had farmed in Laos, Thao says it was a different type of farming. With no equipment, weeding three acres would take three days in Laos. Here, Thao says it takes, "just maybe three or four hours to finish it."



*Cheng Thao, left, works on his family farm each weekend with his wife Mao Lee and children Xaxeng, Maishoue, Chieng, and Mai Kou.*

## Davis Food Co-op: Proud Legacy

by Ann M. Evans, guest author

Located in the hot, fertile lowlands of the Sacramento Valley in the environmentally conscious city of Davis are two institutions, each in the top 20 of their class: The Davis Food Co-op and the University of California, Davis. Though differing in mission, vision and values, both are devoted to the role of food and agriculture within society.

Like their counterparts across the country, Davis students and faculty rallied against the Vietnam War in the late 1960s and led a strike over the invasion of Cambodia in the spring of 1971. As the war concluded, activism against the war became activism in the marketplace, as the battlefield moved to agricultural fields and kitchen tables across America.

One outgrowth of the new activism was toward cooperative economic development. By 1976, there was a movement of cooperative and collective natural food stores across the country, supported by a wholesale and distribution network. A similar movement in organic farming provided fresh produce to this emerging community-based food system, including newly forming farmers markets.

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## Director's Message

## Tomatoes — Big and Small

As I toured a tomato greenhouse operation in Ventura County during a recent Small Farm Workgroup continuing conference, it struck me very forcefully that the paradigm of the small, independent family farmer may be increasingly at odds with the realities of the contemporary U.S. food marketplace.

What drove this home to me was the logistics of this greenhouse tomato operation as it was explained to us by the operator. He markets his tomatoes 52 weeks per year in 18 farmers markets.



Desmond Jolly

While he identified his operation as “small,” it was not the kind of smallness envisioned in the advocacy and legislation that enabled the creation and growth of the California Certified Farmers Market system. That earlier 1970s vision was of a kind of Jeffersonian yeoman small farmer. We did not envision then that a single “farm” would market at 18 farmers markets for 52 weeks per year. Needless to say, my primitive calculations put gross revenues for this operation at well over \$1 million per year. But I could see the logic for their success.

The marketing logic, even of the Certified Farmers Markets, is dictated by a desire for consistency in supply, and a dependable quality of product. This, from the standpoint of the market, reduces their risks and encourages consumer satisfaction. Dealing with fewer farmers also reduces transaction costs, as measured in staff time, handling costs, and paperwork.



photo: Desmond Jolly

The same logic, though heightened, governs the operation of wholesalers and retailers, making it next to impossible for individual small farmers to penetrate supermarket chains or even the institutional buyers, including food service operations. Hence, economies of scale in marketing are becoming more important to the viability of farms than production economies. Some farmers solve the problem by getting bigger, as the previous example suggests, and there have been many instances of successful small farms growing to the \$1 million and above gross income levels.

Those who haven't or cannot for a variety of reasons need to look at alternative business models that are more in keeping with our changed economy. “In a land of giants, ants get crushed.”

For example, we need to revisit cooperatives as one alternative to generating the economies needed to penetrate markets. As Jennifer Waner writes in *New Generation Cooperatives and the Future of Agriculture*, “By operating individually, many farmers are simply unable to expand

operations to the scale necessary for involvement in processing [marketing]. This move requires too much capital, expertise and time; however, by pooling resources as in a cooperative venture, even small producers can reach the necessary size and output levels to vertically integrate and enter the processing arena.”

“Cooperatives have worked well in some areas because they allow producers to retain ownership and control of assets while achieving economic and political power via membership.”

California has a plethora of coops. Many, like Sunkist, have developed brands that are now used as the generic name for the products they sell. Oranges = Sunkist.

But in the vegetable and minor crops areas, we see almost no coops. And it is in these markets that we see small farms being marginalized or excluded. Almost every farmers market has a long waiting list of farmers.

## Looking Towards the Future

The University of California has excelled at production research and technology transfer. But our emerging challenge is now to provide assistance to farmers in regard to their business models, particularly in regard to marketing and organizational development.

We are devoting this issue of *Small Farm News* to cooperatives as a stimulus to new — old? — thinking on this topic, and hope it provides fodder for reconceptualizing how we help promote small farm viability in the 21st Century. ■

# program news

## Visitors

The Small Farm Center hosted **Gavhar Holmuradova**, executive director of Madadkor, a private farmers' association in Bulungur, Uzbekistan. Holmuradova is in Davis to research cooperatives with the help of her hosts, the UC Center for Cooperatives.



*Gavhar Holmuradova*

## Web Links to [www.sfc.ucdavis.edu](http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu)

A new web site, at <http://marketleap.com/publinkpop/default.htm>, lets users know how many other web sites link to theirs. Links to the Small Farm Center web site, online at [www.sfc.ucdavis.edu](http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu), totalled around 5,000.

