

MARKETING

Got Markets?

Cornell researchers and Extension educators in NYC are developing two new marketing tools to help farmers

By John Nettleton and Duncan Hilchey

The continuing drive by agricultural producers to add value to their products is matched by growing retail interest in local, regional and value-added products. Two newly-developed market analysis tools will soon be available to New York State farmers, Extension educators and restaurant owners to help them diversify, add-value, and tap the potential of niche markets in the state.

Farmers are seeking such sophisticated, accessible marketing tools to help them expand their businesses. Recent studies by Cornell's Applied Economics and Management Department and the Community, Food, and Agriculture Program (CFAP) show that New York farmers want more marketing information and tools to take advantage of the immense scale and diversity of the state's consumer base.

These trends and demands have led CFAP and Cornell Cooperative Extension of New York City to develop two novel marketing tools. MarketMaker™ is a no-cost, on-line marketing tool for farmers, processors, retail food businesses and distributors. MarketScope™ is a for-fee tool providing consumer survey data, institutional market databases, and advanced mapping capabilities. Here's a rundown on each individual tool.

MARKETMAKER™ -- FREE ONLINE MARKETING INFORMATION FOR FARMERS AND RETAILERS

Developed by the University of Illinois Extension, MarketMaker is a GIS-based demographic information-mapping tool. Users can visit MarketMaker sites online and conduct detailed business and product information queries, including geo-coded business listings and specific attribute data for farmers, cooperatives, distributors and other agribusiness.

Census profiles and detailed market information can be drawn to varied scales, and cross-State data can be accessed, for example, farms and/or retail food businesses on both sides of the Mississippi. On-screen maps allow the user to identify neighborhoods (census tracts) by income, race, education and household type, as well as see the location of specific businesses in those areas that have potential wholesale buyers.

MarketMaker is currently one of the most extensive collections of searchable food industry related data in the country, with over 65,000 profiles of farmers and other food related enterprises in the three States with online sites (Illinois, Iowa, and Nebraska). The Illinois website, www.marketmaker.uiuc.edu, is linked to both Iowa and Nebraska, with new Partner States (including New York) being developed (See Map, above).

The New York State webpage will come online in early 2007. We are beginning to register producers and ensure that their information and, most importantly, their attributes (organic, grass-fed, etc.) are ready to be loaded on the site early in '07. The Partner State websites will also be accessible from the Agricultural Marketing Resource Center website www.AgMRC.org, which will serve as a portal for the national network and individual States.

Even as these sites are brought online, MarketMaker is being enhanced to include the kinds of capabilities that web users have come to expect:

- Key word searches and search within results
- Improved Registration: farmers and businesses in the MarketMaker data base will be able to create, edit and maintain their own on-line profiles via password access
- Customized Market Profile: users will be able to build a trade area by clicking on the targeted census tracks. Queries and demographic information can then be summarized by the selected trade area and printed as a pdf document.
- Consumption Pattern Data: a new query feature is being added to allow a user to search for and map the highest concentrations of food consumer by product.
- Buyers and Sellers Forum: Food supply chain enterprises will be able to make weekly posts announcing requests for and availability of food products, offering an avenue for potential business relationships to develop.

