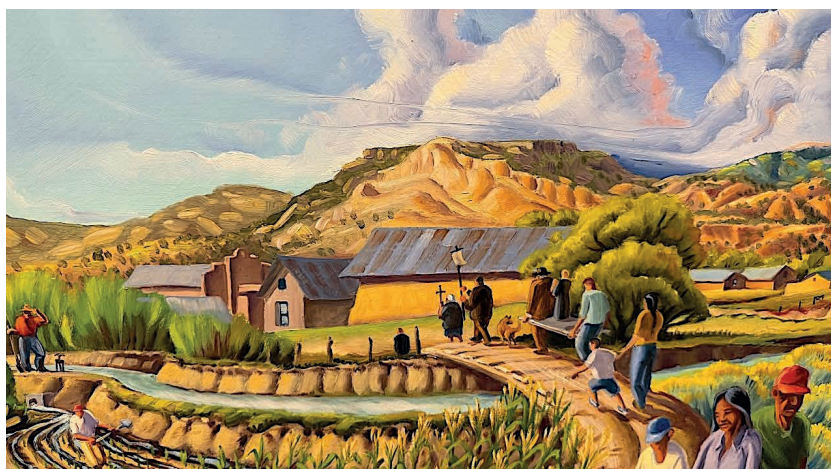


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GROWING A REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM

GREEN FIRE TIMES

News & Views from the Resilient Southwest



HONORING THE PAST, GROWING THE FUTURE

VOLUME 18 NUMBER 5

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COVER: ACEQUIA LANDSCAPE PAINTING FROM THE MILLICENT ROGERS MUSEUM, TAOS; MARIAN NARANJO (SANTA CLARA PUEBLO) AND ROSHI JOAN HALIFAX CONNECT AT THE OWÍNGEH TÁH PUEBLOS Y SEMILLAS GATHERING; A YOUNG SEED-SAVER FILLS A TRADITIONAL SEED POT; SANTA FE FARMERS' MARKET BOOTH. PHOTOS © SETH ROFFMAN

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Some people write off GFT as just an “environmental publication.” If you are a regular reader, you know that the environment is but one thread of a unique tapestry that highlights time-honored regional traditions of sustainability, while promoting culturally based economic development. You will also find articles on education, renewable energy, Indigenous solutions, growing a regional food system, and a lot more. You will find thought-provoking ideas, as well as passionate opinions. The wealth of article submissions we receive demonstrates the need for the unique platform that GFT provides.

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In order for GFT to build on its accomplishments and stay alive, we really need to upgrade our operations. We have reached out to potential funders and foundations, as well as advertisers. Mostly, we receive small donations from devoted readers. We have been operating on a shoestring for a long time—and it's not sustainable. As you're aware, this is an especially critical time for independent, nonprofit, community-centered journalism.



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Top: Value-added product from Three Sisters Kitchen; Melanie Margarita Kirby, Paula García and Addelina Lucero at the Owíngéh Táh seed exchange; Acequia Day march; Moving Arts Española’s “El Agua Es Vida”; Bottom: crops grow among solar panels; Taos rancher Erminio Martínez; Indigenous seed and food-crop presentation; Taos student prepares salad; Santa Fe Farmers’ Market booth; dry Río Grande riverbed

What Is the Future of Agricultural Water in New Mexico?

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY CATHY DAY



Elephant Butte reservoir with high water line visible

The headlines have been grabbing our attention especially urgently this year: “Bone-dry bosque,” Another summer of dry rivers,” “Concerns grow as water levels at Elephant Butte continue to fall.” For the agricultural community, which uses 80 percent of New Mexico’s fresh water, these indicators are deeply concerning.

Record-low snowpack and early snowmelt in the Colorado and New Mexico mountains that feed the Río Grande have created especially dry conditions in the Middle Río Grande and in the Elephant Butte Irrigation districts. As of Aug. 11, much of the northern part of the state was categorized as under extreme drought conditions, with a few areas listed in exceptional drought.

When combined with the knowledge that key aquifers are in serious decline and that the southern Río Grande in New Mexico must reduce its groundwater depletion by 18,200 acre-feet each year, the picture for agriculture looks distressing.

There is no denying that farmers and ranchers will face some hard decisions in coming years. As they compete with growing urban and industrial water users, among others, they will also be facing decreasing water supplies. The evidence has become clear over the past few decades that water from snow will continue to decline in coming years. And this water, termed “snow water equivalent,” is vital to the recharge of our aquifers and the flow of our rivers.

The state of New Mexico has taken steps to identify the path forward. The 50-year water action plan lays out the key water statistics and a road map toward planning for our state’s water future. Integral to the planning are Regional Water Security Planning councils that will engage in detailing the water needs and solutions for different areas of the state.

However, the key factor in ensuring that these challenges are met in a way that supports farming and ranching is how closely the agricultural community becomes involved in the conversation. From approaches like regenerative agriculture that build soil health and increase soil’s water holding capacity to shifts in techniques and crop choices, agriculture has been busy laying the groundwork for solutions.

FARMING CAN MITIGATE DROUGHT

For example, by building 1 percent richer soil—increasing organic matter by adding cover crops, manure, compost, and the like—farmers can increase

Regional Water Security Planning Councils will detail the water needs and solutions for different areas of the state.



Dry Río Grande between Las Cruces and Anthony

soil’s water holding capacity by nearly 3,000 gallons per acre in the top six inches of soil.

This increase is an average, and organic matter does more to improve the water holding capacity of sandy soils than of loamy soils. However, as any organic farmer knows, increased organic matter offers a wide range of benefits to improve soil health, no matter the soil type.

And in a drought year, having more water-holding capacity in the soil, along with having soils protected by living roots below and living plants above makes a great deal of difference in keeping more water on the land. Farmers can obtain funding to improve soil organic matter through the state’s Healthy Soil Program.

Using heat guns to measure temperatures, cooperative extension agents have noted the difference in heat between bare soils and soils with cover crops. Bare soils can get as hot as 140 degrees Fahrenheit. Such temperatures kill the soil organisms that help plants to thrive and rapidly dry up the water in the upper reaches of the soil. Keeping soils shaded with crops or cover crops can keep soils even cooler than surrounding air temperatures, as the crops transpire water that helps to cool the area around them. That helps ensure that soils keep their healthy ecosystems from year to year, but it can also help reduce the overall water-waste losses from the soil.

The picture for agriculture looks distressing.



*Sunset over alfalfa and pecan fields north of Las Cruces, NM
Pecan trees flooded at sunset near Las Cruces*

MEETING DROUGHT HEAD-ON

In a year like 2026, though, many are without sufficient water to maintain even the crops they typically grow, let alone cover crops. Moreover, the settling of the years-long dispute with Texas over water south of Elephant Butte Dam means that the state is obligated to retire some water rights in southern New Mexico.

Given these conditions, fallowing some land becomes a necessity. And we at Farm to Table want to ensure that farmers are an integral part of the conversation about what that will look like. As the main water users, and as growers who put food on our tables every



*Pecan distributor in southern New Mexico
Center pivot system in Roosevelt County, NM*

Another potential piece of the puzzle may lie in incorporating specifically desert-adapted crops with the water that remains. Just as the development of the Kernza market has been invigorating perennial grain alternatives in the Midwest, there are prospects for the development of processing, storage and markets for desert crops like mesquite flour, agave products, prickly pear and its value-added products, chia seed, jojoba, and many more. Organizations like Native Seed Search in Arizona are demonstrating the possibilities.



Farmer Jeremy Gathings of Gathings Gardens pulls up a handful of the rich soil with high organic matter that he's built on his farm.

New Mexico has a challenging water future in front of it. But it also has deep traditions and a diversity of communities who care deeply about the state's welfare in the coming years. Ensuring the inclusion of the voices of those closest to the land will be key to building the best possible future. ■

day, our farmers deserve a clear voice in determining the path forward for water use in the state. The New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council's Water Policy Statement lays out key principles for water use.

Beyond water conservation measures like improving soil organic matter and keeping soils shaded with crops or cover crops, farmers will need to discuss new paths forward. Part of the conversation may be around alternatives to water-hungry crops like alfalfa and pecans—crops whose final destination is often out of state either through direct export or through the export of dairy products.

Farmers seeking to improve water conservation more directly may be able to seek funding through the New Mexico Agricultural Water Resilience Program.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HEARING FROM FARMERS

Whichever direction farmers choose, however, what's key is that their voices be part of the discussion about our water future. They know the land from many years in close relationship with it. Many of New Mexico's farmers are part of the state's earliest communities, stretching back thousands of years. Embedded in those decades and centuries of kinship with the land is a wisdom that comes from long experience of change.

NEW MEXICO LEGISLATIVE WINS FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

BY PAM ROY

In the 2026 legislative session, the New Mexico Legislature made key appropriations to maintain and expand policies to bolster the New Mexico food and farming system.

New Mexico's local food and agriculture businesses are stronger than ever and continue to grow. This is because of the long-term vision of farmers, ranchers, organizations, businesses, agencies, policymakers and the Office of the Governor, who have been working collectively for more than a decade to expand business opportunities for farmers, ranchers and food entrepreneurs while engaging schools, senior centers, early daycare centers, food banks and grocery stores to buy local.



*Jeremy, Solace and children from Gathings Gardens with Kiera McCabe at the 2026 New Mexico Legislature.
Photo: Cathy Day*

Key to stability and long-term expansion are evolving significant relationships and partnerships to coordinate market opportunities, helping buyers understand producers' needs and vice versa, and building the supply chain to support agricultural production, storage and distribution.

We are very fortunate in New Mexico to have a legislature and the Office of the Governor who care about supporting, in a balanced way, New Mexico's food system through the lens of economic growth, while focusing on investments in institutional nutrition programs such as schools and senior centers.

Through a highly coordinated effort over years, these bodies of government, alongside many New Mexico organizations focused on food, agriculture, water and conservation, are committed to investing more resources than ever to benefit food security and economic growth in our rural, tribal and underserved areas of the state.

At the same time, New Mexico's precious water resources are at the center of every discussion and decision in our homes, tribal and town hall meetings and at the state Legislature. Many farmers and ranchers are in dire need of water for their food, fiber and animal production. Many of these farms and ranches are the lifeline, and holders of the cultural integrity of our rural and tribal communities.

It's a world of contrasts when the majority of the food we eat in New Mexico (about 90 percent) comes from far away, including other countries. At the same time, we are committed to expanding, for years to come, our own New Mexico food system benefiting our own farmers, ranchers and food entrepreneurs. By doing so, we keep every dollar in our state. It's a win-win when we support in-state food production for New Mexico market local opportunities. You can find more information about the progress of these programs In New Mexico's 2025 Food Charter Report at www.nmfoodpolicy.org.

We are committed to expanding, for years to come, our own New Mexico food system.

Through the coordinated advocacy of the New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council's many members and partners, committed New Mexico legislators and the Office of the Governor, the 2026 New Mexico Legislature provided an expanded investment in New Mexico's food system. Here is a partial list of programs and funding that focused on the intersections of food and nutrition programs across generations of participants in New Mexico, agricultural producers, and water and natural resource conservation and enhancements.

- 1. **Double Up Food Bucks Expansion (SNAP), \$1 million** for SNAP recipients to buy local at farmers' markets and other approved retail outlets. These funds are focused on a protein pilot program.
- 2. **Regional Farm to Food Banks Program, \$2,000,000** to stand up a statewide program (closed by the federal administration) that connects New Mexico farmers and ranchers, food banks and pantries who want to buy New Mexico produced foods for people who are food insecure.
- 3. **Approved Supplier Program, \$430,000** to provide food safety training for farmers, ranchers and food hubs and coordinate business opportunities with institutional buyers like schools and senior centers.
- 4. **New Mexico Grown and raised food for senior meal programs, \$1,500,000.**
- 5. **Healthy Food Financing Program, \$2,000,000** to provide grants to food hubs, retail grocers in rural and underserved communities and farmers to enhance business opportunities.
- 6. **WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Programs, \$1,000,000** helping to reach those who are nutritionally at risk in communities that don't have farmers' markets.
- 7. **Health Councils, \$4 million.**
- 8. **Student nutrition, \$42,201,000 (Healthy Universal School Meals)** to the Public Education Department's Student Success and Wellness Bureau.
- 9. **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education, \$2,500,000.**
- 10. **Farmers and ranchers' soil and water conservation training program, \$1,000,000.**
- 11. **Farmers and ranchers water efficiency grant program, \$10,000,000** to the New Mexico State University Water Resilience Research Institute (WRRI) that are grants for farmers and ranchers to increase water efficiency in their production practices.
- 12. **Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund, \$4,345,000** to the New Mexico Department of Agriculture, **water protection program** of the New Mexico Environment Department **\$1,936,100**, and **conservation services program** of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish **\$4,348,340**.
- 13. **Acequia repairs and improvements, \$5,000,000. SB 193 passed**, which will double the funding for the Acequia and Community Ditch Infrastructure Fund (ACDIF) from \$2.5 to \$5 million per year.
- 14. **Water Trust Fund, \$100,000,000.**

There's additional funding for acequia and land grant education, bovine reproductive trichinosis eradication, \$5,100,000; veterinary education and retention, \$1,500,000; and support for New Mexico State University's meat-processing facility, \$3,000,000.

We are fortunate to have New Mexico organizations and agencies (such as Agriculture, Public Education, Aging and Long-Term Services, Early Childhood Education and Care, and Health Departments, and the Health Care Authority) willing to take on more by expanding programs, investing in more staff, outreach, and direct funds to farmer, ranchers, schools, senior centers, food banks, and support programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program's (SNAP) Double Up Food Bucks at farmers' markets and grocery stores. With the downsizing of many food and nutrition programs, especially

Many of these farms and ranches are the lifeline, and holders of the cultural integrity of our rural and tribal communities.

SNAP for those who are food insecure, New Mexico's state investment in these local food, agriculture, conservation and water-efficiency programs are more beneficial than ever before. ■



Pam Roy is the founder and policy director of Farm to Table.
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Farm to Table’s New Mexico Farmer Innovation Program

BY MAYA MARTÍNEZ

Expanding Support for Small-Scale, Urban, Rural and Tribal Producers

Farm to Table’s New Mexico Farmer Innovation Program (NMFIP) is continuing to strengthen the state’s local food systems through outreach, education, technical assistance and financial support for small-scale farmers seeking to expand their operations and access new markets. The program helps producers navigate local, state and federal U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) resources, enroll in programs that improve long-term farm viability, and build greater supply-chain resiliency across the state.

NMFIP partners with organizations including the USDA, private funders, the New Mexico Farmers’ Marketing Association, the New Mexico Grown Coalition, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture and the Economic Development Department’s Healthy Food Financing Program.

A five-person Advisory Committee made up of farmers, food-safety professionals, farmers’ market managers and other agriculture stakeholders provided guidance and suggestions as we set up our micro-grants program, including input to the application, review criteria and assisting in decision-making.

URBAN MICRO-GRANT PROGRAM

Designed to support smaller food producers, NMFIP’s Urban Micro-Grant Program provides competitive awards of up to \$20,000 to projects that increase capacity and improve access to healthy food in urban markets, tribal communities and small towns.

- **2024:** Sixty-five applications were received from 18 counties, totaling \$1,165,743 in requested funding. Fourteen farms from nine counties received a total of \$102,778.
- **2025:** Seventy-two micro-grant applications were received from 15 counties, with a total request of \$1,209,245. NMFIP awarded 12 beneficiaries from nine counties a total of \$100,454.
- **2026:** Our last Urban Micro Grant cycle received 44 applications from 13 counties, totaling \$655,224 in requests. Fourteen applicants from nine counties were chosen to receive a total of \$138,729.

2026 URBAN MICRO-GRANT RECIPIENTS

High Maintenance NM LLC — Socorro

The funding will make possible the expansion of a market garden from one-quarter of an acre to one acre. Project activities include upgrading a 2-inch water line, installing frost-free plumbing, and implementing drip irrigation across standardized production blocks. Funds will also support essential hand tools for a two-person operation. The garden will continue to use no-till, compost-based soil-building and water-conserving practices.

Sunshine Farms — Aztec

The funding will help make possible restoration of a historic heirloom orchard established in the 1940s. The orchard produces pesticide-free fruit for the community.



Activities include planting new apple trees, purchasing an agricultural sprayer for kaolin clay and dormant oil applications, and acquiring orchard ladders, harvest bags, picking poles and fruit boxes.

Williams Family Farm — Farmington

The farm is the region’s only winter

tomato producer that uses organic practices. Grant funds will support construction of a third winter greenhouse, enabling the farm to supply all San Juan County schools and daycares through the New Mexico Grown program.

Mandy’s Special Farm — Albuquerque

Mandy’s Farm, a nonprofit, operates New Mexico’s only farm-based apprenticeship designed for individuals with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities. The AgrAbility Apprenticeship Program trains participants in regenerative agriculture, permaculture, soil remediation, composting, companion planting and innovative water-conservation techniques. The project strengthens the next generation of climate-resilient farmers while protecting the Río Grande and Pajarito Acequia through sustainable land-management practices.

Ground Stone Farm — Santa Fe County

The funding will support the rebuilding and upgrading of the farm’s wash-and-pack station to support safe, efficient, year-round produce handling—especially during winter months. Improvements include a new walk-in cooler, a metal building with frost-free plumbing, upgraded drainage, and food-safe work surfaces. These upgrades will increase production capacity, improve workflow efficiency, and expand access to fresh, locally grown food for Santa Fe residents.



Caminante Farms — Española

The funding will help preserve and revitalize heritage peach varieties that have adapted to the region over generations. Aging trees, frost damage, wind exposure and lack of cold storage threaten the orchard’s viability. The project will graft scions from ancient trees onto hardy dwarf rootstock, establish windbreak hedgerows and convert an outbuilding into a CoolBot-equipped walk-in cooler. These investments protect irreplaceable genetic diversity while strengthening long-term food security and economic resilience.



Zamin Greens LLC — Las Cruces

Activities include installing drip irrigation, building raised beds, adding compost and mulch and purchasing essential tools. The project will reduce seasonal production gaps and increase the availability of fresh vegetables for Las Cruces residents.

Chispas Farm — Albuquerque

The farm will construct a second walk-in cooler adjacent to its wash/pack station. The new cooler will improve harvest efficiency, allow temperature-specific storage, and strengthen Albuquerque’s local food economy.



El Tros Farm — Taos

The funding will help expand production capacity and construction of an on-site wash-and-pack station to supply the Talpa Farmers Market and partner with Sin Fronteras for food distribution. Project activities include purchasing seeds, soil, tools and season-extension supplies, and implementing soil-health practices such as cover cropping, composting and no-till management.

Planta Fe — Santa Fe

Funding will make possible the installation of an outdoor walk-in cooler on an insulated base to increase storage capacity, especially during November to March, when local produce is scarce. This infrastructure will help supply healthy food to urban communities in Santa Fe and Albuquerque.

Nova Market Garden LLC — Aztec

The funding will make possible installation of a water-filtration system to bring acequia

water into compliance with food-safety water standards, enabling the farm to expand participation in the New Mexico Grown program. The project includes installing a pump and pressure tank, establishing a four-stage filtration system (media sand, 200-mesh screen, UV and magnetic conditioning), and conducting regular water-quality testing.



Bluffs Farm, LLC — Farmington
This farm was founded in 2025 by a mother-son team. The funded project will bring a remodeled greenhouse and two new hoophouses into production. The funds will support season-extension materials, frost covers and harvest containers, enabling the farm to increase access to fresh, local produce.

Bethel Boer LLC — Portales
The funding supports conversion of part of a retired milk barn into a refrigerated cold room, certified vegetable preparation area, warehouse and remodeled restroom. These upgrades are the first phase of a long-term, controlled-environment agriculture facility. The project will expand year-round vegetable production for eastern New Mexico, where child food-insecurity rates reach 28 percent.

People’s Garden — Truth or Consequences
The People Growing Together project will train 10 teenagers (ages 15–19) in sustainable growing practices. A master gardener will provide hands-on horticultural training, and students will receive tools to keep upon completion. Graduates will be eligible for part-time employment in the organization’s greenhouse and raised-bed facilities, strengthening the local agricultural workforce.

RURAL AND TRIBAL MICRO-GRANT AWARDS

Additional private funding in 2025 enabled NMFIP to begin supporting tribal and rural farmers, laying the groundwork for expanded grant cycles in 2026 and 2027. These competitive, one-time grants support short-term projects that advance regenerative agriculture, water and energy conservation, and climate change mitigation. In the summer of 2025, FTT awarded one grant to Southwest Organizing Project’s (SWOP) Grow the Future program at Polk Middle School for its Youth Farming Internship/Farmer Training.

In January, FTT opened up the first cycle of rural/tribal micro-grants to award \$53,000. We received 41 applications with a total of \$847,309 requested. The beneficiaries are in five counties across New Mexico.

2026 RURAL/TRIBAL GRANT RECIPIENTS

Arroyo Runs Through It — Stanley
This high-desert demonstration farm is installing a greywater irrigation system, edible wind-breaks and perennial food systems to conserve water and reduce erosion. The project will divert approximately 5,000 gallons of household greywater annually into food production and culminate in a hands-on workshop for community members.

Llano Seco Land and Livestock LLC — La Loma



This regenerative sheep operation is purchasing mobile corrals to reduce animal stress, improve halal and USDA meat quality, and expand targeted grazing on leased lands lacking infrastructure. The project strengthens grassland restoration and supports culturally important meat production.

Star Mountain Sanctuary — Peñasco
This small farm is expanding organic vegetable and pasture-raised egg production using no-till methods, onsite composting, drip irrigation and low tunnels. The project will triple vegetable bed space, grow a flock of 60 heritage hens, and model climate-resilient agriculture



in a high-altitude, water-limited region.

Bee Sezi Farms — Shiprock
This Navajo Nation farm is implementing regenerative practices across 18 fields, including soil testing, crop rotation, cover crops and composting. The project will track soil health improvements, increase yields, and host a public field day to encourage adoption of sustainable farming practices.