New web site features include the online library and the continuously evolving agri- and nature-tourism database at [www.calagtour.org](http://www.calagtour.org).

## Grants

The Small Farm Center received the following grants:

- A five-year, \$100,000 grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) through the Institute of Toxicology and Environmental Health (ITEH) at UC Davis for a program on pesticide safety.
- A \$51,000 grant from USDA-Agricultural Marketing Service to develop a farm trails project in Napa, Yolo, and Solano counties.
- Two grants for risk management projects from USDA and the Western Center for Risk Management Education.

## Meetings

**Mark Gaskell**, Small Farm Program farm advisor in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties, and **Ben Faber**, farm advisor, Ventura County, offered a workshop "Lychee and Longan Production and Marketing in California" on April 13, 14, and 25, 2002, in the cities of Escondido, Ventura, and Goleta respectively.

**Manuel Jimenez**, Small Farm Program farm advisor, Tulare County, presented a blueberry meeting May 15, 2002, and a blackberry meeting May 22, 2002, at the Kearney Agricultural Center in Parlier, California.

**Benny Fouche**, Small Farm Program farm advisor, San Joaquin County, hosted and provided a fertigation equipment demonstration at the Strawberry and Blueberry meeting March 22, 2002, in Stockton, California.

The **Small Farm Workgroup's 2002 Continuing Conference** was held this year in Ventura, California, April 16-17, 2002. See the related story on page 6.

## Presentations

**Desmond Jolly**, Small Farm Program director, presented the talk "Opportunities in Agritourism and Nature Tourism" to the Recreation Committee of the Capay Valley Vision organization in Esparto, California, May 20, 2002.

**Ramiro Lobo**, Small Farm Program farm advisor, San Diego County, presented "Farming for Profit — Strategies for Growers," at the Risk Management Seminar and Field Day for Growers in Ventura, California, February 28, 2002.



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Director: Desmond Jolly, [dajolly@ucdavis.edu](mailto:dajolly@ucdavis.edu)  
 Editor/Designer: Susan McCue, [semccue@ucdavis.edu](mailto:semccue@ucdavis.edu)  
 Administrative Asst.: Linda Vieira, [lmvieira@ucdavis.edu](mailto:lmvieira@ucdavis.edu)  
 Administrative Asst.: Birgit Hempel, [sfcenter@ucdavis.edu](mailto:sfcenter@ucdavis.edu)  
 Program Rep.: Gillian Brady, [gabrady@ucdavis.edu](mailto:gabrady@ucdavis.edu)  
 Technical Asst.: Solomon Teklu, [steklu@ucdavis.edu](mailto:steklu@ucdavis.edu)  
 Student Asst.: Samuel Tet

The Small Farm Center links those who need information on small-scale farming with those who have the information. The Center produces publications and a newsletter; sponsors conferences and seminars; holds a library of periodicals, reports and books; gives referrals; and answers numerous requests for information.

Readers are encouraged to send us information, express views, and contact us for assistance. Mention of a specific product is intended for the reader's information or as an example of a similar product—not as a recommendation of that specific product.

## Davis Food Co-op – FROM PAGE 1

Several authors gave voice to the movement, linking agriculture with the environment, and connecting a sense of place with health and food consumption.

In her book *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson provided a sense of urgency with



The Davis Food Co-op occupies a 25,000 square foot space in the heart of town. Photo: Desmond Jolly.

its factual account of the level of environmental degradation already in place. Frances Moore Lappé, in her book *Diet For A Small Planet*, influenced millions of Americans to eat delicious protein-rich meals of natural foods without meat. Recently, Lappé published *Hope's Edge: The New Diet For A Small Planet*, featuring cooperatives as one source of hope for the future.

While the co-ops and other natural foods stores provided the daily bread, the *Whole Earth Catalogue* provided practical information to those trying to live the light lifestyle. And there were many. Today, the natural foods movement is a \$7.7 billion business nationwide. Author Michael Pollan, in his 2001 series in the *New York Times* on the organic food industry, refers to the natural foods industry as “industrial organic.”

The cooperative sector of this market includes about 300 retail food cooperatives in the U.S., representing approximately \$700 million in sales. Walden Swanson, co-op consultant, reviews Year 2000 co-op food store survey data in the July-August 2001 issue of *The Co-op Grocer* magazine, and reports that, “Viewed as a chain, co-ops are third in volume behind Whole Foods (almost \$2 billion) and Wild Oats (just over \$800 million) and

first in number of natural retail food store outlets (Whole Foods: 117 stores, Wild Oats: 110 stores, Co-ops: 300 stores).” Most of these co-op stores have life stories similar to that of the Davis Food Co-op.

### How it Started

Like university towns across the country, first in the 1930s and again in the 1970s, Davis spawned a buying club. The evolution of the “Davis People’s Food Conspiracy” into a supermarket-size retail store was due to the desires of people in need of a product the marketplace didn’t find profitable to offer. They organized a non-profit, democratic business to provide the product to themselves. Over time, the co-op grew.