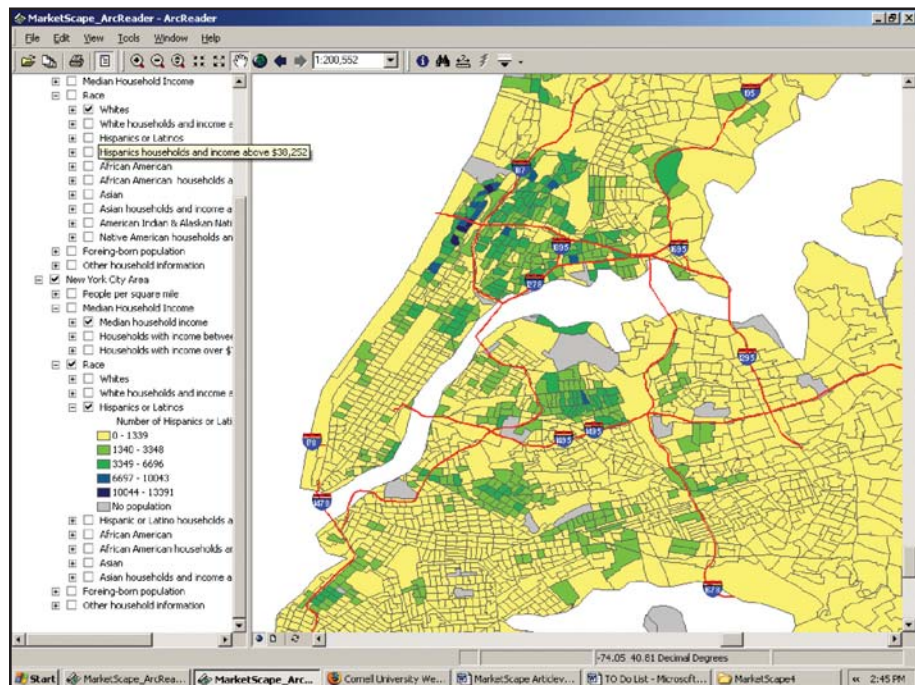
For more information on MarketMaker and how New York producers and producer groups can begin to prepare their data, contact John Nettleton or John Ameroso at 212-340-2900, jsn10@cornell.edu, or jma20@cornell.edu.

MARKETSCOPE™ -- AN ADVANCED MARKETING TOOL FOR COOPERATIVE EXTENSION AND PLANNERS

When Cooperative Development Institute Senior Partner Lynda Brushett needed information on the market for queso fresco (Hispanic fresh cheese) in Albany's Capital District she came to Duncan Hilchey. Hilchey is a researcher with the Community, Food, and Agriculture Program in Cornell's Department of Development Sociology who has been working with Professor Joe Francis on a new market mapping tool for farmers and agribusiness called "MarketScope™."

Using MarketScope, Hilchey produced an interactive map showing the Albany area zip codes with higher concentrations of Hispanic families, along with income data and the location of neighborhood convenience stores that serve the community. "I was amazed at the level of detail—including clickable business information, tons of demographic data on each census tract, and even roads and highways were labeled, says Lynda."

In a brief report prepared using the information provided by MarketScope, Hilchey outlined the opportunities and challenges of marketing to this particular niche. "He showed us that though Hispanic consumers were concentrated and small groceries serving the community were numerous, the median household income was very low which might make it difficult to establish a profitable enterprise making



MarketScope™ Map depicting the concentration of Hispanics in New York City.

queso fresco...Duncan suggested that we make appointments to tour the stores, and he showed us how to click on the symbols identifying the target stores to get the name of the store owners and their contact information. We followed up and visited stores in those Hispanic neighborhoods... MarketScope was really helpful," Lynda reports.

MarketScope is designed for Extension Educators, local planners and development professionals who want to conduct fairly sophisticated market analysis. It will offer a more advanced set of marketing tools, and access to data on demographic factors along with attitudinal and behavioral information on food preferences and purchases. The mapable data in MarketScope include consumer survey results from the Empire State Poll (conducted annually by Cornell Survey Research Institute) and several dozen databases on potential markets such as hospitals, nursing homes, public schools and universities.

Hilchey and Francis are working on advanced features allowing MarketScope subscribers to identify concentrations of niche markets (consumers of organic, gourmet and ethnic specialties, etc.) along with concentrations of consumers of specialty products from artisanal cheeses and value-added fruit preserves, to maple-sugar specialties and herbed sauerkraut. Such added capabilities require a bit more training in geographic information systems (GIS) as well as demographic analysis.

MarketScope will be available to Extension, planning departments, and economic development officials for free in 2007, and after a test period will be available by subscription. For further information, contact Duncan at 607-255-4413, dlh3@cornell.edu.

The co-authors are both Senior Extension Associates: Duncan is with the Community, Food and Agriculture Program in Cornell's Department of Development Sociology, and John is with Cornell Cooperative Extension/New York City.

SMALL FARMS PROGRAM UPDATE

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WANT MORE INFO?



For more information about Cornell's Small Farms Program and lots of other small farm topics, visit our website at www.smallfarms.cornell.edu. You can also sign up to receive our monthly email newsletter, Small Farms Update, by sending an email to Laura Harthan at lbh25@cornell.edu. Please provide your name, farm name, postal address, and county.

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