Emergence Group — Crownpoint
This Diné-led nonprofit is developing the Eastern Agency Producers’ Network to increase local food production in communities where

over 76 percent of residents experience food insecurity. The project provides technical and financial support to growers and teaches climate-smart practices such as rainwater harvesting, mulching, composting and no-till growing.

Brazos View Farms — Los Ojos
This rural farm is expanding hydroponic production and constructing a climate-battery mini-greenhouse to extend the growing season. The project increases access to fresh produce in an underserved community and builds long-term resilience to drought.

NMFIP opened up an additional \$53,000 in funding in the summer of 2026. These grants will be awarded this fall. A final rural/tribal micro-grant cycle will award \$60,000.

These efforts reflect Farm to Table’s ongoing commitment to supporting New Mexico’s farmers, strengthening local food economies, and expanding access to healthy, culturally relevant food across urban, rural and tribal communities.



Farm to Table is currently seeking funding for the continuation of the program. If you know of a funder, foundation or individual who may be interested in helping this program thrive, please contact Maya Martinez, NMFIP director, at maya@farmtotablenm.org . ■

Southwest Organizing Project, Grow the Future program Polk Middle School, Youth Farming Internship Farmer Training program. Photo: Maya Martinez)

2026 NEW MEXICO FOOD AND FARM AWARDS

Presented by the New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council and Farm-to-Table NM

2026 FOOD FOR NEW MEXICO AWARD – CELEBRATING FARMERS’ MARKETS

Farmers & Crafts Market of Las Cruces – Doña Ana County

[HTTPS://WWW.FARMERSANDCRAFTSMARKETOFLASCRUCES.COM](https://www.farmersandcraftsmarketoflascruces.com)



The nonprofit Farmers & Crafts Market of Las Cruces provides a community gathering place for local farmers, producers and crafters to market and sell their products directly to the consumer. The market addresses the community’s need for fresh food and provides a family-friendly venue that promotes relationships between producers and customers.

It also enhances the community’s quality of life by providing education, connections to local resources, and by ensuring access to fresh food for lower-income clientele.

GROWING THE FUTURE AWARD FOR NEW OR YOUNG FARMERS AND RANCHERS

Skoden Farm LLC – Bloomfield, San Juan County

[HTTPS://WWW.SKODENFARM.ORG](https://www.skodenfarm.org)



Skoden Farm is a Diné woman-owned operation based in Shiprock, on the Navajo Nation. At Fort Lewis College, founder Kiera McCabe, inspired by her family’s legacy, discovered a passion for agriculture. Working with Bidii Baby Foods LLC, she learned to farm on tribal land. McCabe now serves as a dedicated steward of traditional food heritage.

With a focus on blue corn and white corn, Skoden Farm cultivates traditional Diné ingredients. Its harvest is transformed into a signature product line, Skoden Snacks—Indigenous superfood snacks designed for culturally relevant, on-the-go nourishment.

A deep commitment to sustainable practices and local sourcing drives McCabe’s work. She is passionately committed to inspiring Native American youth to embrace farming in order to ensure that this vital tradition is carried forward for future generations. “Skoden Farm shares the power of Indigenous foods with the world while honoring its roots,” McCabe says.

Celebrating Food, Farming, Land Stewardship and Hunger Initiatives Across New Mexico

HEART OF THE LAND AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP IN FARMING AND RANCHING

Gathings Gardens – Bloomfield, San Juan County

<https://www.gathingsgardens.com>



Gathings Gardens is a small, family-run farm that grows fresh, seasonal produce using sustainable, community-centered practices. The enterprise is committed to improving food access in the region by keeping produce local, supporting healthy eating, and building relationships with organizations that serve children and families. The farm provides high-quality vegetables and herbs to community partners and schools through the New Mexico Grown Program and by direct distribution.

LIVING LAND AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP IN LAND STEWARDSHIP

Running M Farms & Ranches, LLC – Melrose, Curry County

[HTTPS://RUNNINGMEFARMS.COM](https://runningmfarms.com)

Running M Farms & Ranches is a family-owned and -operated enterprise on the Llano Estacado of eastern New Mexico that is rooted in faith and heritage. In early 2025, the farm’s mission expanded to family lands in the forested mountain meadows of the San Pedro Mountains in northern New Mexico.



Guided by the four pillars of healthy soils, healthy plants, healthy animals and healthy people, Running M applies regenerative agricultural techniques and holistic management, practicing the principles of soil

health and the rules of adaptive stewardship that harmonize with natural ecosystem processes. Through biomimicry and adaptive grazing, the farm rotates livestock across landscapes to build soil structure, improve plant diversity, increase water infiltration, and support resilient wildlife habitat.

Dorper and New Mexico Dahl sheep are raised on Running M, and the family plans to expand into a diverse, multi-species grazing system that honors the land for generations to come.

SOWING CHANGE AWARD FOR ORGANIZATIONS ENGAGED IN CREATING SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

La Semilla Food Center – Anthony, Doña Ana County

[HTTPS://LASEMILLAFOODCENTER.ORG](https://lasemillafoodcenter.org)



Guided by wisdom gleaned from the Chihuahuan Desert and the framework of agroecology, La Semilla Food Center brings resources to the regional food movement by tending soil, plants and people in Southern New Mexico and the greater Paso del Norte region.

The organization leads six multifaceted, frontline, land-based, systems-shifting intergenerational programs that provide small-farmer training while uplifting regional cultural foodways and economic viability. It also offers four fellowships that provide pathways for community members to help shape the food system.

La Semilla’s community- and school-based education programs collaborate with three school districts and several federally qualified health clinics to lead the Food is Medicine Produce Prescription Program and Farm-to-School programming, with over 35 schools and 150 teachers. In addition to its education, technical assistance and market-access components, the organization recently launched a community-controlled Paso del Norte Food and Farm Fund.

SOWING CHANGE AWARD FOR ORGANIZATIONS ENGAGED IN CREATING SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

New Mexico Agrarian Commons – Santa Fe and Doña Ana Counties

[HTTPS://WWW.NMHEALTHYSOIL.ORG/LAND-ACCESS/](https://www.nmhealthysoil.org/land-access/)



The New Mexico Agrarian Commons was founded in 2023 to create land access and equitable opportunities for next-generation and underserved farmers. Based on an innovative model of shared land ownership developed by the Agrarian Trust, the Agrarian Commons is holding land to provide long-term, affordable and secure lease tenure for regenerative agriculture.

Beyond conserving farmland, New Mexico Agrarian Commons intertwines food production with social and environmental justice, community wellbeing and ecological stewardship. López Legacy Farms is the Commons’ first project. It is bringing together farmers, birth-workers, and land stewards committed to ecological restoration and community resilience. ■

ROOTS & RESILIENCE STATEWIDE CONFERENCE

Strengthening NM Farms, Food & Communities

DECEMBER 1–3, 2026

INDIAN PUEBLO CULTURAL CENTER, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

Farm to Table and the New Mexico Farmer Innovation Program (NMFIP) invite agricultural leaders, organizations, farmers, ranchers and community partners to participate in our upcoming statewide conference, *Roots & Resilience: Strengthening New Mexico Farms, Food & Communities*. The conference is designed to strengthen connections across New Mexico’s food and agricultural sectors. Farmers, ranchers, food system advocates, educators, policymakers and industry leaders will collaborate to develop a stronger, more resilient local food system.

Farmers and ranchers—this conference is for you! We want your voice to shape conversations and lead discussions. The sessions will help you plug into opportunities that benefit agricultural communities throughout New Mexico. The three-day event will feature a diverse lineup of plenaries and workshop-style sessions.

The sessions will focus on key areas of interest, such as:

- Assuring the future of New Mexico’s agricultural water
 - Accessing resources (USDA, State, NM’s Approved Supplier Program)
 - Farmer-led sessions on indoor growing, regenerative farming, benefits and challenges of certification (organic, certified naturally grown and others), Integrated Pest Management, tribal land challenges and solutions
 - Peer-to-peer farmer discussions
 - Building out your business (grant writing and farm business planning)
 - Advocating for better food and agriculture policy (improving policies for land and capital access for beginning farmers, collaborating to improve county and city policies)

The conference is designed to help participants build meaningful partnerships, access valuable resources and exchange practical knowledge that strengthens New Mexico agriculture.

The long-term vision for Roots & Resilience is for every participant, particularly farmers and ranchers, to leave with actionable strategies and meaningful connections that support their work. Organizers hope attendees will gain practical tools to increase production capacity, establish valuable partnerships, discover innovative approaches to sustainability, and access expanded market opportunities and resources.

“Our goal is to create a collaborative space where farmers, ranchers and food system leaders can learn from one another, build relationships, and identify solutions that support thriving agricultural communities.”
– Maya Martínez, NMFIP program director



Build meaningful partnerships, access valuable resources and exchange practical knowledge.

Farm to Table and NMFIP emphasize that broad participation is essential to ensuring the event reflects the diversity, expertise and strengths of New Mexico's agricultural and food systems. To enable broad attendance, scholarships will be available for farmers and ranchers.

Registration will be live in early October. You can keep tabs on upcoming announcements about scholarships and conference registration by signing up for Farm to Table's newsletter at <https://farmtotablenm.ourpowerbase.net/farm-to-table-news>.

If you or your organization would like to sponsor a portion of the conference, reach out to Farm to Table's Executive Director, Cathy Day at cathy@farmtotablenm.org. ■



Strengthening New Mexico Farms, Food & Communities

**December 1–3, 2026
Indian Pueblo Cultural Center**

**Hosted by Farm to Table's
New Mexico Farmer Innovation Program**

You are invited! Join farmers, ranchers, and food system leaders from across New Mexico to connect, collaborate, and build a stronger, more resilient local food system.

**Find out more at
www.farmtotablenm.org/roots-and-resilience-conference/**

**Farm
to Table**



Top to bottom: Caminante Farm; cows at Nizoni Farms; Ramel Farm (photos: Maya Martínez); Mary Ben of Bidii Baby Foods (photo: Cathy Day); Gatherings Gardens (photo: Edith Martínez)

Taking Local Food Further

SFFMI Partners to Bring Fresh, Local Food to Rural New Mexico

BY BEVIN CARNES

A partnership between the Santa Fe Farmers' Market Institute (SFFMI) and the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDH) is bringing locally grown food to rural communities, tribal communities, senior centers and WIC (Women, Infants and Children) families across New Mexico. In the process, the program is creating new markets for local farmers and keeping more food dollars in the state.

This partnership between the NMDH and the SFFMI began three years ago, when I first started with the NMDoH's Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. I wondered, "How could this program get food to areas of our state that don't have a farmers' market?" When I mapped out where our farmers' markets, WIC clinics, food pantries and senior centers were located, I saw a big gap. I realized most of our food sources were concentrated in the central part of the state. We were missing rural communities and needed to start serving those places.

At that point, I started working with David Sundberg, SFFMI's program development director. We came up with the idea of providing produce bags to those areas. Last year, I started working with Golden Spread, a food pantry in Clayton serving Union and Harding counties. That's a huge area where there is very little access to fresh produce, and we decided, "Hey, let's do some bulk produce delivery here." From there, the program just kept growing into other small communities throughout New Mexico.

Farmers and food hubs around the state heard about what we were doing and asked how they could create food boxes too. This collaboration really made me think beyond Santa Fe and Albuquerque. It made me ask, "How can we go further?" What started as a pilot has grown far beyond what we expected.

Our WIC clinics now order food boxes each season, so families receive fresh local produce regularly. If we can just get that produce into their hands, it may change some things for them. That's the hope—that they understand the value of local produce, how nutritious it is, and discover foods they may never have tried before.

One of the things I asked David was, "Do you think our farmers would grow watermelon for us? Do you think they'll grow corn? Those are the things people want." David talked to the farmers and got them to grow those crops specifically for us. Now those distributions go out to senior centers, tribal communities and WIC clinics.

To me, it's about meeting people where they are instead of expecting them to come to us.

HOW THE PARTNERSHIP WORKS

The NMDoH Farmers' Market Nutrition Program has been around for more than 27 years. We still receive federal funding, but it only covers about 5,000 participants, and that's not enough for New Mexico. We have more than 67,000 seniors enrolled through Aging and Long-Term Care Services, so we had to start thinking outside the box.

There are only two or three of us at the DoH covering the entire state, so having the Farmers' Market Institute helping with outreach has made a huge difference. The way we pay farmers for bulk purchases or any of the food bags we distribute is, David orders the produce from the farmers. Then I get an invoice of what we're purchasing and run the transaction directly through the SFFMI. They automatically pay the farmers. Since the Mobile Market began, David has also been assisting us in signing up seniors. He gives them the application, talks to them about the program, how it works, what benefits they're going to get and what they can buy. It has been a great collaboration.

IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITIES

Participants who pick up produce from Golden Spread Food Pantry expect it every month. When it's not produce season, they're asking, "When do we get our fresh produce?" It's really neat to sit

We've grown from serving about 5,000 seniors to more than 40,000 people.

with people, hand them the produce and explain what everything is. People tell us they've seen the difference between store-bought and fresh produce. They'll say, "I loved the cabbage. I loved the microgreens." Or, "This produce has really lasted us a long time. It tastes great and we just love it." It's wonderful to hear that because people don't always tell you when something is making a difference.

We've heard similar feedback from tribal senior centers, where people are also excited to see fresh produce being dropped off. The WIC clinics tell us families are really enjoying the produce too.

In the majority of the places where we are doing food boxes, there's maybe one small grocery store, family owned, in the area. And that's about it. We just did a huge distribution in Hillsboro, New Mexico. It's a town of about 130 people. Where do they get their produce unless they're growing it themselves? We went out there, provided fresh produce, and nobody knew what our program was. They were all amazed. We even made a huge salad for everyone to taste, and they could taste the difference.

We've grown from serving about 5,000 seniors to more than 40,000 people. That includes food boxes, food bags, community events and individual benefits. The more people we can serve, the better. I'm trying to expand the food box program into more communities across New Mexico, especially more senior centers and tribal communities. Now it's just about getting the word out.

When you see the faces of the people receiving these food boxes, it's amazing. Some of them start to cry because they haven't had fresh produce in a while. Once they see that honey, it's like gold to them.

To me, it's about meeting people where they are instead of expecting them to come to us. Sometimes people feel overlooked. We show them we're there for them. We want to serve them. We'll be there for you; we'll take that produce to you. ■

Bevin Carnes is a communication specialist for the Santa Fe Farmers' Market Institute.



Mushrooms. Santa Fe Farmers' Market photos © Seth Roffman



FOOD IS MEDICINE

BUILDING HEALTH THROUGH LOCAL FOOD AND COMMUNITY

BY JASMINE MEYER, MPH

Food is fundamental to health. Yet for many New Mexicans, especially those living in rural and tribal communities or navigating pregnancy, early childhood and chronic health conditions, accessing fresh, nutritious food can be difficult.

Presbyterian Healthcare Services' Food is Medicine initiatives are working to change that by connecting health care, community organizations and New Mexico's local food system. The goal is not only to address nutrition security, but to build pathways that make healthy, locally produced food more accessible while strengthening the communities that grow, distribute and share it.

Connecting Families with Fresh, Local Food

One example is Northern and Southern Roots, an initiative designed to address nutrition security among at-risk perinatal people and children. Participants can be referred through health-care providers, community-based partners and Medicaid, and receive local produce and staple foods at no cost for 16 weeks.

Move beyond the idea that improving nutrition is simply a matter of telling people what they should eat.

Community health workers lead distribution sites in Santa Fe, Española and Ruidoso, while community partners operate sites in Las Vegas and Dulce, helping expand access in rural and tribal communities. These relationships are especially important in a state where



The Santa Fe Farmers' Market – Del Sur

distance, transportation and limited food retail options can make accessing fresh food challenging. The work has also required adapting the food model to individual communities rather than assuming that one approach will work everywhere. Presbyterian has developed new food pathways in partnership with Black Mesa Farm and Delicious New Mexico for the Dulce site and with Desert Spoon Food Hub for the Ruidoso site.

Community health and a resilient local food system reinforce one another.



Transportation remains an important part of the equation. A food resource can only improve health if people can reach it, so the program is exploring transportation solutions and other ways to reduce barriers to accessing distribution sites.

Investing in New Mexico's Local Food System

Food is Medicine can create benefits that extend beyond the individual receiving a box of produce. Presbyterian collaborates with local food hubs and producers to source food boxes, including MoGro Mobile Grocery, Santa Fe Farmers' Market CSA, Black Mesa Farm and Desert Spoon Food Hub. Purchasing through these organizations helps connect health-focused food programs with the farmers, producers and food hubs already working to strengthen New Mexico's regional food economy.

This approach recognizes an important connection: Community health and a resilient local food system reinforce one another. When health-care organizations invest in locally grown food, those dollars can simultaneously support access to nutritious foods and the infrastructure needed to grow and distribute food within New Mexico.

Bringing Healthy Food Closer to Where People Live

Presbyterian's work also extends beyond food boxes. In Santa Fe, Presbyterian is helping increase access to fresh food on the city's Southside and helping connect vulnerable community members with the Santa Fe Farmers' Market Del Sur.



The Santa Fe Farmers' Market – Del Sur is a partnership with Presbyterian Santa Fe Medical Center.

Produce vouchers offer another bridge. Vouchers are provided to community members, including through partnerships with organizations such as The Food Depot, Chainbreaker Collective and Gerard's House. Participants in Diabetes ReCHARGE classes can also receive vouchers, connecting nutrition education with the ability to purchase fresh food. Employee wellness vouchers and other eligible vouchers can also be redeemed at the Mobile Market at St. Michael's, another partnership designed to bring healthy food into places where people already live, work and gather.

Together, these efforts move beyond the idea that improving nutrition is simply a matter of telling people what they should eat. Access matters. Transportation matters. Affordability matters. Culture and geography matter. And the strength of the local food system matters.

Growing the Next Chapter

Presbyterian is continuing to develop additional community-supported agriculture (CSA) programming, creating more opportunities to connect New Mexicans with locally produced food. The emerging Food is Medicine model is ultimately about building connections between patients and food, health care providers and community health workers, local producers and food hubs, and communities and the resources that already exist within them.

For New Mexico, where agricultural traditions run deep, but geography and economic circumstances can create significant barriers to healthy food, those connections are particularly valuable.

Food can nourish an individual, but investments in local food access can do something larger. They can strengthen families, support farmers and food producers, reinforce regional food systems, and help communities build healthier futures from the ground up. ■

Jasmine Meyer, MPH, is Presbyterian Healthcare Services' manager of Strategy and Operations, Presbyterian Community Health.

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Celebrating Local Food Heroes

From the New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association

There is no local food without our farmers and ranchers. That's why they have been at the heart of everything the New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association has been doing since 1994. You can meet some of the state's finest farmers and ranchers—from Roswell to Dixon, and Villanueva to Silver City—in *Cultivating Connections*, NMFMA's video series that showcases stories of food, farms and families. During this time, when food insecurity is ever more present, these farmers and markets accept Double Up Food Bucks, the statewide SNAP



incentive program that makes healthy eating with local fruits and vegetables more accessible. Use the QR code below, or go FARMERSMARKETSNM.ORG/CULTIVATE/ to see the most recent episodes and subscribe to the channel to see the latest videos as they're released.

Tesoros del Valle Farmers' Market, Villanueva

Jason González, a small farmer and founder of Tesoros del Valle Farmers' Market, discusses the market's success in Villanueva, a food desert with the nearest grocery store an hour-and-a-half away. Jason envisions growing the farming community by inspiring young people to farm and increasing food crop production.



Río Lucero Farms, Taos

Discover Río Lucero Farms, a regenerative organic farm in Taos, where Emma Patterson and her family grow fresh, local produce for the Taos Farmers' Market. Follow the journey from soil health and sustainable farming to harvest, wash-and-pack, and hear from customers who love buying local, organic vegetables.

Graves Farm & Garden, Roswell

The Graves family, a multi-generation New Mexico farming family from the Pecos Valley,



explains how their trusted family name and nearly 100 years on the land have shaped their Roswell farm stand—from selling watermelons in the yard to running a beloved store and pumpkin patch.



B Street Market, Mountainair

Ann McCloud was inspired to resurrect Mountainair's only grocery store—B Street Market—by her love of gardening and a belief that food is medicine. The store uses fresh local ingredients to provide prepared meals that help people in the community eat better.



Gila River Ranch, Gila

Wendell Han, owner of Gila River Ranch, discusses the importance of farmers' markets for his business. He emphasizes the quality of his meat, sourced locally and free from additives, and the environmental benefits over imported meats. ■



Investing in New Mexico's Food Future

BY JAYME CHESTER

Across New Mexico, locally owned grocery stores, farms, food manufacturers, processors, distributors and food hubs are doing far more than feeding their communities—they are creating jobs, expanding economic opportunity and building a more resilient food system.

Through the New Mexico Economic Development Department's Food, Hunger and Agriculture (FHA) Program, the state is making strategic investments to strengthen every link of the local food supply chain. At the center of this work is the Healthy Food Financing Fund (HFFF), a state-funded grant program that helps food and agricultural businesses develop the infrastructure they need to grow while improving access to healthy food in underserved communities.

Unlike many programs that focus solely on hunger relief or agriculture, HFFF recognizes that food security and economic development are deeply connected. A stronger local food economy means more New Mexico businesses can process, store, transport, market and sell food produced in our state—keeping more dollars circulating locally while creating lasting opportunities for entrepreneurs, producers and workers alike. The program supports investments ranging from commercial kitchens and cold storage to grocery stores, distribution equipment, value-added food production and climate-smart agricultural infrastructure.

The following business profiles showcase a handful of the remarkable entrepreneurs and organizations that have received HFFF awards. While each story is unique, together they demonstrate the power of targeted public investment. These projects are helping expand food access, strengthen local supply chains, preserve rural businesses, and ensure that more New Mexicans can grow, process and purchase food produced close to home.

Behind every grant is more than a piece of equipment or a renovated building. It represents a long-term investment in New Mexico's communities, economy and food future—one business, one community and one success story at a time. ■

Jayne Chester is with the NMEDD's Food, Hunger and Agriculture program. She is the department's Food Value Chain Coordination Representative.