“The co-op represents 11 percent of total retail food sales in Davis,” says general manager and long-time co-op activist Eric Stromberg. “This is unprecedented. Seven percent is the largest any natural food store has across the country.”

He attributes customer loyalty to the product mix offered by the co-op and the deep sense of attachment the community has to the co-op.

**“The co-op represents 11 percent of total retail sales in Davis. This is unprecedented.”**

“There’s history,” says Stromberg, who has been with the Davis Food Co-op two years now. “I know how I felt about my co-op in Greenbelt, Maryland, where I grew up. It was ours. My family helped build it.”

Many of the original UC Davis students and faculty who founded the co-op are still active in the organization, and membership has grown from 300 in the buying club to 4,000 in the co-op store.

The original motivation 30 years ago was nothing short of an alternative food distribution system based on economic democracy, environmentalism and sustainable agriculture. Those same principles appeal to co-op shoppers today.

Page Webb joined the co-op eight years ago when she and her husband



This colorful quilt features a variety of coop logos and hangs in the Davis Food Coop. Photo: Desmond Jolly.

moved to town. The athletic mother of two elementary school children is president of the Davis Educational Foundation that supports the school district’s efforts to serve farm fresh, seasonal food for lunch.

She says, “There’s more to the co-op than just good food, the environmental aspect and sense of community and ownership. Everything is interconnected for me. I have a say in what products are available there. I can bring my own bags, buy fair traded coffee, and buy locally grown organic produce or not. I can do as much or as little as works for me. The co-op offers me a variety of choices.”

### How it Grew

The co-op’s roots lie in an old house on the UC Davis campus. The buying club soon moved off campus to a downtown location. Fueled by idealism, volunteer labor, and market demand, the co-op grew during the next few years to 300 households. In 1975, the structure became unwieldy and membership began to drop. Leadership decided that for the same amount of volunteer effort, they could serve more people through a storefront.

In December 1976, the newly renamed “Davis Food Co-op” opened a 500 square foot garage-like storefront on L

Street toward the eastern edge of town. The same leaders organized a farmers market that year, guaranteeing the farmers that the co-op would buy any produce they couldn't sell at the market. During the next three decades, the Davis Farmers Market grew to attract 7,000 shoppers at its twice-weekly market.

The Davis Food Co-op moved twice, each time to accommodate growth in demand for the unique product selection offered, which was a combination of conventional and natural groceries and produce merchandised in an environmentally friendly way.

Doug Walters, co-op membership director, tells a story from the early "L" street days. It seems people squeezed into the first store and spent so much money that the co-op had to open a bank account, which they did at a local bank. One day a



*Davis Food Co-op offerings include a mix of conventional and organic produce.*

senior co-op cashier in the line for retail deposits at the bank overheard a clerk chuckle to himself, "Not bad — for a bunch of hippies with a cash register!"

Today, the Davis Food Co-op is the largest single co-op store by size west of the Mississippi, with an annual sales volume of \$12 million. One of the biggest locally owned businesses in town, the co-op is a significant employer. The annual winter holiday parade, featuring 5,000 Davis children led by the Cal Aggie Marching Band—uh, begins at the co-op. Like the university, the co-op is a much-loved, local institution contributing to the character of the community, yet not without its controversy.

When offered the choice at the ballot box in mid-1993 about whether to take out a loan from the National Consumer Cooperative Bank to open a second store on the west side of town, members turned it down. Better safe than sorry seemed to be the message. Many had watched the Berkeley Co-op, started in a university town decades ago, expand and fold. Many others felt the no vote was a missed opportunity for more market share; still the co-op has grown every year.

According to David J. Thompson, long-time board member, author of several books on cooperatives and a consultant to cooperatives across the country, "There are two distinct actions the co-op's board of directors took that have placed the Davis Food Co-op at the forefront of the cooperative food retail sector today."

"The first was early adoption of one of the strongest capitalization plans of any co-op in the country," he says. "That has ensured continuous access to adequate equity capital to finance future objectives. The second was buying the building, a former 25,000 square foot supermarket, where the size allowed us to enlarge the co-op to meet member needs."

The leadership of the future will hopefully pioneer new territory within the vision of the founders — economic democracy, environmentalism and sustainable agriculture. The co-op, like the university, will surely stay true to its roots if it respects social values in addition to financial earnings.

**Ann M. Evans** is a nutrition education consultant with the California Department of Education. She is a cofounder of the Davis Food Co-op and Davis Farmers Market, and a former mayor of the city of Davis. ■

## Food Safety Tips

**F**ood poisoning is the common term many people associate with foodborne illness. Estimates of people affected by foodborne illness range from 3.3 million to 12.8 million cases each year, and 3,900 deaths each year, according to the USDA's Economic Research Service. The range of cases is so great because many people attribute their illness to "24 Hour Flu" and do not consider it foodborne illness.

