

Wind River

FARMERS MARKET

STREET
CLOSED

Reservation farmers market receives positive reception

Situation:

A farmers market was established on the Wind River Indian Reservation in 2010 to promote healthy living through sales of locally grown produce, agriculturally related products, and crafts.

A survey distributed across the reservation the summer of 2009 assessed perception of a farmers market. By the end of the summer, almost 400 responses had been collected, revealing a strong interest in a farmers market. A local market would provide easy access to nutritious, fresh fruits and vegetables helping to combat high rates of obesity and diabetes commonly found among tribal people. A farmers market would enable farmers, ranchers, and other vendors to sell locally produced goods near their home, simultaneously providing a way to supplement incomes and support the reservation's economy.

Farmers market committee members from local communities were recruited to serve as an advisory group for the market's establishment. Four out of the five committee members participated in the farmers market manager training in March 2010 as a result of funds received through a Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education grant. This training provided how to develop and support a successful market.

To reach many residents on the reservation, farmers markets were conducted on a rotating basis in Arapahoe, Ethete, and Fort Washakie. Rotating the market location made it possible for each community to have three market days during the primary growing/harvest season. The market averaged eight to 10 vendors per day. Wide varieties of products were sold, including vegetables, local fruit, jams and jellies, baked goods, and Native American crafts.

The Ethete and Fort Washakie markets brought in roughly 30 to 50 customers, and the Arapahoe market had about 15 to 20 customers. The Wind River extension office had a booth where free samples and recipes of snacks made from the market's produce were handed out. This encouraged community members to think of ways to use the products, such as making salsa, coleslaw, and grilled zucchini slices.

Impacts:

There appears to be a greater understanding of the purpose of the farmers market amongst tribal members. Many vendors and consumers commented on the success of the market and are inquiring about selling or buying goods during this year's market.

Throughout the market season, CES noted a number of customers returning week after week to seek out local products they had purchased the prior week. The market has also increased awareness about varying ways to promote healthy lifestyles. For instance, the extension educator was approached by Tribal Health and Indian Health Services to offer programs to their clientele on the benefits of growing and selling locally.

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Wyoming