NM BUSINESSES BENEFIT FROM NMED'S HEALTHY FOOD FINANCING FUND

BY FROM THE NEW MEXICO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

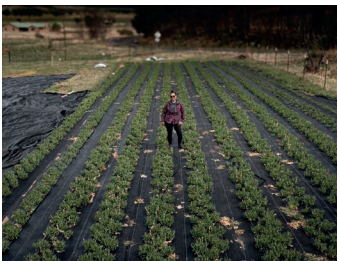
Across New Mexico, the New Mexico Economic Development Department's Healthy Food Financing Fund (HFFF) has been investing in the people growing food, strengthening local economies and making healthy food more accessible—one farm, one family, one community at a time. New Mexico feeding New Mexico. David Sundberg, director of the Santa Fe Farmers' Market Institute, sees the state's investment as something elemental: "People have ideas. That's the seed. And these microgrants are the compost—the soil, the water, the sunlight—that lets these seeds bloom and grow."



BIDII BABY FOODS—AZTEC

When Mary and Zach Ben became parents at the height of the pandemic, they faced a question countless New Mexico families know too well: How do you feed your child well when fresh, healthy food is 50 to 70 miles away? Their answer became Bidii Baby Foods—a family farm growing traditional heritage foods for the children and elders who need them most. What started as a way to feed their own child has grown into nourishment for an entire community—reaching schools, childcare centers and elder-care across the region. It is food rooted in culture, grown with intention.

When the HFFF helped Bidii Baby acquire a tractor to scale its harvest, Zach saw it as something bigger than equipment: "It wasn't a return of investment. It was a return of impact."



LE DOUX GRANGE—MORA

When most people picture a farm, they don't picture 7,400 feet of elevation, a growing season that doesn't start until June, and a single grower hauling produce, running the register, and making all the deliveries herself. But that's the reality for small farmers across New Mexico—and it's the kind of work Le Doux Grange is reimagining in Mora County.

Kristin Swoszowski-Tran grows organic produce and trials drought-tolerant grains built for a changing climate, all while farming in relationship with the land rather than against it. Her challenge was never the growing. It was everything that came after the harvest. That's where the local food system steps in. By connecting with the Los de Mora Cooperative and regional distribution partners, Kristin can do what she does best—and trust the rest to a network built to carry it. "Farmers really like to be farmers," she says "We don't necessarily like to be delivery drivers or cashiers. Anywhere along the food chain that you can have partners—it's really important."

When the HFFF helped fund equipment like a refrigerated trailer and a commercial dehydrator, it didn't just ease the workload—it kept more good food from going to waste and more of it reaching New Mexico tables.



BAMBOO FARMS—LAS VEGAS

In Las Vegas, N.M., two repurposed shipping containers hold something you might not expect: rows of vibrant microgreens growing year-round, feeding schools, seniors and families across the region. Jason González built Bamboo Farms from the ground up—drawing on memories of his grandfather's backyard garden, where rows of peppers, melons and garlic first taught him that growing food is its own kind of magic. Today he's part of a growing network of New Mexico producers working together to get fresh, local food where it's needed most. But scaling a small farm takes infrastructure most growers could never afford on their own. "Without that grant, there's no way. It was life-changing—it allowed me to pursue farming as a living."

When the HFFF helped Bamboo Farms convert those containers into a professional growing and processing operation, it didn't just expand one farm. It strengthened an entire regional food system—connecting producers, reaching institutions and keeping New Mexico-grown food on New Mexico tables.



LOS DE MORA CO-OP—MORA

In a small, mountain community where the nearest full grocery store can mean a long drive over winding roads, the Los de Mora Local Growers Cooperative is proof of what a town can build when it decides to feed itself. It started with five women, \$500 each, and a simple belief: that local food belongs in local hands. Today, the co-op is a working grocery store and a hub—a place where the valley's farmers can bring their harvest, and where neighbors can find fresh, healthy food grown just down the road.

For Carla Gómez, a board member and lifelong farmer, the work is about something deeper than groceries: “A small dream can become something big. People need to not be afraid to dream—or to follow their dreams.”

When the HFFF helped the co-op add commercial refrigeration, it did more than keep produce fresh—it gave local growers a reliable place to bring what they grow, and gave the community a steady source of the food they need.



A & M MEAT PROCESSING—ALAMOGORDO

When Michelle and Anthony Thomas started A&M Meat Processing in 2015, they were working out of a wood shed—cutting meat until 3 a.m., holding down full-time jobs, and pouring everything they had into a dream most banks wouldn’t touch. Today, A&M is a USDA-certified facility that has become a lifeline for ranchers across southern New Mexico—the missing link that lets them turn cattle into a business

their families can build on.

For generations, ranchers raised their herds and sent them off to a sale barn, never knowing where the beef went or who it fed. A&M changed that. With USDA certification, local ranchers can now sell directly to their communities—butcher boxes, subscriptions, farmers’ markets—keeping more value, and more food, close to home. For rancher Brannon Mobley, the change runs deeper than business: “Before, we’d send our cattle to the sale barn, and that was the end of the line. Now it feels like we’re doing something for our community.”

When the HFFF helped A&M complete the slaughter floor needed for USDA certification, it didn’t just finish a building. It opened the door to opportunity for an entire network of ranching families.



OGALALA COMMONS AND MTA FARMS—CLOVIS AND PORTALES

Across northeastern New Mexico, getting fresh food from a farmer’s field to a school cafeteria or a senior center isn’t simple. The distances are long, the communities are small, and a single farmer can’t do it all alone. That’s the gap Ogalala Commons set out to close. Led by Berlin Ervin, Ogalala Commons is the connective tissue of the regional food system—

purchasing from local producers, aggregating their harvests, and delivering fresh food to the schools, institutions and elders who need it. They handle the logistics so farmers can stay focused on growing.

For Berlin, this work is rooted in something simple and deeply New Mexican: “New Mexico-grown means New Mexicans feeding New Mexicans. Food is what brings people around the table—being able to feed each other.”

When the HFFF helped fund a cold storage facility, it gave the region’s producers something they’d never had: a reliable place to store and aggregate their harvest before it moves out into the community. One investment, strengthening an entire network of farmers.



LITTLE STORE #2—CHAPARRAL

In Chaparral—a community of 30,000 where the nearest supermarket is a 15-to-20-minute drive across the Texas state line—one family store decided its neighbors deserved fresh food closer to home. Gilberto Cruz comes from a grocery family. After attending a food summit in Albuquerque, he saw the role a corner store could play in something bigger: the local food chain.

So, he made fresh, locally sourced produce the heart of his store—and his community responded. Produce is now his number one department. “We’re kind of the last part

of the chain before it gets to the consumer. It’s important to have access to fresh food, especially locally sourced—not only are you eating healthier, you’re supporting families that rely on local farming.”

When the HFFF helped Little Store #2 add a 16-foot refrigerated produce case, a walk-in cooler and a fresh produce display, it did more than upgrade equipment—it doubled the store’s capacity to stock local food and made it easier for families to eat fresh without driving for miles.



SEED AND BLOOM—NEW MEXICO

In a men’s prison in New Mexico, something unexpected is taking root: fresh greens rising in a greenhouse, and people rediscovering who they are through the simple act of growing food. Seed & Bloom, founded by Gunjan Koul, is a horticulture and culinary program where incarcerated students grow real, nourishing food—and grow something in themselves along the way.

The produce they raise doesn’t stay behind the walls. Through the Santa Fe Farmers’ Market Institute, it travels out to families across northern New Mexico who need it most. For program manager Paul Mallory, the magic is in something deceptively simple: “The plants don’t care who’s growing them. They need water, they need nutrients—they don’t care that they’re being grown inside a prison. Their past, their history doesn’t matter. If we give them that nourishment, they will grow.”

When the HFFF invested in expanded growing space, it helped this program reach further—turning a greenhouse into a place where food, dignity and second chances all have room to flourish.



SANTA FE FARMERS’ MARKET INSTITUTE—SANTA FE

In a state where the average food item travels 1,400 miles before it reaches your plate, the Santa Fe Farmers’ Market Institute is proving that the freshest, healthiest food can come from right down the road. Led by program director David Sundberg, the Institute supports northern New Mexico’s farmers and works to get their food to the people who need it most—not only the thousands

who visit the famous Santa Fe Farmers’ Market, but the families in low-income and low-access communities who can’t always get there. Through a mobile market and bulk food distribution, the Institute brought \$170,000 worth of local food to those communities in a single year.

When the HFFF invested in refrigeration and aggregation space, it gave the Institute what it needed to gather more local food and carry it farther—getting fresh, New Mexico-grown food to the neighborhoods that need it most, just hours after harvest.



THREE SISTERS KITCHEN —ALBUQUERQUE

Behind every product at a farmers’ market is a story of someone who took a risk. Three Sisters Kitchen in Albuquerque exists to make that risk a little less daunting. It’s a food business incubator—a commercial kitchen and a community where aspiring food entrepreneurs can test, refine and launch their ideas. For the first two years of a new business, the most uncertain and vulnerable stretch, Three Sisters Kitchen offers graduates of its training

program free access to a fully equipped manufacturing kitchen, so they can find out if their dream is viable before risking their own capital.

In founder Anzia Bennett’s words, the goal is simple: give people the space to “explore, experiment and determine the viability of their business”—and prevent unnecessary risk for the people who need that support most.

When the HFFF helped outfit that manufacturing kitchen, it did something that ripples outward: an investment in Three Sisters Kitchen becomes an investment in every food

business that gets its start there—more local products, more entrepreneurs, more of New Mexico’s food made by New Mexicans.



SANGRE DE CRISTO VALLEY MARKET—QUESTA
When the only grocery store in Questa closed in 2022, a town that had relied on it for generations was left with nowhere to buy food close to home. For Dominik Apodaca, that wasn’t something he could walk away from—his family had run the Sangre de Cristo Valley Market since the early 1960s. So he made a choice. Dominik left a successful career in the oil field and came home to buy back and reopen the family store. For

Dominik, reopening those doors meant everything: “Without a grocery store, how do people eat? There are people who can’t leave this community—they don’t have a vehicle, they’re too old, they’re too sick. To be able to provide and be there for the community, that’s everything to me.”

When the HFFF helped fund new refrigeration and a safer store, it didn’t just lower his costs and protect his products—it helped secure the future of a store that families across the valley depend on, one that now sources from more than 30 local vendors.



THE DIXON COOPERATIVE MARKET – DIXON
For nearly a decade, the town of Dixon had no grocery store. To buy food, residents drove out of the valley—and a community that had fed itself for 300 years found itself without a place to gather, shop, or sell what it grew. So Dixon built its own. The Dixon Co-op started with a handful of neighbors, a borrowed corner of the community library, and a belief that a small town deserves a place to buy fresh food close to home.

Today it’s a thriving grocery owned by 420 households—the biggest employer in town, and often a young person’s very first job. For general manager Clark Case, the work comes down to three things: “The best things we do: We support a local agricultural economy, we create community, and we provide really good food to the people who live here.”

When the HFFF helped fund a walk-in cooler and freezer and a safer loading area, it let the co-op stock more local produce, support more area farmers and serve a community that had already shown how much this place means to them—raising tens of thousands of dollars themselves to make it happen.



BRAZOS VIEW FARM—LOS OJOS
In far northern New Mexico, at 7,400 feet where the growing season doesn’t start until June, Joysree Aubrey looked at a family hay field and saw something her community was missing: a place to get fresh, healthy food without driving over an hour to find it. She taught herself to farm—chemical-free, in relationship with the land—and turned that field into Brazos View Farm. For years she sold from a small roadside tent, watching cars speed past. The food was there. What she lacked was a way to keep it, store it and offer it reliably. For Joysree, the work was always about more than produce: “Through all of these resources, one can build a sense of community, a sense of access to good health and a good lifestyle. It’s something you can’t put a price on.”

When the HFFF helped fund a walk-in cooler and a safe staging area near the highway, it changed everything—turning a seasonal roadside stand into a consistent farm stand her neighbors can count on, week after week, including families using WIC and senior benefits.



THE MORA VALLEY LOCAL FOOD SUMMIT

A community gathering celebrating farmers, ranchers and food producers from across the Mora Valley took place on July 22. The Mora Valley Local Food Summit brought together growers, buyers and community partners to tour local agricultural businesses and strengthen relationships. The producers, community leaders, technical assistance providers and state partners share a commitment to strengthening the Mora Valley foodshed. They discussed strategies to build a stronger local food economy.

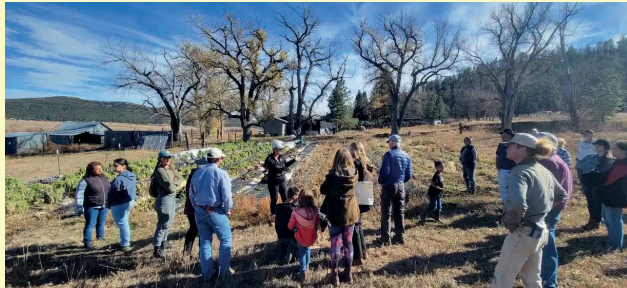


The gathering was hosted by Ogallala Commons, led locally by Berlin Ervin and Jason González. The Springfield, Colorado-based nonprofit works in an eight-state region centered over and extending west and east of the Ogallala Aquifer. The organization seeks to “inspire people, organizations and communities and serve them with educational programming that nurtures leadership, workforce development, stewardship of natural resources and advancement of sustainable food systems.”

The farm tour showcased the momentum happening across the valley. Attendees met at Hatch’s Event Center in Buena Vista. They were welcomed by Ogallala Commons director of operations, Berlin Ervin. Guided by Kristin Swoszowski-Tran, they toured Ledoux Grange, in Mora, a NMEDD Healthy Food Financing Fund awardee that has invested in local food infrastructure. Guided by Carla Gomez, they toured Los de Mora



Local Growers' Cooperative, another HFFF-supported project that is creating opportunities for local producers and consumers. They also toured the recently reopened Houser Raspberry Ranch, which is run by Phil Houser and Anita Moss in La Cueva. After a local foods lunch, catered by Hatcha's Café, they heard presentations by Jason González of Bamboo Farms and Ogallala Commons food hub coordinator, Serena Flynn.



Also attending were partners from the New Mexico Department of Health's WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture's Farm to Food Bank, the New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association and the Río Grande Community Development Corporation.

"Healthy food systems are built through both infrastructure and relationships. Investments in facilities, retail spaces and equipment matter—but it's collaboration, trust and a shared vision that help those investments create lasting impact," said Jayme Chester, New Mexico Economic Development Department's food value-chain coordinator. ■

TEPARY BEANS AT LEDOUX GRANGE: A BEAN BUILT FOR THE DESERT

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY KRISTIN SWOSZOWSKI-TRAN

Some of the most exciting crops here at Ledoux Grange, near Mora, New Mexico, are not necessarily the ones that demand the most water, fertilizer or attention. One of our most intriguing experiments began with a humble little bean that has spent thousands of years learning how to thrive in some of the harshest conditions on the continent.

This season, we are growing and trialing many kinds of rare tepary beans. Tepary beans (*Phaseolus acutifolius*) are an ancient crop of the Southwest, traditionally cultivated by Indigenous peoples in the Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts. Unlike many familiar garden beans, teparies evolved for heat, drought, intense sunlight and erratic rainfall. They are, in agricultural terms, wonderfully stubborn survivors. And that is precisely what makes them so interesting.



Tepary bean pods

A BEAN THAT UNDERSTANDS THE SOUTHWEST

Most of us have been taught to think about agriculture in terms of what a crop needs: water, nutrients, good soil and favorable temperatures. Tepary beans turn that conversation around.

What if we started with crops that already understand our climate?

Teparies can produce during periods of extreme heat, when many common beans struggle. Their drought tolerance makes them particularly well-suited to the Southwest, where water is increasingly precious and summer temperatures can push conventional crops to their limits. At Ledoux Grange, that matters. Growing in New Mexico means paying attention to the realities of our landscape. Water is not an abstract resource here. Every irrigation decision has consequences. The challenge is not simply to grow food, but to grow nutritious food while working within the ecological limits of our place. Tepary beans offer one promising piece of that puzzle.

Their cultivation represents an extraordinary body of place-based agricultural knowledge.

ANCIENT KNOWLEDGE, MODERN LESSONS

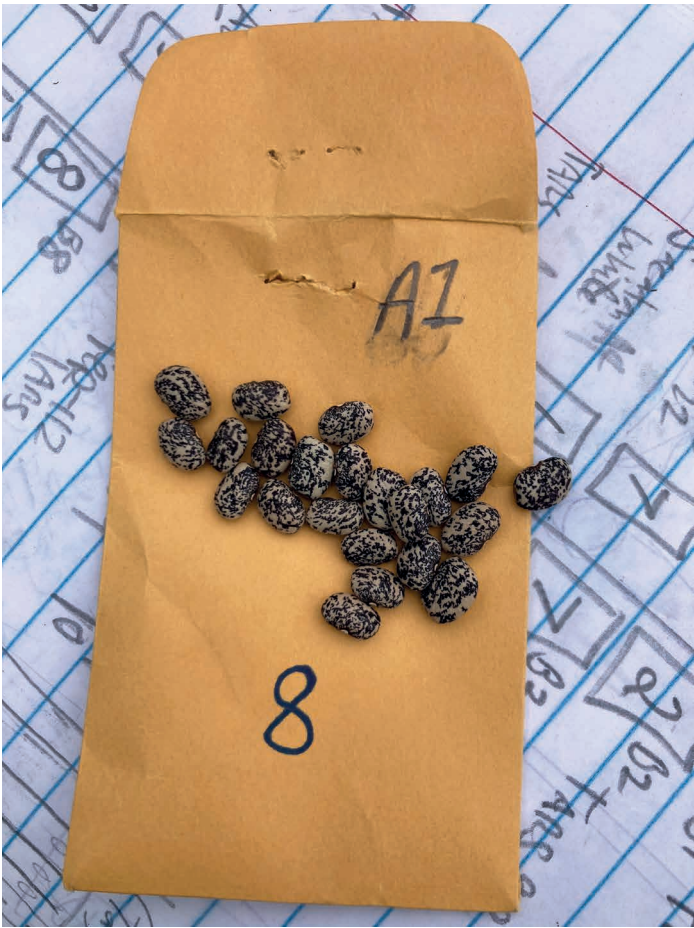
There is nothing particularly new about growing teparies. That is part of the point. For generations, Indigenous farmers across the Southwest selected and cultivated tepary beans because they could produce food under conditions that challenged many other crops. Their cultivation represents an extraordinary body of place-based agricultural knowledge developed through observation, experimentation and generations of relationship with the land. In an era of drought, heat, depleted soils and water scarcity, those old lessons suddenly look remarkably contemporary. We don't necessarily need to invent a new crop for a hotter, drier future. Some of the crops we need have been here all along.

Regenerative agriculture asks a larger set of questions.

GROWING DIFFERENTLY

For us, growing teparies is also an opportunity to think differently about productivity. Conventional agriculture often asks: How many pounds can we produce per acre? Regenerative agriculture asks a larger set of questions: How much water did we use? What happened to the soil? Did we increase biodiversity? Did we build resilience? Can this system continue producing food as conditions become more difficult?

*Crops that already understand
our climate*



Spotted tepary beans

A crop like tepary beans invites those questions. Because they are adapted to drought and heat, they have potential to fit into lower-input systems. Their ability to produce with limited water makes them particularly interesting as we experiment with climate-resilient agriculture. They may also have value beyond the human food system—as animal feed and as a cover crop.

But regenerative farming isn't about finding a magical crop and declaring victory. There is no universal recipe—not even on our own farm. Different soils, microclimates, water availability and



Hail covered drip-irrigated tepary bean research plot; bottom right, flowering tepary bean plant



management histories require different approaches. The question is always: Is this the right crop, in the right place, at the right time, for the right reason? For us, teparies are an experiment in answering that question.

MORE THAN A BEAN

There is something wonderfully satisfying about growing a crop that challenges our assumptions about what belongs in a garden or field. We tend to think of beans as familiar summer vegetables or the dried beans we use in soups and chili. Teparies are something different. Depending on the variety, their seeds can range from white and cream to brown, mottled or speckled. Once dried, they are valued for their nutritional profile and distinctive flavor.

I was lucky enough to experience tepary bean hummus for the first time at Owamni, Sean Sherman's celebrated restaurant in Minneapolis. Suffice to say, it was delicious!

But their real value may be larger than what happens on the dinner plate. A diverse agricultural system needs crops that handle different weather patterns, mature at different times, and respond differently to stress. In other words, resilience comes from diversity. And in the Southwest, that diversity increasingly needs to include crops capable of thriving with less water.

*Once dried, they are valued
for their nutritional profile
and distinctive flavor.*

GROWING TOGETHER

Our tepary bean trials are also part of something larger. We are members of the Southwest Grain Collaborative (SGC), a network connecting farmers, researchers, educators and others interested in developing a more resilient regional food system based on crops suited to the Southwest.

One of the people helping guide this work is Dr. Richard Pratt, whose research at New Mexico State University focuses on cropping systems and plant breeding. His work asks questions central to our own trials: Which crops and varieties can actually thrive here? Which can make efficient use of limited water? And which might provide both agricultural and ecological benefits?

Being part of this collaborative means that our fields become part of a larger conversation. We can grow different varieties, observe how they perform in our soils and climate, and share what we learn. Researchers bring data and breeding expertise; farmers bring practical knowledge about weather, soils, equipment, labor and what actually works on a working farm. That farmer-researcher relationship is important. Agricultural research shouldn't happen only in laboratories or on university plots. Sometimes the most useful information comes from trying something in a real field, with all the complications that real farming brings...like golf-ball-size hail.

THE FUTURE MAY LOOK LIKE THE PAST
Growing tepary beans here at 7,400 feet elevation is a small experiment, but it represents a much larger idea.

As farmers confront climate change, we often look toward technology: new irrigation systems, precision equipment, improved genetics, sensors and data. Those tools have an important role to play. But resilience may also come from looking backward—to crops and farming systems that evolved alongside the climates we are now struggling to navigate. Tepary beans remind us that adaptation doesn't always require creating something new. Sometimes it means remembering what already works.

We are still learning what these little desert beans can do on our land. Will they thrive? How much water will they ultimately require? How will they perform in our different soils? What will the harvest look like? Are there taller varieties that are easier to pick? Those are the questions that make farming interesting.