People erroneously assume they can tell if food is spoiled by the way it smells. The truth is that harmful microorganisms are present everywhere, and food can be contaminated if not handled properly.

Follow these four principles to prepare food and keep it safe.

1. Wash hands and surfaces often; wash hands before handling food.
2. Prevent cross contamination. Wash hands, utensils, cutting boards, and work surfaces with hot soapy water after contact with raw meat and poultry.
3. Cook foods to proper temperatures. Meats should be cooked to an internal temperature of 165°F. Never cook meat in an oven below 325°F. Reheated foods should also reach a temperature of 165°F or come to a full rolling boil. Foods served cold should remain cold and not at room temperature.
4. Refrigerate leftovers promptly. Use containers that are shallow, and do not stack on other containers. This allows the cool refrigerated air to circulate and cool the food quickly. Dense foods, like stew, should be broken down into small pieces to cool quickly.

**Source:** National Center for Disease Control.

# Small Farm Advisors Search For Specialty and Alternative Crops

By Jeannette Warnert, senior public information representative, University of California



This red barn and the Faulkner Farmhouse below are unique features of the UC Hansen Agricultural Learning Center.

With creativity in crop selection and marketing, California's small-scale and family farmers can weather fierce competition from other countries and larger farms, accord-



Small Farm Program farm advisors Ramiro Lobo, left, Richard Molinar, and Mark Gaskell discuss potential height of blueberry plants in a research plot.

ing to presenters at the UC Small Farm Workgroup's annual continuing conference in April at the UC Hansen Agricultural Learning Center in Ventura County.

"Small-scale farmers are looking for anything that can set them apart," said Fresno County farm advisor Richard Molinar.

Small Farm Program farm advisors, Small Farm Program staff, specialists and other workgroup members convened to share their efforts in helping farmers explore alternative crops, new market windows, marketing opportunities with restaurants, schools and specialty produce stores, and farmers market sales.

Frieda Caplan, founder of Frieda's Inc., a specialty produce marketing firm,

told the group her staff looks for good tasting, long lasting, healthful, interesting and affordable produce. The company works with farmers who "beta test" new crops in test plots, are willing to market under the Frieda label, and offer the produce to Frieda's exclusively.

Caplan said she sees future growth in soy products such as edamame, Indian vegetables, fresh foods packaged for convenience stores, and pitahaya, a fruit grown on a trellised cactus plant with custard-textured bright magenta or green flesh.

The Small Farm Center's advisors, based in six California UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE) county offices throughout the state, are leading the way in new crop development. Mark Gaskell, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties, Ramiro Lobo, San Diego County, and Richard Molinar, Fresno County, are testing edamame varieties in local climate and soil conditions. Gaskell, Lobo and Ben Faber, a workgroup member based in Ventura County, have planted lychee and



Faulkner Farm House was built in 1894.

longan, a subtropical tree fruit with white jelly-like flesh that is popular among Hispanic and Asian consumers.

Molinar and Manuel Jimenez, UCCE Tulare County, and are testing blueberry varieties in the San Joaquin Valley. The advisors hope to help farmers harvest high-quality blueberries when prices are

high. Jimenez also is growing 150 varieties of chili peppers, broom corn, and papaya. Molinar has studies underway with nopales, which are edible cactus leaves used in Mexican dishes; sugarcane, a popular Latino snack; water chestnuts, widely used in Asian cuisine; and Chinese medicinal herbs. Aziz Baameur, the newly



Farm advisor Jose Aguiar

appointed small farm advisor in Santa Clara County, also will begin specialty crop research.

Workgroup members also visited Beylik Hydroponics, where they viewed 30-foot-long tomato stems loaded with large, flawless fruit growing in a mineral or coconut-husk matrix. Temperature, humidity, nutrients and water are carefully controlled to optimize production. The crop is sold exclusively at 18 farmers markets, according to Scott Beylik, acting farm manager and owner's son.

The manager of Plaza Las Glorias, the Hispanic market where the group stopped for lunch, said fresh jocotes are in short supply during the holiday season. The advisors snapped photos of the canned fruit, similar to a pickled plum and unfamiliar



Hydroponic tomatoes grow rapidly at Beylik Hydroponics.

to them all, so they could begin researching this new specialty produce opportunity. ■

# pesticide safety

## Pesticides and Your Health

Excerpted from the **Pesticide Safety for Small Farms** publication

Some people are allergic to certain pesticides. They may get a severe skin rash when the pesticide touches their skin, or they may sneeze and have a runny nose and itchy eyes when they are near the pesticide. If a pesticide affects you this way, try wearing some extra protection (gloves, a respirator, etc.). If symptoms continue, you may have to stay away from that particular pesticide.

