



February 6, 2020

**New Mexico Food & Farms Day
Celebrating Community Food Systems and Ending Hunger
Local Food and Farm to School Awards**

New Mexico Food & Farms Day celebrates the efforts of individuals, communities, organizations, and agencies in creating a thriving local food, farming and ranching economy, while at the same time emphasizing that everyone in the state should have access to fresh, local, healthy, and nutritional food.

Farm to School is a nationwide movement that encourages the connection between local food producers and schools by getting more fresh local produce into school settings and by providing educational opportunities such as school gardens, cooking lessons and farm field trips. Farm to School empowers children and their families to make informed food choices, which contributes to greater health for individuals and communities.

**Heart of the Land Award
for Outstanding Leadership in Farming and Ranching**

**Honoring Dorothy Bitsilly
Navajo Nation**

Dorothy Bitsilly, now 91 years old, was born and raised on the Navajo reservation. As a farmer, leader and role model she has been dedicated, and strongly motivated in her leadership in the Tohatchi community for many years.

Her efforts have been instrumental in strengthening the health of her community through her work as the president for the Tohatchi Chapter Farm Board. The Tohatchi Farm Board was awarded funds for a farming water well on a 938 acre farmland in the Tohatchi community. In 2013 the New Mexico State Legislature approved funds for this water well project and was successfully awarded \$600,000 from the New Mexico State Capital Outlay fund and the Navajo Nation. This project is a first ever water well project of its kind on the Navajo Nation. The project is now in its final stage of completion and its expected to be fully operational in the spring of 2020.



Dorothy is also a retired 30 year Bureau of Indian Affairs Education liaison for Navajo Nation youth. She has served as the Vice-President of the Fort Defiance Navajo Nation Council on Aging, and a Navajo Nation representative to the New Mexico Aging Advisory Policy group.

Seeding the Future Award for Best Farm To School Practices

Zuni Public School District

Joy Bobelu, Mark Archuleta Sr. and Mark Archuleta Jr. accepting the Award Zuni Pueblo

The Zuni greenhouse, part of the Zuni Public School District, is better known as the Lucha Greenhouse. It was renovated a couple of years ago and provides growing space for fresh spinach, cilantro, lettuce, kale, radishes, zucchini, melons, cherry tomatoes, and beets in the updated facility that is temperature controlled. The produce is served in the school cafeterias and the greenhouse provides a classroom for students to learn about conventional and traditional gardening.



The greenhouse is moving in the direction of aquaponics, which will involve fish to assist in higher crop yields which will supply the cafeterias. A partnership with the Santa Fe Community College has enabled the district to show students from Twin Buttes Cyber Academy, Zuni High School, and Shiwi Ts'anna Elementary the basics of this alternative way of growing nutritious and colorful vegetables.

Mrs. Joy Bobelu is the Food Services Supervisor at Zuni Public Schools.

Mr Mark Archuleta is the Support Services Director at Zuni Public Schools. He helped coordinate the reconstruction of the Lucha Greenhouse and currently oversees Food Services

www.ZPSD.org

New Mexico Grown Award Celebrating Best Practices in School Nutrition

Gadsden Independent School District Student Nutrition Program Adele Balesh and Antonio Carrasco accepting the Award

Dona Aña County and Southern Otero County



Gadsden Independent School District is one of the largest school districts in New Mexico with a student enrollment of approximately 13,300. Within the District, two nations, three states and four counties come together. The Gadsden Independent School District covers an area of 1400 square miles and consists of twenty-four educational facilities and two administrative facilities, educating the children of southern Dona Aña County and Southern Otero County. The District's commitment to fresh local food is evident in the meals that they

serve year round, in the education that they do around nutrition, in their commitment to local farmers and to the farm to school movement.

Adele Balesh is the Field Compliance Coordinator and works to provide educational and nutritional information to their students about the products that the school district purchases from farmers.

Tony (Antonio) Carrasco is the Warehouse Supervisor who works closely with farmers in the area, such as La Semilla Community Farm and Anthony Youth Farm, to purchase produce that is used by the district.

www.gisd.k12.nm.us

Good Food for New Mexico Award Celebrating Farmers' Markets

Tucumcari Farmers' Market Phillip and Kathleen Box accepting the Award Quay County

Tucumcari Farmers Market serves a rural community of ranchers, farmers and small communities over an 80 mile radius. Its high desert environment supports many products with its long growing season, including chile peppers, okra, squash, tomatoes, melons, cucumbers and lettuce. Other offerings include locally-made goat milk products, grass-fed beef, fresh eggs, home baked goodies, crafts, and music.

A trip to the Tucumcari Farmers Market is a bit like a trip to a community fair - full of activity and good energy, vibrant with entertainment and festivities. The farmers market is managed by Sandy Groves, and serves as a community gathering place in Quay County, supporting economic vitality and healthy living for the region. They are open Tuesdays and Saturdays, from July - October and they accept Double-Up Food Bucks, WIC and Senior Nutrition Program payment.



Phillip and Kathleen Box sell products from their ranch at the Tucumcari Farmers' Market and are active members of the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union.

www.farmersmarketsnm.org/markets/tucumcari-farmers-market/

Sowing Change Award for Organizations Engaged in Creating Sustainable Food Systems

Agri-Cultura Network Helga Garza accepting the Award Bernalillo County



The Agri-Cultura Network, provides access to local produce to promote nutrition education and economic development through traditional and innovative agricultural practices, furthering environmental and community stewardship to strengthen the agrarian and cultural heritage of our land and its residents.

As a cooperative of nine family owned farms in the South Valley of Albuquerque and a network of 36 allied farms from Rio Grande urban and rural farming communities our wholesale business program aggregates a farm to market production. In addition, they support development of farm capacity while providing nutrition education and food access through a CSA community supported agricultural and community events, workshops and activities.

Helga Garza is the Executive Director of Agri-Cultura Network. Helga is inspired by justice, guided by her ancestral ceremonial agricultural calendar, engaging community through a holistic intergenerational approach in developing a sustainable food system.

www.agri-cultura.org