Regenerative agriculture isn't about having all the answers. It is about paying attention, experimenting, learning and adjusting. And sometimes, the teacher is a tiny bean that has



been surviving the desert for thousands of years. Maybe it has a few things left to teach us. ■

Kristin Swoszowski-Tran owns Ledoux Grange, an organic-certified, diversified produce and research farm (where yak are also raised) high in the mountains of Mora, New Mexico. She is a dedicated producer for local food and regenerative agriculture.

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Growing from the Seeds Planted by Community

Agri-Cultura Network and La Cosecha
Community Supported Agriculture

BY JULIANN SALINAS AND KAITLIN MURPHY

In 2008, people in Albuquerque's South Valley were concerned about their community's health. Research showed a rise in diet-related diseases in both children and adults. As a need to address this trend became apparent, the challenge became, "How do we create access to healthy, affordable local produce while reinforcing economic security for local farmers and ranchers?"

Agriculture across New Mexico was increasingly viewed as an unviable, unattractive profession. Generational farmers witnessed significant changes, due in part to gentrification, while their children and grandchildren were faced with the difficult choice between keeping up the family farm or pursuing other educational and career opportunities away from home.

Local food produced by the people, for the people



Fresh, local and on the move! 3,500 pounds of organically grown, New Mexico produce, locally raised frozen meat and ACN's value-added products were delivered to the Pueblo of Zuni.

Three local farming entities, Valle Encantado, La Placita Institute and Red Wolf Clan, were determined to change this narrative. They came together to form Agri-Cultura Network (ACN), a collaborative model that would aggregate and distribute local food produced by the people, for the people.

The early years were extremely challenging. Overcoming a learning curve while confronting policies at state, regional and federal levels that favored large, conventional farmers with commodity crops rather than small or mid-sized farms producing the viable food of

ACN became the first food hub in NM to receive Harmonized GAP certification, the highest standard of food-safety practice.

specialty crops —foreshadowed the work laid ahead. Regardless, ACN aggregated fresh food and distributed it to community members, becoming one of the first food hubs in the state.

La Cosecha Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) became the solution to help meet demand for accessing healthy food. By 2012, the CSA distributed to 25 households over a course of 20 weeks. Peak distribution maxed out at 600 pounds a week. The network’s income came from CSA participants. From the outset, the organization had to navigate administrative barriers to accept SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Program) benefits from the participants.



As production grew, so did the organization. In 2016, Helga García-Garza became co-director of Agri-Cultura Network and La Cosecha CSA. Having worked in every role with both organizations since 2011,

she says, “I truly believe that my time as a farmer for 20 years, followed by overseeing aggregation, quality control and distribution, gave me a unique bottom-up perspective, one that informed the policy work and our growth with real-work insight.”

Between 2016 and 2020, both organizations experienced significant growth. ACN and La Cosecha CSA attracted new funders, promoted community-based advocacy efforts, and expanded their farmer network to more than 50 farms across New Mexico. Concurrently, these efforts streamlined vendor processes, promoted Double-Up-Food-Bucks benefits, and set preferences for institutional buying for New Mexico-grown food.

The organizations raised over \$6 million in capital funding to expand operations to new properties and facilities.

This unique model garnered national attention. As a Robert Wood Johnson Fellowship recipient in 2018–2020, García-Garza oversaw the CSA’s expansion to 320 members. This growth pushed aggregation and distribution capacity to its limits while operating at the South Valley Economic Development Center. “We recognized that we needed to start exploring having our own production building,” García-Garza said, “but we were too busy meeting daily demands.”

The soon-to-open Raices Sagradas (Sacred Roots) Farm will demonstrate water capture, seed saving, soil building and native-plant-pollinator habitat creation.

Just when it seemed the organizations were getting the flow of things, the world shut down. “When pandemic lockdowns were put in place, everything changed overnight,”



AGN packagers, greenhouse production at the new Raices Sagradas Farm, frozen zucchini fries. Thanks to Veronica Griego of the NMDOH’s WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program, 125 fresh produce boxes (1,500 pounds) were delivered to the city of Hatch. Other boxes were headed to Fort Sumner.

The unique model garnered national attention.

García-Garza recalled. “While we had always cut our own path with little or no guidance, getting food to people across the state with few resources during a time of global uncertainty and fear was unprecedented. Our farmers—who, for the first time, were finally recognized as the “essential workers” they had always been—really stepped up. They provided daily updates on what produce or meat was available and worked with us on following the emerging guidelines for safe food handling. Unlike many businesses at the time, we were busier than ever.”

For the first time, our farmers were finally recognized as the “essential workers.”

Policy Advocacy

During that period, Agri-Cultura/La Cosecha continued to stress the importance of policy advocacy. “Real change comes from procurement policies that value local food production, support regenerative growing practices, and acknowledge historical biases, racism and power dynamics,” she emphasized. García-Garza brought this perspective to the New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council, where she was voted chair in 2020—the first Indigenous woman to hold the position. She served two consecutive terms.

As growth continued, in 2021, ACN became the first food hub in New Mexico to receive Harmonized GAP certification, the highest standard of food-safety practice available. By 2022, the organization launched its first value-added food line. In 2024, García-Garza was awarded the prestigious James Beard Foundation Leadership award for Food Security and Access, and the organizations raised over \$6 million in capital funding to expand operations to new properties and facilities.

With this financial support, in 2026, the organization purchased two properties in the South Valley, extending its food hub across three individual development campuses, all within a mile of each other along Isleta Boulevard. With this promising new future, each location will serve distinct purposes, provide jobs and expand access to healthy, organically grown food for the community.

The seeds of Raices Sagradas (Sacred Roots) Farm began to sprout in 2019. Located on Citation Street in the South Valley, this soon-to-open urban farm will produce locally and organically grown food, while demonstrating regenerative, Indigenous-based practices including water capture, seed saving, soil building and native plant pollinator habitat creation.

Located just up the road on Isleta Boulevard is the future site of the Raices Sagradas Nursery. Currently a 1.7-acre open lot, this nursery will undergo development in the next couple years to become an urban forestry and arborist training center.

Finally, there is the future site of the main campus—the food and eco-wellness hub, where ACN will continue to grow and develop local food production while building a strong workforce trained in green jobs. This facility will house the value-added production, aggregation and distribution programs. The dream for this space is to host community events and workshops, cooking classes, advocacy, policy work and more.

ACN and La Cosecha CSA staff and board of directors are both proud of and humbled by the tremendous growth of the community-based organizations. “Our success has been built on the self-determination of farmers and ranchers working together under a cooperative model with the investment of community-driven markets,” García-Garza said. ■



Juliann Salinas is La Cosecha CSA and Agri-Cultura Cooperative Network's director of grants and programs. She is also a co-founder of the New Mexico Bee Collective, an Albuquerque-based, women's beekeeping group. Kaitlin Murphy (Hopi-Navajo) is the education coordinator for La Cosecha CSA. For the past year, she has partnered with community schools to plant trees on campuses.

EXPERIENCE, RELATIONSHIPS AND A COMMITMENT TO LOCAL AGRICULTURE

For years, Agri-Cultura Network has been at the forefront of connecting New Mexico farmers and ranchers with families that need fresh, nutritious food the most. Every ACN box contributes to healthier communities across the state—including the Pueblos.

From sourcing and value-added production to distribution, ACN is demonstrating that a strong, locally built food system can deliver at scale while keeping dollars in the hands of New Mexico producers and circulating in the region's communities. Every ACN bottle or box represents local farmers, community partnerships, food-access programs, workforce development, and the belief that New Mexico's communities deserve food grown and processed close to home.

Introducing ACN's Frozen Zucchini Fries

By creating value-added products like frozen zucchini fries, ACN is helping reduce food waste, support New Mexico farmers and make local produce available year-round. The zucchini fries are made with fresh, locally grown zucchini. The washed, pre-cut fries can go straight from a freezer to your favorite recipe. They can be baked, air-fried, sautéed, or added to soups or casseroles for a quick meal.

LOCAL PRODUCE AGGREGATION FACILITY BEING BUILT IN BERNALILLO COUNTY

Something exciting is taking shape in Bernalillo County. A 5,600-square-foot local produce aggregation facility is being built through a partnership between Río Grande Community Development Corporation (RGCDC) and the county. The RGCDC team—especially Luís Nuñez—is building something special.

The facility is still under construction—so it's mostly walls, floors and a whole lot of potential. But in just a few months, the space will be washing, slicing & dicing and packing locally grown produce for distribution to schools, institutions and other local buyers. The facility will be maintained at approximately 39°F to support food safety and product quality, as produce moves through aggregation and processing.

This is the kind of infrastructure that can make a real difference in New Mexico's food system. Having a place where local produce can be aggregated, prepared and distributed at the scale that institutional buyers need, creates new opportunities for producers while making it easier for schools and other local institutions to buy New Mexico-grown food.

GREENLATINOS PARTNERS WITH YES HOUSING TO PLANT TREES IN ALBUQUERQUE

Seventy fruit and nut trees. One former industrial site. A neighborhood that will taste the difference for generations. On Arbor Day in April, GreenLatinos’ Urban Greening Initiative partnered with YES Housing and Mission ABQ to plant the trees at Aldea del Río in Albuquerque’s South Valley. It was one of the final milestones in transforming an old industrial site into a community where affordable housing, food systems and green infrastructure grow together.

“This is what environmental justice looks like on the ground,” said Carlos Matutes, environmental state director of GreenLatinos New Mexico. “Not just a policy paper, but shade over a playground, and apricots within walking distance.” Juan López from YES Housing said, “Partnering with GreenLatinos created so much opportunity for us to serve our community.”

The tree planting is one of four community-led projects that GreenLatinos is supporting across Albuquerque.



GreenLatinos’ tree planting projects are part of broader community initiatives focused on urban greening and climate resilience in Albuquerque.

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YOUTH, NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY: HEALING LAND AND COMMUNITY

BY JAVIER VIGIL

In the mountains and valleys of northern New Mexico, the relationship between people and the land has always been deeply connected. Our forests, rivers and acequia systems are not just landscapes, they are living systems that sustain biodiversity, culture and community. Today, one of the most important opportunities we have is reconnecting young people with these natural systems.

When children spend time in nature, something remarkable happens. They begin to notice the small details many adults overlook: the insects moving through the grass, the birds nesting along riverbanks, the wildflowers blooming along the acequia banks in spring. These observations are not just moments of curiosity—they are the beginning of ecological awareness.

Biodiversity refers to the variety of life in an ecosystem—plants, animals, insects, fungi and microorganisms—all working together to create balance. Healthy biodiversity strengthens ecosystems, making them more resilient to drought, disease and environmental change. But biodiversity is not protected by science alone—it is protected by people who care about the land.

This is where youth play a vital role.

When young people are given the chance to plant native species, restore riverbanks, maintain acequias, or participate in watershed stewardship, they begin to see themselves as caretakers rather than observers. They understand that their actions—

When young people are given the chance to participate, they begin to see themselves as caretakers rather than observers.

For young people especially, nature provides a sense of calm and grounding.



Javier Vigil and local youth working on an acequia

no matter how small—contribute to the health of the ecosystem around them.

In northern New Mexico, these connections are also deeply cultural. For generations, families have worked the land, tended water systems, and passed down knowledge about the seasons, soil and wildlife. When youth reconnect with these traditions, they are not only learning about biodiversity—they are rediscovering a sense of belonging.

Scientific research increasingly confirms what many communities have long understood: Spending time in nature has powerful effects on human wellbeing. Exposure to natural environments reduces stress, improves mental health and

strengthens emotional resilience. For young people especially, nature provides a sense of calm and grounding that is difficult to find in today's fast-paced, technology-driven world.

In many ways, biodiversity heals people just as much as people help protect biodiversity. When children spend time along a river, they learn that clean water matters. When they see pollinators moving through flowers, they understand the importance of protecting habitat. When they help plant trees or remove trash from a watershed, they feel the satisfaction of contributing to something larger than themselves. These experiences build stewardship. And stewardship builds future leaders.

Across northern New Mexico, programs that engage youth in outdoor education, watershed restoration and ecological learning are helping create a new generation of land stewards.

Whether through school programs, community initiatives or volunteer efforts, these opportunities give young people the chance to reconnect with the land in meaningful ways.

The impact extends far beyond the individual child. Youth who develop a relationship with nature often carry that respect into adulthood, influencing how communities manage land, water and wildlife for generations to come.

In a time when ecosystems around the world face increasing pressures, investing in youth and nature may be one of the most powerful conservation strategies we have. By guiding young people back to the rivers, forests and fields of our region, we are doing more than protecting biodiversity—we are nurturing the next generation of caretakers who will ensure that these landscapes continue to thrive. And in that process, the land heals us just as we work to heal the land. ■



Working in an acequia on a northern New Mexico ranch

Javier Vigil is president of Northern New Mexico Recreation & Outdoor Conservation Foundation's Backyard Biodiversity program. He works in partnership with local conservationists, farmers, scientists and biologists. He wishes to thank the Chama Peak Land Alliance.

NM ACEQUIA ASSOCIATION RENEWS EFFORT FOR DISASTER FUNDING AMID FLOODS, FIRES AND DROUGHT

New Mexico acequias won't survive the new normal of wildfires, floods and prolonged drought without a dedicated, easy-to-access funding stream that operates independently of state or federal disaster response systems. That's the conclusion New Mexico Acequia Association Executive Director Paula García reached following a series of legislative committee hearings in July. The interim Land Grant Committee convened budget experts and advocates to discuss how to craft legislation that would provide the historic irrigation canals with adequate funding to rebuild after increasingly common and damaging natural disasters.



In recent years, wildfires, floods and drought have weakened the statewide acequia network, causing tens of millions of dollars in damage each year and depriving irrigators of their livelihoods until they can pay to dig out sediment, replace a headgate or rebuild an embankment, García said.

But funding from state and federal disaster-response agencies has been difficult to access. Most disaster funding hinges on whether an official state or federal declaration has been declared, but sometimes disaster damage to acequias escapes the notice of state or federal leaders, García said. For example, last year, she noted, floods that damaged roughly 30 acequias near Chimayó and Ojo Caliente did not prompt a state disaster declaration. More recently, stewards of an acequia in the Jémez area are similarly trying to rebuild without state or federal funding following a flood that destroyed it this summer.

But even if state or federal leaders declare a disaster, the small, volunteer organizations overseeing the ditches often don't have the capacity to navigate layers of bureaucracy to unlock funding. And in most cases, acequias have to pay 25 percent of the costs or find a way to pay for repairs in full and then wait for slow-to-arrive government reimbursement. That leaves them increasingly vulnerable to disasters, García said, with nowhere to turn.

MOVING ARTS PRESENTS EL AGUA ES VIDA

In August, after months of rehearsals, Moving Arts Española's students, instructors and guest artists took the stage at the Lensic Performing Arts Center in Santa Fe for a sold-out performance that honored the culture and traditions of Northern New Mexico and celebrated the region's acequias. Mariachi Azteca welcomed the audience into the theater. The Moving Arts Band, mentored by Soledad García, provided music throughout the evening.

Under the direction of Moving Arts co-founder Roger Montoya, "El Agua Es Vida" wove together flamenco, ballet, traditional regional music, hip-hop and theatrical performances. The result was a vibrant showcase. Moving Arts alumni and ballet instructor, the reigning Miss Indian New Mexico, Than Povi Martinez, took the stage with an original piece created for her students. She also joined fellow instructor Gabriel Carrion-González for an impressive pas de deux, accompanied by world-renowned pianist Katya Grineva.

"The show was a powerful reminder of what is possible when young people are given the opportunity, mentorship and space to express themselves," Montoya said. "This performance was a celebration, not only of their talent, but of the families, teachers, artists and community members who make this work possible." For more information, visit: MOVINGARTSESPANOLA.ORG.



Top left: Paula García

Above: Acequia Day march at the state capitol during the 2026 Legislative session

Photos © Seth Roffman

Last year, House Bill 371 would have established a trust fund that generated \$5 million a year for acequias to rebuild after disasters. It passed the House of Representatives by a 63-2 vote but failed to pass the Senate Finance Committee.

García said she hopes the ongoing meetings with lawmakers and others in the months leading up to the session will produce legislation that "cracks the code" and finally dedicates adequate funding for acequias struggling for their survival. "We need to cultivate that political will to make it happen, and make the case about why our communities are important," she said. "We're a part of New Mexico, and our infrastructure needs are very unique and vital to our survival as land-based people."



Regional Agriculture News from Taos

BY MICAH ROSEBERRY

Agriculture, Implementation, Research & Education (A.I.R.E.)

The northern New Mexico regional food system is growing stronger, thanks to farmers and partners from northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. Together, they are helping strengthen this network and expand offerings to A.I.R.E.'s Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program and 800-meal-a-day USDA lunch program. The AIRE co-op refrigerated truck has been transporting peaches, sweet corn, zucchini, lettuce, cabbage and carrots from cooperative farms. Despite drought conditions, the goal of rebuilding our regional foodshed and reducing our carbon footprint is making progress.

Strengthening Organic Farms and the Communities They Feed

A.I.R.E.'s CSA, Taos Community Farms, is an aggregated CSA that supports local farmers by providing a reliable, sustainable market that guarantees additional weekly income in addition to the farmers' market and competitive wholesale restaurant sales. The CSA's membership funds educational opportunities for high school interns and builds direct relationships with farmers. Local heirloom melons, peaches, tomatoes and oyster mushrooms are delivered to the CSA from Freshies Farm in Dixon, New Mexico. Umami Gardens provides kale, lettuce, bok choy, carrots and eggplant. Fresh sprouts are cut on site by Veteran's Off Grid. Salad micro-greens come from Kaizen farms. Members pick up weekly and enjoy music at a pop-up happy-hour farm stand.



A.I.R.E. staff educator Auroura Thimmesch with CSA interns Theresa Valencia and AJ Martínez

rate with the UNM Culinary Art Program. The farm-to-school institutional project will move into the armory kitchen that is currently being remodeled, thanks to a \$350,000 capital outlay facilitated by state Sen. Bobby Gonzáles. Walk-in refrigeration and freezer storage will store local farm products and supplies for farm-to-school and farm-to-institution classes. UNM students will intern and participate in the production of meals.

This fall is the second semester of a prototype after-school dinner program, serving 50 students at Enos García Community School. A.I.R.E. is providing local organic meals that will be supported by the state's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

These local markets and programs are surviving and thriving.

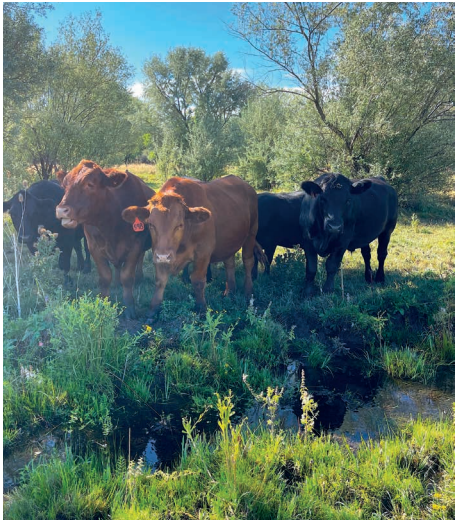
Northern New Mexico Stockman's Association member and sixth-generation rancher Erminio Martínez is weighing whether to liquidate his stock due to the drought. Robert Martínez, another sixth-generation rancher, says that the number of cow and calf pairs, reduced now due to hay prices and drought, will create beef shortages that we will all feel next year. Co-op enthusiasts are brainstorming

A.I.R.E.'s USDA school meal program cooks local organic meals for 400 students at Vista Grande High School, Taos Integrated School for the Arts and Taos International School. Students enjoy fresh sweet corn, snap peas, cherry tomatoes, baby carrots, calabacitas and sweet peppers. Javier Martínez, from Martínez Orchard in Chimayó, delivered 20 bushels of apples to start the school year off and will provide up to 100 more bushels in September and October. Martínez Orchard is at 50 percent production due to spring freezes and drought conditions.

AIRE's lunch program is expanding and plans to collabo-



Blue corn planted by K-5 students at the Enos García School community garden; Parr Field community garden; Pacheco meat; A.I.R.E.'s FarmLink truck



Javier Martínez unloads apples; students with young corn plants at Parr Field; beef cows; tomato; Taos student prepares fresh salad

These local markets and programs are surviving and thriving. They support our local economy, while providing good nutrition and healthy food for northern New Mexican families. The regenerative economy created by farmers, CSA members and farm internships, sustained by students who eat USDA school lunches made with local ingredients, is a viable collaborative approach to keeping our local agriculture strong and vital for the future. ■

Micah Roseberry has been farming in New Mexico since 1988. She is the director of the nonprofit A.I.R.E. (<https://airetaos.org>) and owner of the Farmhouse Café and Bakery in Taos, N.M.

TAOS NONPROFIT TCEDC FOUND LIABLE FOR OVER \$800,000 IN DAMAGES

A recent state court judgment against the nonprofit Taos County Economic Development Corporation (TCEDC) and its executive director, Mercedes Rodríguez, found the business incubator liable for over \$800,000 in damages. On the ninth day of the trial, after hearing 13 witnesses, a jury found TCEDC liable for all claims: negligent misrepresentation, conversion, negligence and breach of contract, and also found the defendants in violation of the Unfair Practices Act.

The six-person jury decided that TCEDC had wrongly spent a \$1.4-million New Mexico Food Security Grant that had been awarded by the Governor's Food, Farm and Hunger Initiative. TCEDC had jointly applied for the grant with A.I.R.E. (Agriculture, Implementation, Research and Education), a Taos nonprofit with a mission that is complementary to TCEDC's mission to strengthen the local food system. Under Rodríguez's leadership, TCEDC spent all of the grant on infrastructure and materials for a controversial Matanza meat processing facility that never materialized, despite five years of promises.

A.I.R.E. alleged that the grant proposal leveraged its track record of providing meals to food-insecure children. The grant's final report highlighted A.I.R.E.'s accomplishments, including harvesting 2,000 pounds of heirloom blue corn and providing school meals, despite the fact that none of the grant funds benefited those activities. The jury found TCEDC liable for negligent misrepresentation due to the discrepancy between the collaborative grant proposal and the report to the state of how the funds were actually spent.