Allergic reactions may not occur with your first or second exposure to a particular pesticide. However, your body may become sensitized to that pesticide, and if you are exposed to it again, you may experience an allergic reaction.

Some harmful effects from pesticides may not show up for a long time. Studies with laboratory animals show that some pesticides may cause cancer and other potential problems: nervous system damage, reproductive damage, harm to unborn children, or damage to specific organs such as lungs, liver, kidneys, etc.

Scientists cannot always know about the long-term effects of pesticides on human beings, so don't take any chances. When you handle pesticides, or when you work in areas where pesticides have been applied, do everything you can to keep them from getting on or in your body.

### Emergency First Aid

If you inhale a pesticide, get to fresh air immediately. If you are having difficulty breathing, call for help, then sit down and try to breathe normally. It is not helpful to walk around if you are having difficulty breathing.

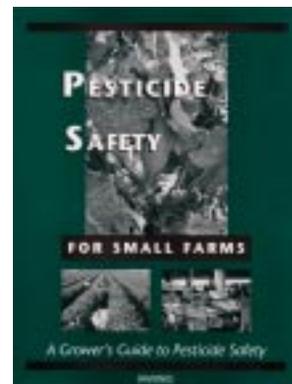
Before you rescue someone who has inhaled a pesticide and who may be unconscious, make sure that you do not expose yourself to the same danger. Wear the appropriate respiratory protection and move the victim to fresh air. Then remove the victim's respirator (if present), loosen the clothing, and call for emergency medical assistance (9-1-1 or your local emergency number.)

Ask someone to take you to the doctor:

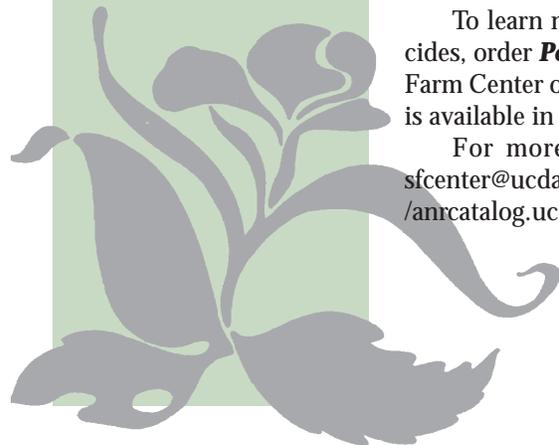
- if you swallow a pesticide or get it in your eyes.
- if you spill concentrated or a large amount of diluted pesticide on your skin.
- if you find it difficult to breathe.
- if your skin shows signs of severe irritation.
- if you feel ill and think you may have pesticide poisoning.

To learn more about how to protect yourself when using pesticides, order **Pesticide Safety for Small Farms, A Grower's Guide to Pesticide Safety** from the Small Farm Center or ANR Communication Services in print, video or audio cassette format. Information is available in English, Spanish, Hmong, Cambodian, and Lao languages.

For more information, contact the Small Farm Center at (530) 752-8136 or e-mail [sfcenter@ucdavis.edu](mailto:sfcenter@ucdavis.edu); call ANR Communication Services at (800) 994-8849 or order online at <http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu>. ■



*Pesticide Safety for Small Farms*



**Hmong Farmer** – FROM PAGE 1

Now, 27 years later, Thao leads a tour through the HAC offices in a downtown six-story Fresno building donated by the Carton and Margaret Taylor family. From this space, Thao explains, HAC operates its farmer cooperative and other initiatives including the Small Farm Resource and Training Center, developed with partners including the UC Small Farm Program, UC Cooperative Extension, USDA, and



*Cheng Thao grows many crops on his farm, including green beans, snow pea tips, and lemongrass, pictured here.*

American Farmland Trust, to serve as an incubator for beginning farmers.

“As we know of the Hmong who live in Fresno, the last skill they have left is farming,” says Thao, who sees the cooperative as a means of helping Hmong farmers make a better living with that skill. “But it’s not easy,” he says. “It’s still a struggle for the Hmong community in Fresno.”

Founded in 1996, HAC is dedicated to finding ways for Hmong-Americans to become economically sufficient. An estimated 60,000 Hmong-Americans live in Fresno. The HAC cooperative assists

Hmong farmers in gaining economic independence by helping them sell their produce at a fair market price.

“The Hmong American Community cooperative has the potential to make positive changes in the lives of Fresno’s Hmong farming community,” says Karen Spatz, business and cooperative specialist with USDA

Rural Development. Spatz has worked with HAC during the last several years to help develop the cooperative’s farmer and business training.

With help from Spatz and others from outside agencies and organizations, HAC coop members receive training in pesticide safety, agricultural laws, marketing, bookkeeping, and finance. To market members’ products, HAC sells through wholesalers in Los Angeles and San Francisco, and on the HAC web site at <http://www.hmongamer.com>.