In addition to working with local farms to supply its Community Supported Agriculture program, A.I.R.E. provides 800 local and organic USDA farm-to-school meals daily—160,000 annually—with preparation assisted by high school culinary interns at A.I.R.E.'s commissary kitchen. Across Taos County, A.I.R.E. maintains five high school gardens, six greenhouse structures and educational programs that reach 3,800 students each year. A.I.R.E.'s executive director, Micah Roseberry, also owns the Farmhouse Café and runs Amigos Locale, an event space and headquarters for A.I.R.E.'s CSA and school lunch programs.

A few years ago, TCEDC agreed to allow A.I.R.E. to prepare meals in TCEDC's commercial kitchen and establish an onsite wash-and-pack facility as part of the grant proposal. The building and its equipment turned out to be dangerous and in disrepair. A.I.R.E.'s counsel argued at trial that the "fridges were hot," the "ovens were cold" and the "walk-in freezers locked people inside." An A.I.R.E. worker testified that she became ill due to a serious gas leak and was locked in a walk-in freezer.

A.I.R.E. found another kitchen in which to prepare meals for Taos schoolchildren. Rodríguez refused to return AIRE's thousands of pounds of locally produced meat and produce, claiming unpaid rent was owed for the use of its facility. TCEDC also allowed the heirloom blue corn to mold, rendering it inedible. An editorial in *The Taos News* said, "Rodríguez will forever be known as the person who allowed thousands of pounds of local food to spoil," and called for the business incubator's board, which includes former and present city and county officials, to appoint new leadership.

Over a year ago, more than 50 people, including prominent ranchers and business owners, signed a petition asking that Rodríguez step down. Erminio Martínez, a long-time rancher and former TCEDC board member, was one of those who circulated the petition. Martínez was reportedly pleased by the recent civil court

verdict indicating that TCEDC was 100 percent responsible for the damages. "This was a major injury to the farmers, to the ranchers," he told *The Taos News*.

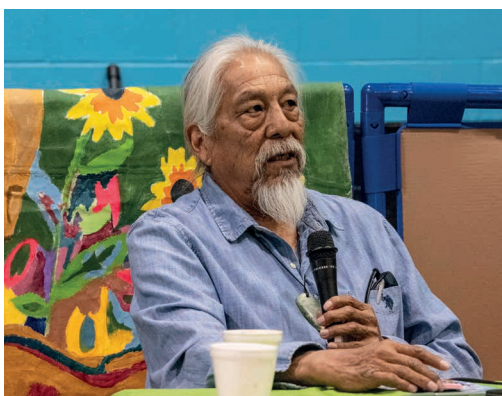
A statement released by TCEDC's board of directors after the trial said the organization "disagrees with the jury verdict and is analyzing its legal options." Weeks later, the defendants submitted a motion requesting a new trial.



Rancher and former TCEDC board member Erminio Martínez

Owíngēh Táh Pueblos y Semillas Gathering and Seed Exchange

An intercultural gathering (“Answering Ancestral Prayers”) took place at Santa Clara Pueblo in the spring. It was presented by the New Mexico Food & Seed Sovereignty Alliance, which includes Tewa Women United, the New Mexico Acequia Association, the Traditional Native American Farmers Association, Honor Our Pueblo Existence, Sol Feliz, Breath of My Heart Birthplace and other groups. The event brought together traditional farmers from Acequia and Pueblo communities to celebrate their agricultural heritage and share seeds. The day included a procession for a seed blessing ceremony, an exchange of native and heirloom seeds, a meal of traditional food and a dialogue.



Photos © Seth Roffman

EVERY SEED HAS A STORY: HONORING THE PAST, GROWING THE FUTURE

BY JESSICA SWAN
AND DON EMIGDIO BALLÓN

Every seed carries more than the promise of food. It holds the memory of a place, the knowledge of generations and the resilience of the people who have cared for it. Seeds are not inherited from institutions. They are entrusted from one generation to the next.

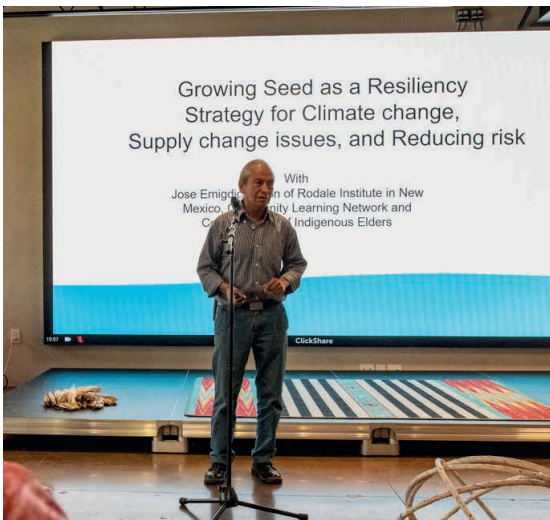
In the spring of 2026, farmers, seed keepers, educators, gardeners, youth and community leaders from across New Mexico came together at New Mexico Community Capital’s Learning Hub in Albuquerque for a community celebration and seed exchange. The event was supported by Rodale Institute through the USDA Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP). The gathering became an opportunity to share family histories, growing practices, traditional ecological knowledge, recipes, language and memories.

A screening of *Seed: The Untold Story* helped set the tone, reminding us that seeds are far more than agricultural commodities. They embody thousands of years of adaptation, culture and biodiversity. The gathering also renewed conversations about the Native American Seed Act, bipartisan legislation designed to help tribal communities protect traditional Native seeds and agricultural practices. The Act reflects many of the values at the heart of the gathering: seed sovereignty, Indigenous leadership, cultural preservation and our shared responsibility to protect agricultural knowledge for future generations.

The event included a remembrance of Gailey Morgan III of the Pueblo of Tesuque, who served his community as a Tribal Council member. For nearly 20 years, Gailey worked alongside Emigdio, learning and carrying forward knowledge about seeds, agriculture and stewardship. Their work together is a good example of how knowledge is passed through relationships, from elder to student, farmer to farmer and generation to generation.

A Living Seed House and Storytelling Space

That spirit of stewardship continues in partnership with New Mexico Community Capital and its Resilience Hub, where a Seed House and Storytelling Space is being established. It will serve as a place where community members can share heirloom varieties, document family histories, and preserve stories that make New Mexico’s agricultural traditions unique. An interactive map highlighting seasonal crops and growing regions will inform visitors about the remarkable diversity found across our state’s farms, acequias, pueblos and gardens. New Mexico’s agricultural identity has been



“Food and Seed Sovereignty – A Community Celebration and Seed Exchange” in Albuquerque, was sponsored by New Mexico Community Capital, Rodale Institute, West/Southwest’s Transition to Organic Program, and Es Qué Market.

Photos (top to bottom): Exchanges of Indigenous and heirloom seeds; Ballón with members of Gailey Morgan’s family and Tesuque Pueblo community members; Jared Hagood (r) of Lineage Seeds; Top: seed display; presentation by professor and landscape architect Susannah Abbey; Ballón’s presentation; NMCC program director Henry Jake Foreman welcomes community members, farmers and seed-keepers. Photos © Seth Roffman

shaped by many communities. Indigenous farmers, acequia communities, migrant growers and countless gardeners have contributed to the biodiversity that feeds us today.

Emigdio Ballón:

“Seeds teach abundance through reciprocity. In Bolivia, as a child, I learned this lesson when my grandfather placed seeds in my hand and taught me that if I cared for them, they would care for me. Seeds are meant to be cared for, grown and shared—but sharing must also honor where knowledge comes from and the people who have carried it.

“Preserving New Mexico’s agricultural legacy means protecting more than seeds. It means protecting the knowledge, language, relationships and traditions that allow them to flourish, while ensuring that the people who carry that knowledge are credited, respected and share in the benefits it creates. The recognition and economic value that our region’s agricultural communities have generated have not always been returned to the people and places from which they came.



“As climate change continues to challenge agriculture, locally adapted seeds and community knowledge are among our greatest resources. By protecting biodiversity, honoring Indigenous and community knowledge and strengthening relationships

between growers, we invest in healthier, more resilient food systems that are rooted in place.”

Every seed has a story. Through these partnerships, we hope future generations will inherit not only the seeds themselves, but also the wisdom, relationships and traditions that have kept them alive for centuries. ■

Don Emigdio Ballón (Quechua) was born in Cochabamba. He earned his B.A. in agriculture at Major Bolivian University of Saint Simon and his M.A. in plant genetics in Colombia. He has specialized in research on quinoa and amaranth. He was the farm director at Tesuque Pueblo for 18 years.

Jessica Swan, a lifelong New Mexican, and her husband, David, combine decades of involvement in regenerative agriculture, community advocacy and the culinary world to run Es Qué Market in Albuquerque. Jessica and Emigdio Ballón collaborate to strengthen seed stewardship and support community-led food systems in New Mexico.

Above: Gailey Morgan III and Jessica Swan, Washington, D.C. Climate Resilience Rally, 2023

Preserving Legacies: The Flower Path Pollinator/Water is Life Collaboration

Redefining resilience to build a more just and thriving future

BY MELANIE MARGARITA KIRBY

For many of us who have a desire to support and nurture our land-based lifeways, food sovereignty, biodiversity conservation and integrative cultural traditions, working with and in community requires not only motivation of community members, but in many cases, community-focused organizations for funding and resource support. Finding financial support can be challenging, especially in these changing times and climes. But through a creative network, and by nurturing relationships across sectors and specialties, the potential to manifest visionary efforts that benefit our biodiverse communities can come to fruition—though it can take many years.

We are excited to share a developing program, which began in 2022, and an update on its evolution as we work together to support the interrelationship of place, pollinators and people.

Manifesting visionary efforts that benefit our biodiverse communities can come to fruition.

A few years ago, GFT published an article about the launch of *The Flower Path* collective, which focused on encouraging cultural and ethical seed gathering and saving for pollinator and habitat regeneration in our climate crisis-impacted northern New Mexico landscapes. *The Flower Path* began with several Indigenous matriarchs, including myself, Addelina Lucero (Taos Pueblo), Beata Tsosie Peña (Santa Clara Pueblo) and Roxanne Swentzell (Santa Clara Pueblo). I was initially inspired through my lifelong



Pollinator and land stewardship advocacy mural designed by Yucca Bozzuto (Taos Pueblo), painted by Institute of American Indian Arts (LILA) students

work with bees. These women introduced me to broader concepts of food, water, land stewardship and the interconnected relationships among people, places, habitat and climate.

In 2022, I participated in the New Mexico Coalition to Enhance Working Lands Fellowship and received a Convening Community Collaborations seed grant. This was used to bring my fellow Indigenous matriarchs and me together to brainstorm on how we could manifest *The Flower Path* program. With a gracious donation from the Altman Family Foundation and an Environmental Cooperation North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action (NAPECA) grant through the Flowering Tree Permaculture Institute, *The Flower Path* created Nature's Toolkits, which have been shared at seed-exchange and pollinator events.

We are now in the process of establishing a larger initiative to create programming and community collaborations through what will be called *The Flower Path Conservancy*, with a mission to provide methodologies to support stewards of land, environment, seeds and pollinators through community-centered outreach, education, research and professional development. *The Flower Path Conservancy's* pillars include:

- Relationships—Research: Community-Based Living Laboratory
- Responsibility—Regeneration: Habitat & Stewardship
- Respect—Consilience: Inclusivity of Knowledges
- Reciprocity—Education & Outreach

In recognition that we, as New Mexicans, are a part of a cultural mosaic of interweaving heritages and diverse landscapes, we are extending our creative network. This provides opportunities to broaden community engagement. With the addition of Paula García, executive director of The New Mexico Acequia Association, we have begun a three-year program called *Preserving Legacies*.

In partnership with the Climate Heritage Network, the International Council for Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the National Geographic Society, *Preserving Legacies* is a global initiative dedicated to safeguarding humanity's rich diversity of heritage places and practices. It equips heritage custodians with climate adaptation training, professional connections and resources to protect heritage places. Each cohort grows a dedicated community of practice.

Preserving Legacies is a global initiative dedicated to safeguarding humanity's rich diversity of heritage places and practices.



Illustrations from a Flower Path booklet

The program spans three years and is designed to create lasting impact:

- Year 1: Individuals that care for heritage places complete one-year of comprehensive climate training.
- Year 2: Custodians apply that training to lead a climate risk assessment for their community.
- Year 3: Custodians use their risk assessment as a guide to design, implement and test climate-adaptation solutions that are specifically tailored to their communities and cultures. These climate solutions have the potential to transfer culture and heritage into regional, national and international climate policy.



Melanie Kirby (l) with (top) Alicia Thompson and Yucca Bozzuto at LALA; below: with Paula García and Addelina Lucero at the Owingeh Ta seed exchange

I have nominated the northern New Mexico Sangre de Cristo Río Grande region as a Preserving Legacy Heritage Site. As site custodians, we are currently attending a virtual, yearlong training program, and we will be visiting other global sites to connect with site custodians around the world. In Year Two, we will receive team support, financial resources and scientific advising to lead a climate risk assessment for our heritage place, along with storytelling guidance. For Year Three, we will share insights in the program’s global community of practice and connect to policy processes to propel heritage into climate action.

We are gearing up to travel to Quito, Ecuador this fall to visit a previous cohort custodian’s site and learn how we can work together around the world to preserve our beautiful landscapes and cultures as we all brace for climate change-related challenges. We will also bring the Preserving Legacies program’s training and resources to support communities across northern New Mexico. For information on how to support The Flower Path Conservancy, email: flowerpathconservancy@gmail.com . ■

Margarita Kirby is a native New Mexican with Tiwa, Mescalero Apache, Indo-Hispano and Caribbean ancestry. She is an entomologist specializing in bees and has a passion for interdisciplinary approaches to biodiversity conservation and mixed-media educational storytelling.

BUMBLEBEE ATLAS SEEKS VOLUNTEERS

A new program has been launched in New Mexico to protect the state’s at-risk native bumble bees. The New Mexico Bumble Bee Atlas is part of a nationwide program operated by the Xerces Society, which is seeking volunteer citizen scientists to help locate and study these tiny and important animals. The Atlas aims to document the locations and habitat needs of the bees.

New Mexico is home to at least 22 species of bumble bees, which are highly efficient pollinators essential to agricultural production and the health of native plant communities. Several species native to New Mexico have undergone steep declines in recent decades.

“Bumble bees are incredibly important pollinators, but they haven’t been well studied in New Mexico,” said Amy Dolan, a conservation biologist who is coordinating the program. “In order to conserve them, we have to learn where they are and which habitats they’re using. Bumble bees are not always easy to find, so we’re asking volunteers from all parts of the state.”

Last year, participants across the U.S. completed almost 3,000 surveys documenting more than 30,000 bumble bees. The information is helping researchers understand which are at risk, map species ranges, and design conservation plans. “We hope participants in New Mexico will help us track down species like Cockerell’s bumble bee, which may have the smallest range of any bumble bee in the world,” said Rich Hatfield, a conservation biologist.

Scientists hope the Bumble Bee Atlas will help find solutions to recover threatened species. Six of New Mexico’s bumble bees have been petitioned to gain federal protection under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. In 2025, four species were added to the state’s Wildlife Action Plan. Data deficiencies for these species have left conservationists with little information to work with when making land management decisions. New Mexico is a state with diverse landscapes, some of which are quite remote. So surveying sparsely populated areas is crucial.

Atlas volunteers conduct surveys using catch-and-release methods to photograph and record each bee they encounter. Photographs are submitted to an online platform where sightings are verified by experts. No prior experience is necessary. Before collecting data on their own, participants must receive training to learn how to complete surveys, take high-quality photographs of bumble bees, and submit observations. To join the project, visit bumblebeeatlas.org .

THE MOTHERHOUSE PROJECT

BY DAVID WYLLIE



The Motherhouse Project helps small orchards and farms in New Mexico cope with unpredictable spring weather. We use Solitary nesting bee boxes (“Motherhouses”)—10 per Motherhouse community—spaced 100 yards apart, about the space of three football fields. We’ve found this to be ideal for quality control and management of cocoons for release the following year. The boxes’ nesting substrate material consists of natural cane or reed tubes. Each box supports substrate for three to four female Mason bees (family *Megachilidae*).

For maximum pollination to optimize crop yields, our goal is to release the pollinating bees when fruit tree blossoms are at their peak. We release bee cocoons when the blossoms begin to swell and ambient temperatures are consistent for the bees’ health. Climate change can disrupt this timing. Blossoms may open too early, or the bees can become active too soon or too late to effectively pollinate the trees.

The Mason bee lifespan is about three weeks. Mason bees spend 95 percent of their time and energy pollinating. A female Mason bee is *not* a queen and does not produce honey. She does not live in a hive but is solitary, laying eggs and feeding her offspring with collected pollen and nectar. A female Mason bee, a “Mother,” pollinates 2,000 blooms per day.

We also harvest Mason bees to repeat the cycle each year, thereby supplying a sustained pollination source for small orchards.

David Wyllie is a biogeographer and a longtime beekeeper. Due to a disability, he received a grant from Agr.Ability to purchase equipment and develop a method to raise Solitary bees. He may be contacted at 505.589.8675 or email themothouseproject@gmail.com .

Alto Park Garden Project in Santa Fe

BY DEBORAH BOLDT AND DOUGLAS CONWELL

“Hope is often misunderstood. People tend to think that it is simply passive wishful thinking: I hope something will happen but I’m not going to do anything about it. This is indeed the opposite of real hope, which requires action and engagement.”
— Jane Goodall, *The Book of Hope: Survival Guide for Trying Times*

Pollinators—most of us know about bees and butterflies. But pollinators come in all shapes, sizes and even species. Students at Aspen Community School, seniors at Mary Esther Gonzáles Center, City Parks and Open Space staff, and community volunteers are among the pollinators who have added critical insect pollinator habitat and much-needed plants in a newly created, 300-foot-circumference community garden at Ron Shirley Alto Park in Santa Fe.

The park has been home to open lawns, tennis and basketball courts, soccer and baseball fields and La Familia Health Clinic. Over the past three years, the community coalition has created a place for multicultural collaboration and intergenerational ecological education. The new community garden is adjacent to the Santa Fe Riverwalk.

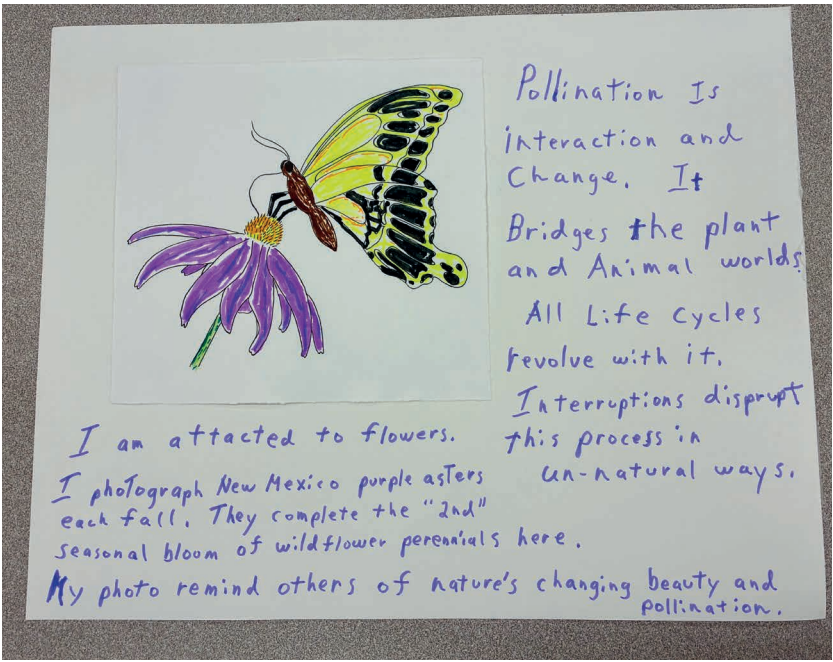
The city excavated the garden beds, which had been rocks and weeds, and installed drip irrigation. Northern Soccer Club members did additional heavy lifting. Landscape professional Wendy Wilson developed a plan; Payne’s Nursery and Reunity Resources donated mulch and compost. The Xerces Society and Plants of the Southwest helped with plant selection. Financial contributions from groups and individuals such as the New Cycle Foundation Fund and Sallie Bingham made possible the purchasing of supplies. Nusenda Credit Union also donated money and staff time. Fundraising was through the Santa Fe Watershed Association.



In May 2024, to the beats of eco-hip hop and an African music ensemble, students and volunteers enthusiastically went to work with shovels and wheelbarrows to prepare the garden.

What began as a conversation on a park bench in 2023 has grown into the kind of hope in action that Jane Goodall

advocated. And now a new phase has begun—a major mural depicting pollination is being created on a building facing the garden. The project is being sponsored by YouthExpress (<https://youthexpressnm.org>). In preparation for the project, with support from the local branch of the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, YouthExpress organized workshops on pollination for students and seniors. Thirty-six Aspen students, working with lead artist Gabriela Corral Zubia and project director John Paul Granillo, painted pollinators and learned how the mural-making process will work when painting on-site.



A festive community celebration is planned for late September. ■

Deborah Boldt is executive director of YouthExpress (<https://youthexpressnm.org>). Douglas Connell is coordinator of the pollinator garden project. He sponsors cross-cultural events and journeys to Chaco Canyon and Canyon de Chelly. <https://earthwalks.org/>

Right: pollinator mural in progress; student paintings; La Familia staff admire artwork;
Above: working to prepare the garden; inspired student

FOOD FORESTS AND EDIBLE LANDSCAPES FOR NEW MEXICO

How Regenerative Design Can Transform Your Property into a Living Ecosystem

BY SUSAN CERSOSIMO

When people think about landscaping in New Mexico, they often picture gravel, a few drought-tolerant shrubs, and perhaps a shade tree. While these landscapes can conserve water, they often miss an incredible opportunity. Your landscape can be far more than attractive—it can produce food, build healthy soil, support pollinators, conserve water, provide wildlife habitat and become more beautiful and productive with each passing year. This is the philosophy behind food forests and edible landscapes.

A food forest isn't simply an orchard or a vegetable garden. It's a carefully designed ecosystem where trees, shrubs, herbs, flowers, vines, groundcovers, fungi and beneficial soil organisms work together much like they do in nature. Every plant serves multiple purposes, and each contributes to the health of the entire system.

The result is a landscape that requires fewer outside inputs while becoming increasingly resilient and abundant over time.

WORKING WITH NATURE INSTEAD OF AGAINST IT

One of the most common mistakes I see is approaching landscaping as a collection of individual plants. A tree is planted here. A shrub goes there. Flowers fill another bed.

Nature doesn't work that way. Natural ecosystems thrive because every element supports the others. Trees provide shade and organic matter. Shrubs create habitat. Flowers attract pollinators. Groundcovers protect the soil. Microorganisms recycle nutrients. Water moves slowly through the landscape, nourishing everything in its path.

Permaculture uses these same ecological relationships to design landscapes that function as complete living systems. Instead of constantly solving problems with more irrigation, fertilizer, or pesticides, the landscape begins solving many of those problems itself.

HEALTHY SOIL COMES FIRST

Every successful landscape begins below ground. Healthy soil is alive with billions of bacteria, fungi, insects and other organisms that help plants access water and nutrients. These living systems improve soil structure, increase water infiltration, and create stronger, healthier root systems.

Unfortunately, many New Mexico soils have been depleted by years of disturbance, erosion and low organic matter. The result is compacted soil that sheds water instead of absorbing it.

The first step in regenerative design is rebuilding that living soil. This can be accomplished through compost, mulch, cover crops, biological soil amendments and minimizing soil disturbance. As organic matter increases, the soil functions like a sponge, storing moisture long after a rainstorm has passed. Healthy soil isn't just good for plants—it's the foundation of every successful landscape.

A carefully designed ecosystem where trees, shrubs, herbs, flowers, vines, groundcovers, fungi and beneficial soil organisms work together

WATER IS OUR MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE

In New Mexico, water influences nearly every design decision. Traditional landscapes often treat rainfall as something to move away from the house as quickly as possible. Regenerative landscapes take the opposite approach. Rain is viewed as a valuable resource that should be captured, slowed, spread across the land and allowed to soak into the soil.

Simple features like mulch basins, rain gardens, swales, berms and strategically placed plantings can dramatically reduce runoff while increasing groundwater recharge and soil moisture. These passive water-harvesting techniques often reduce irrigation needs while creating healthier growing conditions for trees and perennial plants. Rather than depending entirely on supplemental irrigation, the landscape begins making better use of the water nature already provides.

EVERY PLANT HAS MORE THAN ONE JOB

One of the defining characteristics of permaculture is that every element should perform multiple functions. Take lavender, for example. Many people grow it for its fragrance and flowers. In a tree guild, however, lavender also attracts pollinators, supports beneficial insects, suppresses weeds, provides nectar for bees and adds beauty throughout the growing season.

Likewise, clover fixes nitrogen in the soil while acting as a living mulch. Comfrey mines nutrients from deep in the ground and produces mulch for surrounding plants. Strawberries protect bare soil while producing fruit. Currants and gooseberries create another productive layer beneath fruit trees. Together these plants create a healthy community that benefits the entire ecosystem.

FOOD FORESTS DESIGNED FOR NEW MEXICO

Food forests look different depending on climate. In New Mexico, successful edible landscapes typically combine drought-tolerant native plants with productive fruit and nut trees selected for our elevation and growing conditions.



Permaculture garden/food forest in New Mexico

Understand the land before trying to change it.

Depending on the site, a design may include apples, pears, peaches, plums, cherries, jujubes, persimmons, almonds, pecans, chestnuts, grapes, berries, herbs, native grasses, pollinator plants and carefully selected shade trees. These productive species are integrated with native plants that support wildlife while requiring minimal supplemental water once established. The result is a landscape that provides food, beauty, shade, biodiversity and habitat throughout the year.

MORE THAN FOOD

While the harvest is certainly rewarding, food forests offer benefits that extend far beyond fresh fruit. Healthy landscapes improve water quality by increasing infiltration and reducing erosion. They create habitat for birds, butterflies, native bees and other beneficial insects. Trees provide shade that cools homes and outdoor living spaces while reducing energy costs.

In NM, successful edible landscapes typically combine drought-tolerant native plants with productive fruit and nut trees

They also reconnect people with the natural world. Children learn where food comes from. Families spend more time outdoors. Neighbors share harvests. Pollinators find refuge in increasingly developed communities. These landscapes strengthen both ecological and human communities.

SMALL CHANGES CREATE BIG RESULTS

Many people assume they need several acres to create a food forest. The truth is that even a modest backyard can become a productive ecosystem. Adding one fruit tree with companion plants, replacing a section of lawn with edible landscaping, installing a rain garden, or planting pollinator habitat are all meaningful first steps. Over time, these individual improvements grow into a landscape that functions as a complete ecological system.

You don't have to transform your property all at once. The most successful projects often develop gradually, allowing the landscape to mature naturally while homeowners learn alongside it.

A DIFFERENT WAY TO THINK ABOUT LANDSCAPES

As an Indigenous woman land steward, I've always believed that healthy land supports healthy communities. Throughout my work, I've seen that principle hold true across very different landscapes. Whether I'm working with homeowners, ranchers, farmers, policymakers or community organizations, the goal remains the same: understand the land before trying to change it. Every property has its own opportunities. Every site has its own story. Good design begins by listening. ■



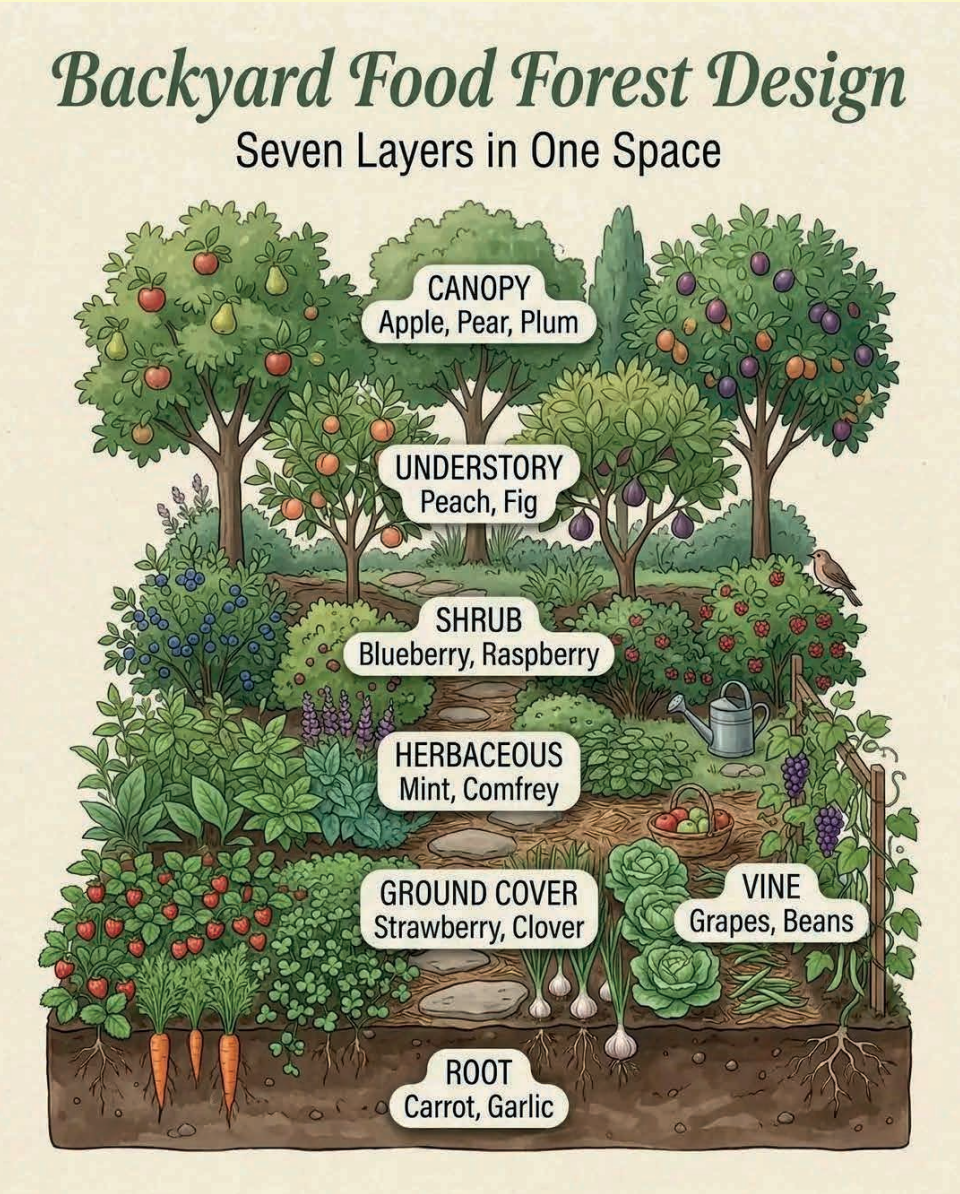
Susan Cersosimo is a certified permaculture designer, a certified project management professional, regenerative farmer, educator and owner of Vital Soil Landscapes and Manzano Springs Farm. She specializes in water-wise, regenerative landscapes designed specifically for New Mexico's unique climate and growing conditions. 505-886-1185, vitalsoillandscapes.com

FOOD FOREST DESIGN MADE SIMPLE

First and foremost, respect the ecological root footprint of existing trees and shrubs.

- 1) Build in layers.
Use tall trees, smaller trees, shrubs, herbs, ground cover, vines and roots to maximize space and productivity.
- 2) Let plants support each other.
Each layer protects the soil, improves moisture retention and creates a balanced ecosystem.
- 3) Reduce maintenance.
A well-designed system requires less watering, fewer inputs and minimal intervention.
- 4) Focus on diversity.
Mix fruits, vegetables and herbs to strengthen resilience and increase yields.
- 5) Keep soil covered.
Use mulch or ground cover to protect fertility and prevent erosion.

A layered garden is more productive, more stable, and closer to how nature actually works.



OP-ED: GARRETT GRADDY-LOVELACE

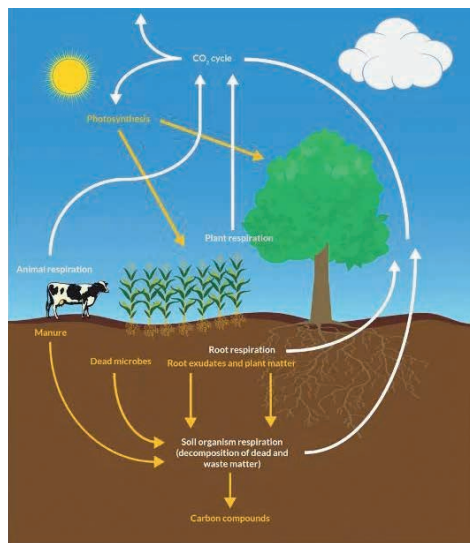
IN THE WAKE OF A FARM BILL FIASCO, AGROECOLOGY PLANTS SEEDS FOR CLIMATE SURVIVAL

Amidst the current, cruel chapter of the long-simmering Farm Bill fiasco, agroecology movements grow and take root.

The central agricultural legislation of the United States has a settler-colonial origin, layered with New Deal attempts to mitigate the ravages of unchecked agro-capitalism. But these early policies for supply management (to stave off economic rural crisis of the Great Depression) and soil conservation (to stave off ecological rural crisis of the Dust Bowl) gave way mid-20th century to commodity-crop surplus deployment for geopolitical gain (to win the Cold War) and then to neoliberalism's "free" trade. The agro-corporate-dominant status quo barreled on into the 21st century, even with valiant mitigations for local food and racial justice, largely tucked into the Miscellaneous title of the Farm Bill.

In the dregs of the Farm Bill's broken promises, agroecological movements across Turtle Island take deeper root.

and Customs Enforcement (ICE) with its rabidly racist surveillance, abductions, detentions and deportations. The farmworkers (farmers without land) maintaining the nation's fruit, vegetable, meat and dairy sectors have been on the frontline of this carceral violence.



Of note, New Mexican policymakers have worked hard to stop the worst of the 2026 proposed Farm Bills. Senator Luján proposed the Cultivating Horticultural Innovation in Local Economies (CHILE) Act to support specialty crop farmers and contested the SNAP eviscerations. As a member of the House Agricultural Committee, Rep. Vasquez contested the Trump regime's mafia-esque importation of Argentine beef and the unjust SNAP decimation.

But more is needed than mere stopgap opposition, and those on the frontline of land, water and seeds stewardship are hard at work on recovering alternatives. Across the U.S. (Turtle Island) and the Américas (Abya Yala), across the African continent

and Asia (and the small western peninsula of Asia, called Europe), a vast realm of land-based movements for food sovereignty is growing and deepening—a realm encompassed by the term agroecology (*agroecología*). As articulated in the *Nyéléni Declaration*, a foundational 2007 global agreement defining and advancing food sovereignty as a fundamental human right, agroecology movements strive to recall, adapt and deepen agricultural systems based

Agroecology fosters food sovereignty, farm justice and ecological healing.

Agrobiodiversifying is a way of living, being and relating.

cutting-edge climate-science and agronomy, and a social and political movement, agroecology draws on cosmovisions to enact food sovereignty, farm justice and ecological healing.

The agroecology movements are "global" yet place-based, transnational by being trans-local. In the Américas context, agroecology has deep roots in *milpa* agroecology, from the ancient Mayan agrarian traditions called 'three sisters'—beans, corn and squash—intercropped with culinary and medicinal herbs, in a dynamic swidden agroforestry. Jaime Chávez's essays and poetry give a New Mexico-based overview of this worldwide phenomenon. Agroecology is exemplified in New Mexico by the famed acequia systems, with all their hydrological and agricultural genius.

Agroecology is exemplified in New Mexico by the famed acequia systems, with all their hydrological and agricultural genius.



Yet, central to agroecology of course is seeds, via the process of *agrobiodiversifying*—in deliberate active gerund form. Agrobiodiversity is more than a noun. As a verb, it is a way of living, being and relating. Taos Pueblo provides evidence. Members of the pueblo have stewarded and adapted *milpa* agroecology for centuries and millennia. The Taos agrarian traditions have survived

layers of colonial and settler violence, on into poverty and climate crises. In 2018, the Indigenous Seed Keepers Network led rematriation of Taos-based, open-pollinated squash seeds to elders in the community. Representing a culinary decolonization, as well as an intergenerational transfer of seeds and knowledge, renowned seedkeeper Rowen White, who co-led the seed rematriation, called the return of seeds to their ancestral home of Taos Pueblo "fertile resistance to colonial hegemonies."

Accordingly, in the dregs of the Farm Bill's broken promises, agroecological movements across Turtle Island take deeper root. With hunger looming across the country and tens of millions of people losing SNAP access, communities refuse to be passive—such as food justice leader Liz O'Gilvie (of Springfield Eats, Rural Coalition, Transformational Farm Bill Network, and Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance) in her third week of a hunger strike to protest the brutal SNAP cuts. The work of feeding communities, of defending land, of protecting water and of keeping seeds is not only *not* supported by federal agricultural legislation but is now actively undermined. Agroecology, and its central pillar of agrobiodiversifying to feed people, offers a way forward.

Looking forward to the 2027 Taos Seed Conference! ■

Garrett Graddy-Lovelace, MTS, Ph.D., is provost and associate professor at the American University School of International Service, Agroecology Research-Action Collective.

ECONOMIC REPORT: STATE'S AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY SHOWS GROWTH



New Mexico chile plants. Photo courtesy NMDA

New Mexico's food and agriculture industries generated \$50.5 billion in economic impact in 2025—a 12 percent increase from the previous year—according to the 2026 *Feeding the Economy* report. The national report, produced by a coalition of food and agriculture organizations, tracks economic contributions across the full farm-to-fork supply chain. The coalition includes the American Farm Bureau Federation, the Food Industry Association, the National Restaurant Association and 33 other industry groups.

The report shows that cattle and calves are the state's number one cash commodity, with a production value of \$1.72 billion. New Mexico ranks within the top 10 milk-producing states in the nation, with a production value of \$1.2 billion annually. The state ranks number one in the nation for chile pepper production, with a production value of \$52.2 million annually

Other key findings for New Mexico:

- **\$50.5 billion** in total economic impact (over 12 percent increase from \$45 billion in 2024)
- **\$14.36 billion** in wages (over 11 percent increase from \$12.9 billion in 2024)
- **\$5.13 billion** in business taxes
- **\$301.65 million** in exports
- **265,032** jobs statewide

“This report shows that New Mexico's agriculture industry generates more than \$50 billion for the economy and supports over 265,000 jobs,” said New Mexico Secretary of Agriculture Jeff Witte. “From farms and ranches to food processors and restaurants, agriculture drives economic activity and helps sustain communities across New Mexico.”



The complete 2026 *Feeding the Economy* report, including detailed state-by-state analysis and statements from industry leaders, is available at www.FeedingTheEconomy.com.

NM ATTORNEY GENERAL JOINS LAWSUIT AGAINST THE USDA

BY IVY JEAN REYNOLDS

New Mexico Attorney General Raúl Torrez has joined a coalition of 21 attorneys general who have filed a lawsuit to stop the Trump administration from requiring states to agree to new terms and conditions for their financial agreements with the federal government. Those agreements cover billions of dollars in critical food-, agriculture- and rural-development assistance. On Dec. 31, 2025, the USDA announced the rules for its federal agreements. They require states and other agreement holders to adopt specific administration policies regarding diversity initiatives, immigration and gender identity to remain eligible for funding.

Some of the programs subject to the new terms and conditions include the National School Lunch Program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Women Infants and Children (WIC) Program and other rural support programs such as volunteer firefighters. In New Mexico, 150,357 students benefit from National School Lunch programs. About 481,000 New Mexicans benefit from the SNAP.

Massachusetts AG Andrea Joy Campbell and the coalition argue that the administration is operating far outside its legal lane. Joining Massachusetts in the lawsuit are the attorneys general of California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

MONTHLY NM WATER REPORT HALTED

A monthly report that forecasts New Mexico's water supply has been halted due to staffing limitations in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service. The reports have provided precipitation and streamflow data that has been used by water planners and irrigators. The data is still being collected but hasn't been compiled into monthly reports in recent months. The hiatus is temporary, a spokesman for the agency told *The Santa Fe New Mexican*. Similar reports are produced for all Western states and New Mexico has been the only state that hasn't been producing the reports.

The reports also make it possible for farmers or irrigation districts to know what the probability is to exceed certain thresholds of volumes of water, evaluate their risk and make operational decisions. The reports are primarily based on data from Snowpack Telemetry Network (SNOTEL), a system of snowpack and climate sensors.

Norm Gaume, president of New Mexico Water Advocates, said that he has seen a pullback on the federal level in relation to water monitoring. Gaume thinks that upgrades to the state's water gauging system are needed to improve data collection.

BOOK PROFILE

FEEDING THE WORLD AS IF PEOPLE MATTERED: HOW SMALL FARMS PRODUCE VALUE BEYOND YIELDS

BY ANDREW FLACHS

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA PRESS (2026)

The dominant view of agriculture has focused only on what we produce. It sees value in terms of capital gains or yield efficiency, masking how our global food system produces tremendous amounts of food commodities while failing to feed people, support rural communities or enhance ecological wellbeing. *Feeding the World as if People Mattered* asks us to look more deeply and more humanely at what we perceive to be most valuable in our agricultural systems.

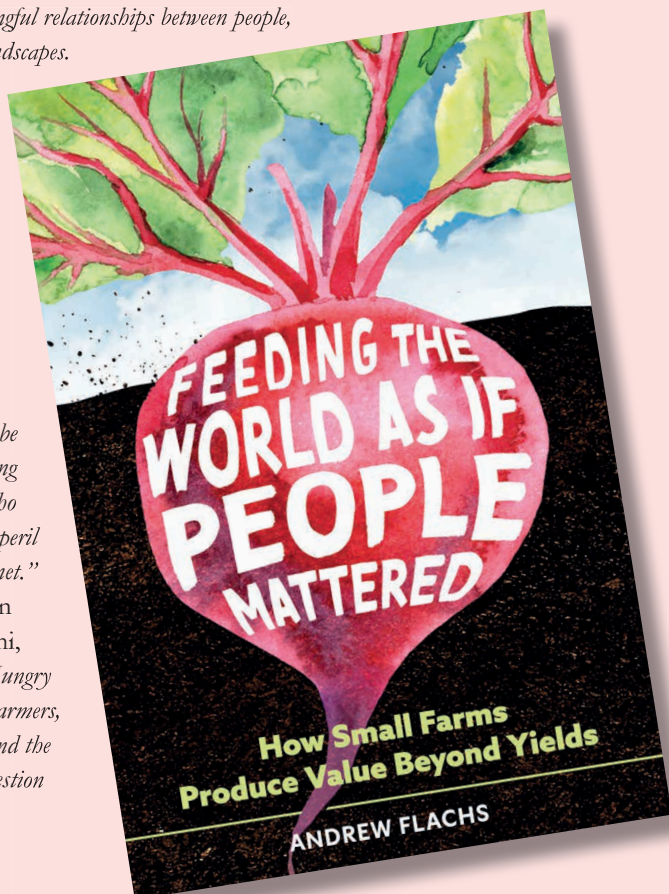
Amid plantation monocultures and industrialized farms built to maximize production, there are also many communities where economy and ecology are not in conflict. On small farms in India, Bosnia and the USA that are profiled in *Feeding the World as if People Mattered*, all embrace ecological diversity as the best path to keep the farm.

Dr. Andrew Flachs explores genetically modified crops, heirloom seeds and our own microbiomes. His writing on agricultural development has been featured in numerous peer-reviewed publications as well as the National Geographic magazine.