Although sales through the web site are minimal, Cheng Thao believes the best

way to increase sales is to grow quality products and build customer relationships slowly. To assist in that goal, he would like to recruit members to farm in one location, where they would share inputs and equipment, reducing costs and increasing ease of quality control, transport to the packing house, and distribution.

Current cooperative membership is low, with 100 part-time members and 43 members who sell only

through the coop, but Thao believes that the dream of economic success for Hmong farmers can still be achieved through the coop approach. Before the coop started,

Thao says, Hmong farmers did not know the correct prices they should be receiving for their products. “But the coop is different,” says Thao. “They can tell you how much you can get and the profits you make. The percent the coop cuts off from your profit, that’s still yours too.”

For Cheng Thao, the coop’s future looks brighter all the time. “I think we will get something better,” says Chen with a smile. “Still working on it. I try my best.” ■



*Cheng Thao confers with Michael Yang, Small Farm Program field assistant with UC Cooperative Extension, Fresno County.*



*This quilt, created by Hmong women to depict the farming cycle in Laos, hangs in the HAC office.*

**To learn more about Hmong American Community, visit the HAC web site at [www.hmongamer.com](http://www.hmongamer.com) or call Hmong American Community in Fresno at (559) 237-5905.**

## resources

## publications

**How to Start a Cooperative** is one of many free downloadable cooperative-related online publications available from the USDA Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS). The RBS online library, at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/pub/newpub.htm>, also includes issues of Rural Cooperatives magazine, and a variety of cooperative-related research, statistical, and service reports. Cost: download is free. To purchase printed copies, contact: USDA/Rural Business-Cooperative Service, Stop 3255, Washington, D.C. 20250-3255; (202) 720-7558; e-mail: [coopinfo@usda.gov](mailto:coopinfo@usda.gov).



**Pacific Coast Cooperatives: Selected Characteristics and Major Challenges**, is available from the UC Center for Cooperatives. The downloadable publication assesses results of a survey of West Coast members of agricultural and non-agricultural cooperatives facing issues including changing laws and regulations, rapid financial growth, difficulty in attracting qualified directors, loss of members, and competition. Cost: download is free at <http://www.cooperatives.ucdavis.edu/publications/general.html>. Contact: Center for Cooperatives, University of California, One Shields Ave., Davis, CA 95616; (530) 752-2408.

**The Cooperative Employee Training Package**, including a video, publication, overhead slides, training suggestions and a quiz, is available from the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives (NCFC). Cost: \$60 plus shipping and handling. Contact: NCFC Education Department, 60 F Street NW, Suite 900, Washington, D.C. 20001; (202) 626-8700; <http://www.ncfc.org>.

The **Missouri Alternatives Center** offers a list of cooperative-related publications on its web site at <http://agebb.missouri.edu/mac/links/index.htm>. To find cooperative publications, select the letter "C." Then scroll down to the link, "Cooperatives and Cooperation," or call the center at (573) 882-1905.

The **University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives** web site includes a page filled with links to downloadable agricultural cooperative publications on topics ranging from alfalfa to specialty crops. To download, go to [http://www.wisc.edu/uwcc/info/i\\_pages/resagcoops.html](http://www.wisc.edu/uwcc/info/i_pages/resagcoops.html), or call the center at (608) 262-3981.

**A History of African-American Farmer Cooperatives, 1938-2000**, is a presentation by Bruce Reynolds of USDA Rural Business-Cooperative Service at the annual meeting of the NCR-194, a regional research meeting focusing on cooperatives. His presentation tells the story of agriculture and cooperatives in the American South, and is available from the Arthur Capper Cooperative Center at Kansas State University web site at <http://www.agecon.ksu.edu/acc/Default.htm>, or call the center at (785) 532-1508.

The Kentucky Center for Cooperative Development web site includes **Agricultural Economics (AEC) Cooperatives Radio Transcripts** of programs covering topics ranging from developing direct meat markets to new opportunities for horticulture enterprises. Download transcripts by going to <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/KCCD/ukpubs.html> and clicking on AEC Cooperatives Radio Transcripts, or call the Kentucky Center for Cooperative Development at (859) 257-7272.

## web sites

**American Cooperation Online**  
<http://www.americancooperation.org/>

**Arthur Capper Cooperative Center,  
Kansas State University**  
<http://www.agecon.ksu.edu/acc/Default.htm>

**Center for Cooperatives  
University of California**  
<http://www.cooperatives.ucdavis.edu/>

**Cooperative Enterprise Program  
Cornell University**  
<http://cooperatives.aem.cornell.edu>

**International Cooperative Alliance**  
<http://www.coop.org/welcome.htm>

**Missouri Alternatives Center  
Cooperative Links**  
<http://agebb.missouri.edu/mac/links/index.htm>

**National Cooperative Bank**  
<http://www.ncb.com/>

**National Cooperative Business  
Association**  
<http://www.ncba.coop/>

**National Council of Farmer  
Cooperatives**  
<http://www.ncfc.org/>

**Quentin Burdick Center for  
Cooperatives  
North Dakota State University**  
<http://www.ag.ndsu.nodak.edu/qbcc/>

**USDA Rural Business-Cooperative  
Service**  
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/>

**University of Wisconsin Center for  
Cooperatives**  
<http://www.wisc.edu/uwcc/>

# news notes

■ Authors Mary Holmes, Norman Walzer, and Christopher Merret explain the difference between earlier cooperatives established in the 1920s and 1940s and new generation cooperatives in the publication ***New Generation Cooperatives: Case Studies Expanded 2001***.