"Around the world, the most common livelihood that people have is small-scale farming, even though it is becoming increasingly marginalized by the corporations and states that shape people's lives. This wonderful new book, based on extensive work with small-scale farmers around the world, demonstrates that how the costs and benefits of small-scale farming are counted is a gross misrepresentation of its value. Small-scale farmers produce a greater diversity of life by building strong, meaningful relationships between people, plants and landscapes.

Rather than being the face of the past, this book shows that small-scale farming is critical to the face of a sustainable future. It will be essential reading for everyone who recognizes the peril facing our planet."

—A. Haroon Akram-Lodhi, author of *Hungry for Change: Farmers, Food Justice and the Agrarian Question*



Albuquerque's Nascent Mesquite Revolution

An ally from the plant world

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY SANDRA MACK

This has been a tough summer for farmers and gardeners. The physical and emotional toll of record heat has settled into our bodies, not to be shrugged off. We look toward future growing seasons with increasing unease. The climate crisis has arrived.

Simultaneously, we see growing fragility in the larger economy that supplies us with 98 percent of our food in Albuquerque and New Mexico. Diesel reserves are at record lows, and prices continue to climb. Prices at the grocery store are climbing too.

Into this context of existential dread comes a friend, an ally from the plant world: the mesquite tree. Honey mesquite, screwbean mesquite and velvet mesquite, all native to our region, are here, have always been here, and are capable of multiplying until we have a tree for every neighborhood, a tree for every family, and then half-a-million mesquite trees, one for every person in our city. Each tree is ready to give us mesquite pods by the hundreds and thousands, if only we are ready to become a mesquite people.



A honey mesquite tree in Albuquerque

People have been eating mesquite in the Southwest for thousands of years.

No one tastes mesquite pancakes, muffins or cookies made with the sweet complex superfood flour of ground mesquite pods and says yuck, or even meh. No one. We want to eat this. People have been eating mesquite in the Southwest for thousands of years. Mesquite flour is naturally sweet but low-glycemic, and it stabilizes blood sugar. It contains protein, essential minerals and fiber that supports gut health.

The sprouting and planting of mesquite trees from seeds takes a little knowledge and almost no water. In the past, mesquite was spread because cattle and other animals ate the pods. The coating on the hard seed was partially digested, and in the cow patties, mesquite trees sprouted. With a little help from humans to "scarify" the seed coat, seeds can be directly planted or raised for just a few weeks in a cup and then transplanted before the remarkable taproot reaches the bottom of the cup. Mesquite seedlings can then be transplanted right into the summer monsoon.

The mesquite revolution is just around the corner.

Mesquite pods can be stored dry, so are easy to



A caloric staple food that grows on a tree has distinct advantages over annual agriculture in our hot climate.

has distinct advantages over annual agriculture in our hot climate. A key advantage is the shade and cooling effect afforded by trees. Along with that, the tree has ultra-deep roots and requires almost no supplemental watering after the seedling stage. And once your tree is established, it takes no gardening skills or work to keep it going, aside from a bit of pruning in the early years to develop the thorny canopy above your face level. Mesquite's tiny, complex leaves don't even need raking in the fall; they quickly incorporate the legume's rich nutrients into the soil.

harvest and save. A coffee grinder will grind them to flour. In the future, we could have community mills where mesquite could be ground in bulk.

A caloric staple food that grows on a tree



All of these factors explain why interest in mesquite is growing rapidly in Albuquerque. The mesquite revolution is just around the corner. Will you start learning and start planting? Will you help us? ■



Sandra Mack is an Earth and space science teacher at Amy Biehl High School, and co-founder of Cool it Burque. You will find more information on propagating mesquite at coolitburque.org.

*Above: Mesquite pods ripening on a honey mesquite tree
Mesquite seedlings ready to be planted*

LATE-BREAKING NEWS FROM HISTORY

FROM THE PUEBLOS TO THE PACIFIC, 1776–2026 WESTWARD EXPLORATIONS ACROSS INDIAN COUNTRY

Bond House Museum, 706 E. Bond St., Española, NM
505-747-8535, WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/SGHSBONDHOUSEMUSEUM/

Coinciding with the commemoration of 250 years since the signing of the U.S. Declaration of Independence, a low-profile Río Arriba museum has created a pertinent exhibition. Located near Santa Clara Pueblo on the western shore of the Río Grande, the Bond House Museum overlooks La Plaza de Española, with its assortment of structures evoking four centuries of cross-cultural encounters. The museum itself was originally built in 1887 as home to a successful merchant family. The Victorian style adobe building has been painstakingly restored.

Between 1776 and 2026, New Mexico experienced three regimes: a kingdom under imperial Spain, a province under republican México, and a U.S. territory for 64 years—until it was finally awarded statehood in 1912. Throughout that succession of regimes, Pueblo communities across the region alternately confronted and sought to cooperate with semi-nomadic plains and mountain tribes whose traditional hunting grounds were shrinking.

That trio of regimes is represented in a landmark three-part exhibition curated by Julianne Burton-Carvajal and stewarded by the San Gabriel Historical Society. The exhibition constitutes an intriguing sidebar to “America 250.” It is entitled, *“From the Pueblos to the Pacific, 1776–2026: Westward Explorations across Indian Country during New Mexico’s Spanish, Mexican and American Eras.”*

The exhibition features artifacts, devotional items, maps, explanatory banners and artwork evoking the Spanish era, including the 1776 Dominguez-Escalante expedition from Santa Fe to Monterey and the Old Spanish Trail from Abiquiú and Taos to El Pueblo de Los Angeles (1829–1848). The unsung heroism of Abiquiú *genízaros* offers an example of “late-breaking news from history”—a new angle on the past that emerges when fresh eyes examine the historical record.

The Mexican-era section focuses on the first commercial route connecting northern New Mexico with the Pacific Coast. Authentic components of the complex mule-packing system so ubiquitous and essential during that era are among the many items displayed. There are also early-20th-century portraits photographed at New Mexico pueblos, in western New Mexico, and of northeastern Arizona tribes by Edward S. Curtis.

A grand finale slideshow will be presented on Nov. 4 from 3:30–5 p.m. Curtis’s great-grandson will present interviews and photos of descendants of individuals photographed by Curtis a century ago.

**SAN GABRIEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PRESENTS**

EDWARD S. CURTIS - 1903

**W, F, SAT 12 – 4PM
FREE ADMISSION**

**FROM THE PUEBLOS TO THE PACIFIC:
WESTWARD EXPLORATIONS ACROSS INDIAN COUNTRY
DURING NEW MEXICO’S
SPANISH, MEXICAN & AMERICAN ERAS, 1776–2026**

**OLD SPANISH
NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL
1829 - 1848**

**FRIDAY, JULY 3 – WEDNESDAY, NOV 4
AT THE BOND HOUSE MUSEUM
IN ESPAÑOLA**

Section I: Spanish Era
Dominguez-Escalante Expedition
From Santa Fe to Monterey in 1776

Section II: Mexican Era
Old Spanish Trail from
El Pueblo de Abiquiú to
El Pueblo de Los Angeles
1829–1848

Section III: American Era
Previously Unpublished
Southwestern Photographs
by Edward S. Curtis
1900–1930

For northern
New Mexico.
For our shared home.
Forever.

For Santa Fe.
For Española.
For Las Vegas.
For Mora.
For Native Tribes, Pueblos & Nations.
For Food Security.
For Wildfire Recovery.
For School Programs.
For the Arts.
For Health.
For Senior New Mexicans.
For Good.



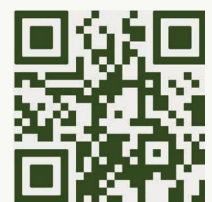
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NMED LAUNCHES CIRCULAR ECONOMY PLAN

Initiative advances reuse, recovery and New Mexico supply chains

New Mexico businesses, local governments, tribal governments, schools and nonprofits can now apply for a share of \$11.5 million in funding for projects that keep materials and resources in productive use through reuse, recycling and recovery. Through the competitive procurement process, the New Mexico Environment Department will support circular economy projects with measurable environmental and economic benefits.

In August, the NMED issued a request for proposals for circular economy projects while also releasing the state's first Circular Economy Plan, a roadmap for reducing waste, strengthening in-state markets and infrastructure, and keeping materials and economic value circulating in New Mexico. The NMED expects to award the first contracts in October.

A circular economy keeps products and materials in use through practices such as maintenance, reuse, refurbishment, remanufacturing, recycling and composting. These efforts can reduce pollution and resource extraction, create jobs and strengthen local supply chains. Projects can include recovering critical minerals from electronic waste (e-waste), transforming discarded textiles into reusable products and composting food waste for agricultural use.

Eligible projects must take a systems-based approach to reducing waste and keeping materials and resources in productive use for as long as possible. Projects may recover, reuse or redesign materials, products or processes in ways that preserve their value, reduce demand for new resources or prevent waste at the source. The request for proposals includes two funding categories: \$1.5 million for feasibility and assessment projects and \$10 million for project implementation.

"New Mexico has an opportunity to grow our economy by getting more value out of the resources we already have," said Rep. Meredith Dixon. "This investment will help New Mexico businesses turn materials that would otherwise go to waste into new products, creating new economic opportunities and stronger supply chains while making sure we are getting measurable results for every public dollar we invest."

The New Mexico Circular Economy Plan will guide NMED's broader circular economy work, with a focus on reducing waste and illegal dumping, strengthening in-state markets and improving materials management. The plan also identifies actions for priority materials including scrap tires, batteries, household hazardous waste and organics.

Celebrating 100 Years!

PRESERVING SANTA FE SINCE 1926

This year the Old Santa Fe Association turned 100 years old. Through history education, community service and historic preservation advocacy, we continue to promote the preservation of Santa Fe's unique distinction that combines culture, tradition, and environment — the priceless assets of our region.

Please join us as we celebrate Santa Fe's cultural and architectural heritage. We are excited to welcome new members and reconnect with old friends.

Visit www.oldsantafe.org to get involved!



Since 1926

The Agrarian Ritual of Patience

*In memory of Wendell Berry
and for Ofelia Zepeda*

To be a desert farmer,
You must get good at waiting.
Each night you sleep with one ear open
In case the sounds of the first sprinkle
Tap-dance on the metal roof above you.
Then you get up, but you don't go out
Because you must busy yourself
Gathering up all manner of seeds
To ready them for the morning planting.

After you have sown then, you wait for days
Like a stick caught in an eddy, hoping
For another rain to germinate the seeds
Since one rain alone and water from a hose
Never seem enough to get all of them to sprout.

As you watch them grow until their tendrils
Reach out and grab a pole or trunk of a tree
You idle your time away weeding around them
Hoping that this will help them rise
Until their yellow or purple blossoms break out
With the songs of bees beneath dark skies.

But this is the moment when the pace begins
To hasten, moving far too fast for the Waiter
Because the baby squash bulge out their bellies
More and more as each day passes, and the green
Beans begin to dry into a papery tan then pop open,
Flinging their seeds at you as you pass by.
"How can this be?" you cry in their direction,
"I have waited so long and now you seeds
Are flying at me so fast I can hardly catch you!"

That's when you kneel, on your knees again
Patiently sifting through the topsoil and litter
Trying to rescue each bean, cumin or coriander seed
By pinching your index finger and thumb together
To lift them up to rest in a tightly woven basket
That sits next to your knees until you stand

To carry them home, where boiling water awaits them
On the old wood-burning stove in your kitchen.
It may take hours for them to soften and season
But you know when they are done when you can hear
The last light rain of the season tap on your roof
And smell earthy vapors emerging from your bean pot.

— Gary Paul Nabhan

WHAT IF NM BECOMES AN OFFICIAL AGRICULTURAL TOURISM STATE?

BY DAVID NIDEL

There are many examples of what defines agricultural tourism. Examples include farm, ranch and dairy tours, farmers’ markets, wineries, entertainment, pumpkin patches and corn mazes. There are events for harvesting, farming education, craft and culinary classes, and more. County and state fairs that feature livestock shows, rodeos, petting zoos and produce competitions are other examples.

Many of us have watched movies where we admired the scenery of a farm or ranch and wondered what it would be like to visit. Farms and ranches have served as venues for birthday parties, weddings, family reunions, etc., as well as catered sites for corporate events. Some farmers and ranchers have built lodging facilities on their properties. Onsite farm-to-table restaurants have become popular destinations. The hospitality provided by farmers and ranchers, exhibited at farmers’ markets, fairgrounds and other locations, provides memorable experiences for visitors while generating an income stream for farmers and ranchers outside of farming and ranching.

In at least 39 states there are official agriculture tourism programs that reduce the costs of liability insurance per business and also the cost of promotion. These states’ departments of economic development, commerce and tourism expand state and community tourism promotion, increasing the number of visitors and the visitors’ length of their stay, creating more jobs and reinforcing the tax base.

In New Mexico, operations that offer hospitality services, host events and provide activities for visitors, currently undertake these activities individually at their own entrepreneurial risk. There are few opportunities for market collaboration or group discounts that are enjoyed by states with official agritourism programs. An official agritourism program in New Mexico would promote branding and provide more incentives for tourists to visit.

On Dec. 25, 2025, U.S. Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-NM) joined Senate colleagues to introduce The Agritourism Act to Accelerate the Growth of Rural Innovation and Tourism Opportunities and Uphold Rural Industries and Sustainable Marketplaces. This bipartisan legislation was to support the economic development and growth of agritourism businesses in New Mexico and nationwide.

In the 2026 state Legislature, a bipartisan effort was made to enact House Bill 521, The Agritourism Promotion Act, as a first step to establishing an official New Mexico Agriculture Tourism Program. It passed one committee hearing, but did not move forward. With the support of farmers, ranchers and tourism interests to help lobby for its passage, it will likely be resubmitted.

The main opposition to this bill was based on its liability factors. The state does not want to be held liable for contributing to the misfortune of a visitor or participant because it had promoted the goods and services of the agriculture venue. However, crafting this legislation based on the state’s Recreational Use (NM Stat § 17-4-7) Statute that protects private landowners from liability, allowing visitors to use their land for outdoor recreation such as hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, etc., and supports Sen. Heinrich’s bill seems like a viable alternative. The lobby of New Mexico’s farmers, ranchers and tourism interests may provide a greater likelihood of the Act’s passage. ■

David Nidel, MS, has a background in rural tourism, tourism management and economic development.

AGRIVOLTAICS – SOLAR ON FARMLAND

The Future of Farming May Be in the Shade

By combining agriculture with solar energy, farms can improve resilience, generate additional revenue, conserve water and produce clean electricity—all from the same land. Whether the land is used for crops or grazing animals, agrivoltaics continues to demonstrate why farming and renewable energy can go hand-in-hand. Farmers and researchers across North America, Europe and Asia are testing different crops, climates and solar panel designs. Many are uncovering the same surprising result: In the right conditions, solar panels aren’t competing with agriculture—they’re helping it.

Agrivoltaics could provide a major source of electricity, coupled with a high-value crop. Putting them on about 1 percent of the country’s land would supply all the energy that the world needs, some say. And, it offers a big part of the climate solution.

Jack’s Solar Garden (JACKSSOLARGARDEN.COM), near Longmont, Colorado, sits on five acres that used to be a hay field. Byron Kominek turned it into something the industry is still catching up to: an innovative dual land-use approach that includes a working solar array that also grows food. Since 2021, the farm has produced over 25,000 pounds of spinach, herbs and berries underneath 1.2 MW of solar panels, enough to power 300-plus homes. If a 5-acre family farm can stack food production and power generation on the same ground, the “we don’t have room for both” argument doesn’t hold up for anyone with underused space.



**In Italy, olive groves under solar panels
yield **more fruit** and **clean power**,
proving food and energy
can **thrive together**.**

The Science Current

FOR AGRICULTURE:

- The panels reduce evaporation from the soil, reducing water needs for irrigation.
- Agrivoltaics allows shade-tolerant crops like lettuce, spinach, potatoes and tomatoes to thrive underneath panels that protect them from excessive sun and wind.
- Rising summer temperatures mean that fruit growers need to rethink how they manage their crops. In the Netherlands, agrivoltaic raspberry farms have shown similar or better yields compared to traditional farming, using up to 50 percent less water.
- Researchers in Puglia, Italy, installed semi-transparent solar panels above an olive grove and found that olive yields increased by 12 percent and water evaporation decreased by 19 percent.



- The latest research reveals that in many cases, solar panels are helping grow healthier crops and tastier fruit. The research in Italy showed that olive oil polyphenol levels improved, indicating enhanced quality.
- Researchers recently installed 832 solar panels approximately nine feet above a commercial blueberry farm. By elevating them well above the crops, enough shade is provided to reduce heat stress while still allowing plenty of sunlight, airflow, farm equipment and workers to move freely beneath the array. The blueberries were reported to be larger, juicier and sweeter than berries grown in full sun.
- Researchers at the University of Minnesota found that agrivoltaic systems can support high-quality forage for grazing dairy cattle. In fact, some grasses produced more biomass beneath solar panels than in conventional pastures, suggesting that well-designed systems may enhance forage production.
- A solar ranch in Tennessee combines solar development with cattle grazing instead of treating them as competing and uses. Texas ranchers now run sheep across about 68,000 acres of solar farms because goats climb the panels and chew the wires. Dual-use approaches like these could help expand renewable energy while still supporting ranching and rural communities. “We need this in New Mexico,” said Neal Denton, senior environmental scientist at the New Mexico Environment Department.

Agrivoltaics doesn’t improve every crop and doesn’t work equally well in every climate.

Crops such as rice, wheat and soybeans can experience lower yields if solar panels create too much shade or if the system isn’t properly designed. Panel height, spacing,

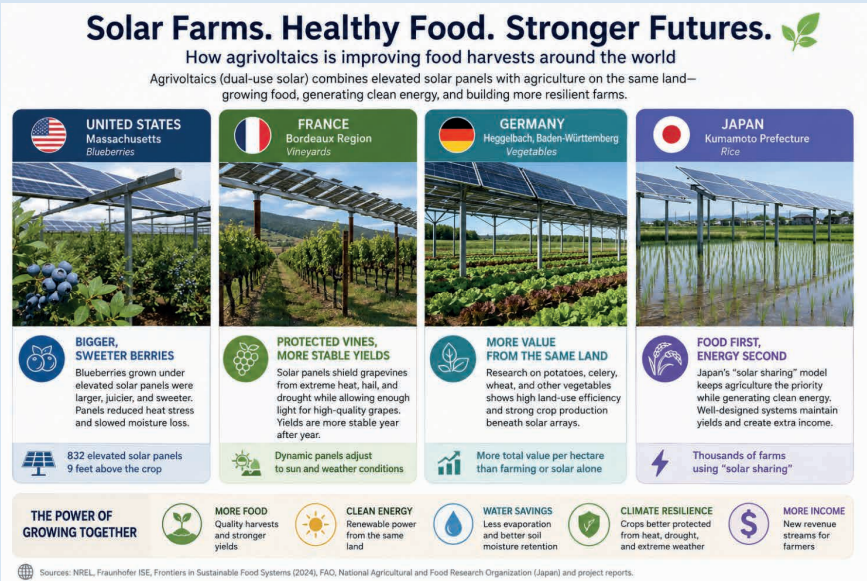
orientation, crop selection and local climate all play an important role in achieving the right balance between food production and clean energy.

FOR SOLAR:

- Crops underneath solar panels can reduce the temperature of the panels, stopping them getting so hot that their efficiency is reduced.
- Some people say, “Don’t put solar panels on farmland. Put them on parking lots. Keep prime farmland prime farmland.” Here is a response to that argument:

1. With a few exceptions, solar panels generally don’t perform as well when installed over blacktop, especially as our planet grows hotter.
2. Prime farmland is *not* prime farmland unless there’s a farmer who is financially willing and able to farm it. Renewables can empower farmers to keep their land in use and in their family.

Energy has to be produced somewhere. We can localize our energy and reduce our reliance on foreign oil imports.



NEW MEXICO’S FACTORY FARM POLLUTION

The industrialization of livestock production—and the waste that comes along with it—has led to widespread water pollution.

New Mexico has over 280,000 dairy cows living on mega-dairies, and they produce 11.5 billion pounds of manure annually, according to Food and Water Watch. This is *four times as much* as the state’s human population produces.

The New Mexico Environment Department has been discussing new surface water regulations to protect waters across the state from industrial polluters, including factory farms. But according to FFW, although NMED has a unique opportunity to create strong rules that are protective of our precious surface waters, the rules the agency has proposed are far too weak. FFW has encouraged strong pollution-control requirements on factory farms. The NMED, FFW says, must craft CAFO-specific rules that eliminate loopholes present in federal regulation so that discharging CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) can no longer evade permitting requirements.

WHAT’S GOING ON

ALBUQUERQUE / Online

SEPT. 10–20

NEW MEXICO STATE FAIR

Expo NM, 300 San Pedro NE

[HTTPS://STATEFAIR.EXPONM.COM](https://statefair.exponm.com)

SEPT. 14–16

BUILDING AN ADVANCED ENERGY ECOSYSTEM

Sandia Resort & Casino

400+ energy leaders. Expert panels, presentations, interactive workshops, exhibitors and networking. General admission: \$300. [HTTPS://NMWOMENLEAD.ORG/ABOUT-THE-CONFERENCE-1](https://nmwomenlead.org/about-the-conference-1)

SEPT. 17–19

38TH ANNUAL GREAT MINDS IN STEM CONFERENCE

Albuquerque Convention Center

GMIS inspires and supports students and professionals—especially from underserved communities—to build a diverse and inclusive STEM workforce. Hosted by the Hispano Chamber of Commerce. Info: 323-791-9295

SEPT. 18 OPENING

I THOUGHT I SAW YOU YESTERDAY

Community Gallery, National Hispanic Cultural Center, 1701 4th St. SW

Exhibition reflects on the role grief, intimacy, celebration, land, food and familial relationships play in maintaining ancestral knowledge and memory. nhccnm.org/museum/exhibitions

SEPT. 19, 4 PM

SOMOS ALBUQUERQUE

NHCC, 1701 4th St. SW

Indoor and outdoor festival featuring local artists, performers, makers and community alongside national music headliners. \$24.95. [HTTPS://WWW.EVENTBRITE.COM/](https://www.eventbrite.com/)

SEPT. 27. 10 AM–5 PM

AKI MATSURI JAPANESE FALL FESTIVAL

Expo New Mexico

Cultural exhibits, vendor fair, musical demonstrations, Japanese arts, food and more. Tickets: \$14.48–\$17.12. [EVENTBRITE.COM](http://eventbrite.com)

OCT. 3, 12–5 PM

SW ORGANIZING PROJECT CHILE FIESTA

211 10th St. SW

505-247-8832, [SWOP.NET](http://swop.net)

OCT. 10, 11 AM–3 PM

FALL FARM FESTIVAL

Gutiérrez-Hubbell House, 6029 Isleta Blvd. SW

Music, dance, conservation carnivale programs, petting zoo, crafts, food vendors and tours of the historic property. Free.