According to the authors, earlier open-membership cooperatives were commodity based clearinghouses for members' unprocessed products, while new generation cooperatives operate with closed memberships that process or add value to the commodities they grow. Learn more about successful and unsuccessful new generation cooperatives by downloading the free publication from Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs web site at <http://www.iira.org/pubsnew> and searching by author name or publication type (case studies).

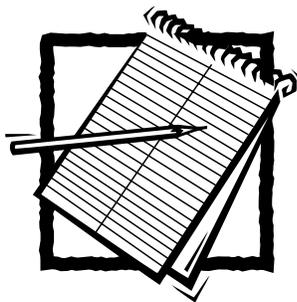
■ Shermain Hardesty is the new director for the University of California's Center for Cooperatives. Hardesty will draw on her extensive background as a private consultant with wide-ranging experience in food marketing and agricultural cooperatives to oversee the center's research, education, and public outreach activities for cooperatives in agriculture, consumers, business, and other areas.



Shermain Hardesty

Hardesty plans to broaden the scope of the center's activities by increasing collaborative efforts with UC Davis and other universities and cooperatives, developing an online database of public and private specialists, enhancing center publications on the web site, and continuing sponsorship of training conferences for cooperative leaders and researchers. For more information, contact: Center for Cooperatives, University of California, One Shields Ave., Davis, CA 95616; (530) 752-2408; e-mail: [centerforcoops@ucdavis.edu](mailto:centerforcoops@ucdavis.edu); or visit the web site at: <http://cooperatives.ucdavis.edu>.

■ 2002 Farm Bill was signed by President Bush May 13, 2002, with up to \$180 billion in spending to farmers during the next 10 years. Compared to the current farm bill passed in 1996, this agreement increases the amount of money budgeted for crop subsidies and conservation programs. About \$50 billion will be allocated to cotton, grain and rice farmers. Conservation programs will receive an additional \$9 billion through 2007 to preserve farmlands, save wetlands, and improve water quality and soil conservation. For more information, visit the USDA web site at: [www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/farmland/](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/farmland/).



■ The deadline for organic growers to become certified is October 21, 2002. Those selling more than \$5,000 worth of goods per year must be certified by that date under the new National Organic Program set up by USDA. Growers can find information about certifying agents, applicants for accreditation, application information, and information about the National Organic Program at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop>.

■ Farm kids are less likely to develop allergies later in life, according to a report from the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology. Report findings include:

- Early life exposure to endotoxins in dust and other microbial compounds helps protect children against allergic sensitization and from developing allergic diseases.
- Barn exposure and farm milk consumption by children younger than one year of age reduced the frequency of asthma, hay fever and allergic responses. Farm kids in general have lower asthma and hay fever symptoms.
- Exposure to barns and farm milk has lifelong benefits.

■ The Great Valley Center's Digital Network includes the publication ***Locations for Public Access to Technology in the Central Valley***. Many locations are community based, have bilingual staff, and are open to adults and children at no cost. Small scale farmers who wish to add computer skills to their businesses may find local access to computers by downloading the publication from [www.greatvalley.org/cvdm](http://www.greatvalley.org/cvdm), or call the center at (209) 522-5103.

■ Cooperative marketing can be a great opportunity and a great challenge. California growers considering this marketing option may contact Karen Spatz, California representative for USDA Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS). She can be reached at USDA Rural Development, 430 G Street, Davis, CA 95616-4169; (530) 792-5829; e-mail: [karenspatz@ca.usda.gov](mailto:karenspatz@ca.usda.gov).

To find a list of USDA Rural Business-Cooperative Service contacts in other states, visit <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/csdir.htm>.

## calendar

## JUNE

17

**Cost and Return Study Training  
Kearney Agricultural Center, Parlier, CA**

This Small Farm Workgroup meeting presents methodologies to collect grower data for cost and return studies.

Contact: Eta Takele, area farm advisor, UC Cooperative Extension, Riverside County, (909) 683-6491, ext. 243; or Ramiro Lobo, farm advisor, UC Cooperative Extension, San Diego County, (858) 694-3666.

18-19

**Bus Tour: Specialty Crop Production and Marketing  
in the Central Valley****Various Central Valley locations**

This Small Farm Workgroup bus tour visits five farm sites during two days, with stops including a commercial blueberry farm and a visit to the "Pride of Woodlake" project.

Contact: Richard Molinar, farm advisor, UC Cooperative Extension, Fresno County, (559) 456-7555.

June 24-August 15

**Sustainable Agriculture Principles and Practices  
Student Experimental Farm, UC Davis**

This 20- to 25-hour per week course offers eight units of UC Davis credit and combines field activities with lectures, discussions and field trips about commercial organic crop production.

Contact: Mark Van Horn, Student Farm-Pomology Department, UC Davis, (530) 752-7645.

June 28

**Trainers of Pesticide Handlers and Agricultural Fieldworkers  
Winters, CA**

This workshop qualifies participants to train pesticide handlers and agricultural fieldworkers. Participants receive the 400-page Pesticide Applicator Instructor's Handbook, EPA materials, and other resources.

Contact: Integrated Pest Management Education and Publications, UC Davis; (530) 752-5273.

## JULY

10

**Update on Citrus Research  
Indio, CA**

Speaker Peggy Mauk, farm advisor, UC Cooperative Extension, Riverside County, will present information on citrus research.

Contact: Jose Aguiar, farm advisor, UC Cooperative Extension, Riverside County; (760) 863-7949.

## AUGUST

5-7

**National Institute on Cooperative Education Conference  
Chicago, IL**

Presentations include megatrends in food and agriculture and how cooperatives can benefit, and the role of co-op boards and leadership.

Contact: Christina Cooper, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, 50 F Street NW, Suite 900, Washington, D.C. 20011; (202) 879-0809.

## AUGUST

7

**Strawberry Production and Vegetable Diseases  
Indio, CA**

Farm advisors Wayne Schrader and Jose Aguiar present information helpful to strawberry and vegetable growers.

Contact: Jose Aguiar, farm advisor, UC Cooperative Extension, Riverside County; (760) 863-7949.

12-15

**2002 Western Apicultural Society Annual Conference  
North Lake Tahoe, CA**

For beekeepers in the western states and Canada, the program includes sessions on hive products, honey bee behavior, practical beekeeping, and honey bee research.

Contact: Eric Mussen, extension apiculturist, Department of Entomology, UC Davis; (530) 752-0472.

## SEPTEMBER

11

**Spiders, Snakes, Scorpions and Field Safety  
Indio, CA**

Dr. Mike Glassy, medical entomologist, presents related field safety information to growers.

Contact: Jose Aguiar, farm advisor, UC Cooperative Extension, Riverside County; (760) 863-7949.

16-19

**National Extension Tourism Conference NET 2002  
Traverse City, MI**

NET 2002 provides a learning and networking opportunity for extension researchers, specialists, field agents, and administrators involved in tourism education and research.

Contact: Co-Chairman Philip J. Alexander, 800 Livingston Blvd., Suite 4A-2, Gaylord, MI 49735-8321; (989) 731-0272.

17-20

**Third National Small Farm Conference  
Albuquerque, NM**

Farmers, extension agents, scientists, and agricultural agency members will meet to discuss and develop methods to preserve small farms.

Contact: Edmund Gomez, New Mexico State University, (505) 852-2668; <http://www.cahe.nmsu.edu/smallfarm>.

18-21

**Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers Conference  
Madison, WI**

Session topics include season extension, new cut flower varieties, production methods for fresh and dried flowers, disease and pest management and marketing.

Contact: ASCFG, M.P.O. Box 268, Oberlin, OH 44074; (440) 774-2887.

Add your event to our online calendar at <http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/calendar>

# Starting a New Cooperative

from the Center for Cooperatives, University of California



## Step 1.

- Core group meets to clarify need and the potential use of a cooperative as a solution.

## Step 2.

- Hold meeting of potential members to discuss forming a cooperative.

## Step 3.

- Select steering committee.

## Step 4.

- Conduct economic feasibility analysis.
- Survey potential feasibility analysis.
- Conduct market research and analysis.
- Prepare financial projections.

## Step 5.

- Hold meeting of potential members to report findings.

## Step 6.

- Prepare business plan.
- Share results with potential members.

## Step 7.

- Draft legal papers. File upon approval of potential members.

## Step 8.

- Hold the cooperative's first annual meeting.
- Adopt by-laws.
- Elect board members.

## Step 9.

- Implement the business plan.
- Complete membership signups.
- Secure capital and finalize other agreements.
- Hire manager.
- Acquire facilities.

## Step 10.

Start operations.

**For more information**, contact: Center for Cooperatives, University of California, One Shields Avenue, Davis, CA 95616  
phone: (530) 752-2408; fax: (530) 752-5451  
e-mail: [centerforcoops@ucdavis.edu](mailto:centerforcoops@ucdavis.edu)  
web site: <http://cooperatives.ucdavis.edu>



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