OCT. 19, 4–7 PM

GOLDEN CHILE AWARD CEREMONY

National Hispanic Cultural Center

Awards recognize innovative NM Grown programming at early care and education centers. K-12 schools and senior centers. NM Farmers’ Marketing Assn. [HTTPS://NEWMEXICOGROWN.ORG](https://newmexicogrown.org)

DEC. 1–3

ROOTS & RESILIENCE CONFERENCE

Indian Pueblo Cultural Center

“Strengthening NM Farms, Food & Communities.” Practical tools & strategies to increase production capacity, build networks and partnerships. Hosted by Farm to Table NM’s Farmer Innovation Program. 505-660-8403, [WWW.FARMTOTABLENM.ORG](http://www.farmtotablenm.org)

THROUGH MAY 31, 2028

COILING KIN: THE LIFE OF PUEBLO POTTERY

Maxwell Museum of Anthropology, 500 University Blvd. NE

23 potters from 14 pueblos selected 70 works from the permanent collection. A deep reflection of clay in Pueblo life. Presented in the round with audio-visual materials. [MAXWELLMUSEUM.UNM.EDU](http://maxwellmuseum.unm.edu)

TUES.–SUN. 9 AM–5 PM

“ONLY IN ALBUQUERQUE”

Albuquerque Museum, 2000 Mountain Rd. NW

Permanent exhibit told through four galleries: Spirited, Courageous, Resourceful and Innovative. Hundreds of the city’s beloved artifacts are featured. \$3–\$6., Free Sun., 9 am–1 pm. [CABQ.GOV/ARTSCULTURE/ALBUQUERQUE-MUSEUM](http://cabq.gov/artsculture/albuquerque-museum)

TUES.–SUN. 9 AM–4 PM

INDIAN PUEBLO CULTURAL CENTER

“Gateway to the 19 Pueblos of N.M.” Through Feb. 21, 2027: “Grounded in Clay: The Spirit of Pueblo Pottery.” Special 50th anniversary programming. Cultural dances, restaurant. \$12/\$10/children under 5 free. 505-843-7270, [INDIANPUEBLO.ORG](http://indianpueblo.org)

TUES.–SAT. 10 AM–4 ON

MAXWELL MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY

500 University Blvd. NE

“People of the Southwest” permanent exhibition celebrates the cultural history of the SW, especially the close relationship people have had with the land. Free admission. 505-277-4405, [HTTPS://MAXWELLMUSEUM.UNM.EDU](https://maxwellmuseum.unm.edu)

NM MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY AND SCIENCE

1801 Mountain Rd. NW

Reopened after seven months of renovations. 505-841-2800, [NMNATURALHISTORY.ORG](http://nmnaturalhistory.org)

RESILIENT FUTURES INITIATIVE

Dangerous heat, pollution and natural disasters affect all New Mexicans, especially frontline communities. This initiative, facilitated by the City of ABQ’s (CABQ) Sustainability Office is an effort to future-proof communities in Central NM. [RESILIENTFUTURESNM.ORG](http://resilientfuturesnm.org)

SANTA FE / Online

SEPT. 4–13

314TH FIESTAS DE SANTA FE

Sept. 4 burning of Zozobra, followed by parades, music on the plaza, a fine arts & crafts market and other events. [SANTAEEFIESTA.ORG](http://santafeefiesta.org)

SEPT. 9–11

SACRED ROOTS, SOVEREIGN FUTURES

Buffalo Thunder Resort, Pojoaque, N.M.

Tribal leaders, educators, families, advocates and community partners from across nations, pueblos and tribes of NM will come together to strengthen early childhood systems. @NewMexicoECECD

SEPT. 17

JOINT OPEN HOUSES

IAIA, 83 Aran Nu Po Rd.

SFCC, 6401 Richards Ave.

Institute of American Indian Arts (1–5 pm, [HTTPS://IAIA.EDU/ABOUT/2026-IAIA-OPEN-HOUSE/](https://iaia.edu/about/2026-iaia-open-house/)) and Santa Fe Community College (10 am–2 pm, [HTTPS://WWW.SFCC.EDU/IAIA-SFCC-OPEN-HOUSE-26/](https://www.sfcc.edu/iaia-sfcc-open-house-26/)).

SEPT. 18–20

EARTH USA 2016

Scottish Rite Center

13th International Conference on Architecture & Construction with Earthen Materials.
Podium presentations, poster sessions, reception, tours. <https://www.earthusa.org>

SEPT. 25, 1–7 PM

POLLINATOR PALOOZA

Institute for Applied Ecology, 1202 Parkway Dr., Ste. B

Talks from leading names in pollinator conservation, professional networking.

SEPT. 27

INDIGENOUS WAYS RED ROAD POW WOW

Santa Fe County Fairgrounds

Song, dance and intergenerational connection. Cultural demonstrations, food vendors.

INDIGENOUSWAYS.ORG

SEPT. 29, 5:30–8:30

SF MAYOR’S AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE ARTS

Scottish Rite Center, 463 Paseo de Peralta

RSVP by 9/22: TINYURL.COM/2026-MAA-TICKETS, Info: ARTSANDCULTURE@SANTAFENM.GOV

THROUGH SEPTEMBER

MAKOWA: THE WORLDS ABOVE US

Museum of Indian Arts & Cultures

Exhibition exploring Indigenous relationships with the sky and how stories and sciences speak to one another. WWW.INDIANARTSANDCULTURE.ORG

OCT. 3–DEC. 19, FRIDAYS. 8:30 AM–12:30 PM

EV OPERATIONS BOOTCAMP

SF Community College

Understanding hybrid and electric vehicle diagnostics, repair and safety. Free to qualified NM residents. <https://sfcc.augusoft.net>, 505-428-1324, CANDICE.MIRABAL@SFCC.EDU

OCT. 3–4

HARVEST FESTIVAL

El Rancho de las Golondrinas, La Ciénega

Living history museum’s program, local foods, talks and demonstrations.

GOLONDRINAS.ORG

THROUGH OCT. 4

ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS

New Mexico Museum of Art, 107 W. Palace Ave.

Photographic exhibition of Route 66 landmarks traces visual and cultural legacy of America’s storied highway. [HTTPS://WWW.NMARTMUSEUM.ORG](https://WWW.NMARTMUSEUM.ORG)

OCT. 8, 5 PM

GOVERNOR’S AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE ARTS

St. Francis Auditorium, NM Museum of Art

Selected by the governor, NM Arts, NM Arts Commission.

OCT. 10–12

SF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ DAY

Santa Fe Plaza

Traditional and contemporary Native dance and music, poetry and storytelling, Buffalo and Hoop dancers, cultural exhibits. SANTAFE.ORG/INDIGENOUSPEOPLESDAY

OCT. 14–19

SF INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Screenings, panels, parties and awards. Santafe.film

THROUGH OCT. 16, TUES–SAT, 12–5 PM

OUT OF THE VAULT: THE COLLEGE OF SANTA FE COLLECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Community Gallery, 201 W. Marcy St.

Internationally recognized and locally admired photographers. Free.

OCT. 17, 9 AM–4 PM

STEM PATHWAYS FOR ALL

SF Community College

Hands-on STEM workshops on science, technology, engineering, math. STEAM Fair exhibits, keynote speaker. Open to fifth- to eighth-grade students. Registration: forms.gle/sg17peCsResntxus9

THROUGH OCT. 18

CONTINUUM: BLINDFALL, FIRST STRIKE (CONTINUUM)

Vladem Contemporary/ NM Museum of Art

Immersive exhibition by Virgil Ortiz and Eric F. Garcia evokes the spirit of Pueblo people through clay, painting, fashion, film and installation. The past is reimagined as a living force that shapes the present and future. \$3–\$12. NMARTMUSEUM.ORG

OCT. 19–21

AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION–NM

State Conference. Theme: Planning Close to Home: Good Neighbors, Great Places.

[HTTPS://NEWMEXICO.PLANNING.ORG](https://NEWMEXICO.PLANNING.ORG)

OCT. 28–30

REGENERATE CONFERENCE: “STEWARDSHIP IN ACTION”

SF Community Convention Center

10/28: Workshop Day (open to the public). Demos and informative sessions led by experts.

10/29: Full day of plenary presentations and panels. 10/30: Plenaries, panels, roundtables and exhibits. Presented by Quivira Coalition, American Grassfed, Holistic Management Intl.

THROUGH NOV. 30

I AM CLAY: ACOMA LIFE IN FIGURES

Museum of International Folk Art, 706 Cam. Lejo

Community-curated show of figurative pottery works by Acoma Pueblo artists from ancient times and today. 505-476-1204, \$3–\$12, MOIEA.ORG

THROUGH JAN. 3, 2027

BUILDING WORLDS: KEN FURY AND GARY MEDINA COOK

LALA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts

Contemporary Genízaro artists shed light on a long obscured history of cultural narratives of the Southwest. [HTTPS://IAIA.EDU/EVENT/BUILDING-WORLDS-KEN-FURY-GARY-MEDINA-COOK/](https://IAIA.EDU/EVENT/BUILDING-WORLDS-KEN-FURY-GARY-MEDINA-COOK/)

THROUGH MARCH 7, 2027

“STARS, STRIPES AND FIRST AMERICANS”

Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, 710 Cam. Lejo

The many meanings of the American flag, as seen on objects from the late-19th century through the 21st. Also, “Route 66 Is Indian Country.” \$7–\$12.Closed Mondays. 505-476-1269, INDIANARTSANDCULTURE.ORG

THROUGH SEPT. 12, 2027

“1912”

NM History Museum

New exhibition offering a snapshot of the state at a time of remarkable change and growth, exploring what formally tied 327,000 Nuevo Mexicanos to the Union.

OCTOBER 3

STAND UP FOR NATURE

SF Farmers’ Market Pavilion

Astrophysicist will connect Indigenous sky knowledge, science, culture and conservation. Music by Lone Piñon. Dinner. \$195 benefits SF Conservation Trust. 505-989-7019, WWW.SFCT.ORG

SATURDAYS THROUGH DEC., 9 AM–2 PM

SANTA FE ARTISTS MARKET

The Railyard north of the Water Tower

Local juried artists sell fine art and crafts. INFO@SANTAFEARTISTSMARKET.COM

SUNDAYS

RAILYARD ARTISAN MARKET

SF Farmers’ Market Pavilion

Gifts, souvenirs and mementos from local artisans and creative small businesses.

SANTAFEFARMERSMARKET.COM

MON.–FRI.

POEH CULTURAL CENTER AND MUSEUM

78 Cities of Gold Rd., Pueblo of Pojoaque

Di Wae Powa: They Came Back: Historical Pueblo pottery. The Why, group show of Native artists.

Nah Poeh Meng: core installation highlighting Pueblo artists and history. \$7–\$10. 505-455-5041

MON.–SAT., 8 AM–4 PM

RANDALL DAVEY AUDUBON CENTER & SANCTUARY

1800 Upper Canyon Rd.

Free guided walks to see birds, Sat., 8:30–10 am. RSVP for Randall Davey House tours. 505-983-

4609, RANDALLDAVEYAUDUBON.ORG

TUES., SAT., 8 AM–1 PM

SANTA FE FARMERS’ MARKET

Market Pavilion, 1607 Paseo de Peralta

Farmers and producers from northern NM. 505-983-4098, SANTAFEFARMERSMARKET.COM

TUES.–SUN., THROUGH SEPT. 7.

ROOTED STRONG: VISIONS OF AMERICA FROM NM

New Mexico Museum of Art

Exhibition exploring the layered histories of NM’s lands and peoples, highlighting communities, traditions and artistic voices that shape the state and its place within the American story.

WEDS–FRI. THROUGH DECEMBER

NUEVO MEXICANO HERITAGE ARTS MUSEUM

750 Camino Lejo, Museum Hill

100 Years of Collecting/100 Years of Connecting, historical and contemporary artworks and articles representing daily life in New Mexico. Free admission. 505-982-2226, [HTTPS://NMHERITAGEARTS.ORG](https://NMHERITAGEARTS.ORG)

WEDS–SAT., 10 AM–6 PM; FRI.–SAT., 10 AM–6:30 PM

SANTA FE CHILDREN’S MUSEUM

Interactive exhibits, play areas, weekly programs. \$10/\$8/\$7/\$3/one & under free. 505-989-8359,

SANTAFECHILDRENSMUSEUM.ORG

WEDS–SUN.

EL RANCHO DE LAS GOLONDRINAS

334 Los Pinos Rd., La Ciénega

Living History Museum dedicated to the heritage and culture of 18th- and 19th-century New Mexico. 505-471-2261, GOLONDRINAS.ORG

SAT., 9 AM–2 PM THROUGH DECEMBER

SANTA FE ARTISTS MARKET

SF Railyard north of the water tower

More than 40 artists from around NM. Ceramicists, photographers, woodworkers, jewelry makers, fiber artists, sculptors. Free. SANTAFEARTISTSMARKET.COM

SAT., 9–4, SUN., 10–4

EL MERCADO DE EL MUSEO

El Museo Cultural de Santa Fe

Many vendors. Art, jewelry, herbal remedies, textiles, beads, tapestries, books, furniture and more.

COMMUNITY WATER SERIES

9/10, 6–7 pm: River talk at Iconic Red; 9/17, 10 am–12 pm: Historic San

Ysidro Tour; 9/19, 9 am–2 pm: Nichols Reservoir Tour; 9/22, 12:30–2 pm:

Buckman Direct Diversion Tour; 9/23, 9–11:30 am: Paseo Real Wastewater

Treatment Plant Tour; 10/17, 10 am–12 pm: Urban Forest Management

Workshop. WWW.SANTAFEWATERSHED.ORG/CSF-26

EL RANCHO DE LAS GOLONDRINAS

La Ciénega, N.M.

Living history museum. GOLONDRINAS.ORG

IAIA MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY NATIVE ARTS

108 Cathedral Place

Closed Tuesdays. \$5–\$10; under 16, Native and Indigenous peoples free.

888-922-4242, IAIA.EDU/MOCNA

MUSEUM OF INDIAN ARTS & CULTURE

710 Camino Lejo (Museum Hill)

Maatakuyma: Essential Elements: Art, Environment and Indigenous Futures,

Makowa: The Worlds Above Us; Here, Now and Always. \$7–\$12.

10 am–5 pm. Closed Mondays. 505-476-1269, [WWW.INDIANARTSANDCULTURE.](http://WWW.INDIANARTSANDCULTURE.ORG)

[ORG](http://WWW.INDIANARTSANDCULTURE.ORG)

MUSEUM OF INTERNATIONAL FOLK ART

706 Cam. Lejo, Museum Hill

“Protection: Adaptation and Resistance.” More than 45 artists explore themes of climate crisis, struggles for social justice, strengthening communities through ancestral knowledge and imagining a thriving future. \$3–\$12. NM residents free first Sunday of the month.

NATIVE BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE

SF Business Incubator, 3900 Paseo del Sol

Monthly gatherings for Native American entrepreneurs, artists and business owners to connect, share resources and build pathways to success. Presented by UNM Rainforest Innovations and the City of SF Economic Development Dept.

NEW MEXICO HISTORY MUSEUM

113 Lincoln Ave.

“1912,” a snapshot of the state at a time of remarkable change and growth.

The museum explores what tied 327,000 Nuevo Mexicanos to the Union. 36

historic objects. Closed Mondays. 505-476-5200, NMHISTORYMUSEUM.ORG

SANTA FE HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Seeking land, donated or for sale, to build affordable housing. Low-income homeowners help build homes and make mortgage payments to the nonprofit HFH. Property owners can qualify for 50% Affordable Housing tax credit through the NM Mortgage Finance Authority. 505-986-5880, ext. 109

SANTA FE WATERSHED ASSN. EVENTS CALENDAR

[HTTPS://WWW.SANTAFEWATERSHED.ORG/EVENTS/](https://WWW.SANTAFEWATERSHED.ORG/EVENTS/)

STATE MUSEUMS

Museum of International Folk Art (10 am–5 pm), Museum of Indian Arts

and Culture (10 am–4 pm), N.M. History Museum (10 am–4:30 pm), N.M.

Museum of Art (Tues.–Sun., 10 am–4 pm). NEWMEXICOCULTURE.ORG/VISIT

WHEELWRIGHT MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

704 Cam. Lejo

10 am–4 pm Tues.–Sat. \$10., children under 12 free. 505-982-4636,
[HTTPS://WHEELWRIGHT.ORG](https://wheelwright.org)

YOUTHBUILD / YOUTHWORKS!

Paid training for Youth 16–24. Construction, Culinary, GED. 505-989-1855, [WWW.SANTAFEYOUTHWORKS.ORG/SANTA-FE-YOUTHBUILD/](http://www.santafeyouthworks.org/santa-fe-youthbuild/)

ESPAÑOLA

WEDS, FRI, SAT, 12–4 THROUGH NOV. 4

“FROM THE PUEBLOS TO THE PACIFIC”

Bond House Museum, 706 Bond Street

Westward explorations across Indian Country during NM’s Spanish, Mexican and American eras. 11/4, 3:30–5 pm: Edward Curtis’s great-grandson presents interviews and portraits of descendants of individuals photographed by Curtis. 505-747-8535, SG.HISTORY65@GMAIL.COM

TAOS / Online

SEPT. 12, 12–3 PM

LOCAL FOOD FIESTA

1021 Salazar Road

Lunch, music, kids’ activities, local food entrepreneurs showcase products.
Free. TCEDC.ORG

OCTOBER 3–4

TAOS WOOLS FESTIVAL

Revolt Gallery

Celebrating fiber artists, ranchers and sheep. TAOSWOOLSFESTIVAL.COM

THROUGH FEB. 28, 2027

DESENTERRANDO FUTUROS / UNEARTHING FUTURES

Exhibit explores adobe as a living practice connecting art, architecture and ancestral knowledge across the Americas.
Harwood Museum, 238 Ledoux St.
HARWOODMUSEUM.ORG

THROUGH MARCH 1

“HONORING THE LIFE AND WORK OF DEANNA AUTUMN LEAF SUAZO”

Millicent Rogers Museum

1504 Millicent Rogers Rd.

Open daily. [HTTPS://WWW.MILLICENTROGERS.ORG](https://www.millicentrogers.org)

LA HACIENDA DE LOS MARTÍNEZ

708 Hacienda Way

Northern NM-style Spanish colonial “great house” built in 1804 by Severino Martínez.
Open daily. TAOSHISTORICMUSEUM.ORG

HERE & THERE / Online

SEPT. 15–19

11TH TURTLE ISLAND BIOREGIONAL CONGRESS

Vernonia, Oregon

A bioregion is an interconnected community of landforms, watersheds, plants and animals, including human settlements. [HTTPS://WWW.TIBC11.EARTH](https://www.tibc11earth)

SEPT. 20, 10 AM–4 PM

LOS LUCEROS FALL FESTIVAL

Alcalde, NM

Historic site celebrates northern NM agricultural heritage with traditional arts, demonstrations, music, food and family activities. MUSEUMFOUNDATION.ORG

SEPT. 20, 9 AM–5 PM

NURTURING YOUR LAND

Trees That Please Nursery, Los Lunas, NM

A permaculture journey through soil, water, earthworks and plants. In-depth presentations, guided site visit, panel discussion. Tickets: \$99. TREESTHATPLEASE.ORG/EVENTS

SEPT. 25–27

RÍO GRANDE DEL NORTE PUBLIC LANDS DAY

Near Tres Piedras, NM

Wildlife-friendly fence modification near San Antonio Mountain, camping and Sunday fly-fishing on the Río Grande. BACKCOUNTRYHUNTERS.ORG/EVENTS

OCT. 10–12

ABIQUIÚ STUDIO TOUR

Self-guided driving tour takes visitors and collectors through the village of Abiquiú and the surrounding Chama River Valley. ABIQUIUSTUDIOTOUR.ORG

OCT. 12–15

GOOD MEDICINE CONFLUENCE

Ghost Ranch, Abiquiú, NM

Herbalists, plant educators, wildcrafters, natural healers and others interested in plant knowledge and traditional herbalism. [HTTPS://WWW.GOODMEDICINECONFLUENCE.COM/](https://www.goodmedicineconfluence.com/)

OCT. 14–16

OUTDOOR ECONOMICS CONFERENCE

Ruidoso, NM

Outdoor professionals, policy makers and outdoor industry leaders will advance economic development strategies and opportunities connected to protected public lands. \$167.24. Organized by Outdoor NM. [HTTPS://WWW.EVENTBRITE.COM/O/29388975781](https://www.eventbrite.com/o/29388975781)

OCT. 24–25

RÍO GRANDE SKY FIESTA

Los Luceros Historic Site, Alcalde, NM

Morning balloon launches, Saturday evening balloon glow, live music, food vendors, classic car show, family activities. RIOGRANDESKYFIESTA.COM

THROUGH NOV. 13

LAND & LEGACY PHOTOGRAPHS

NM Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, Las Cruces, NM

Photos of farming and ranching in El Paseo del Norte region by the Doña Ana Photography Club and the Photography Enthusiasts of El Paso.

THURS–SUN, 10 AM–4 PM

BOSQUE REDONDO MEMORIAL

Fort Sumner Historic Site, Fort Sumner, N.M.

Exhibit, 30 years in the making, tells the story of “The Long Walk” and the Bosque Redondo. \$7, children 16 and younger, free. NM residents with ID free first Sun. each month. NMHISTORICSITES.ORG/BOSQUE-REDONDO

EARTH KNACK SURVIVAL AND OUTDOOR LIVING SKILLS

Crestone, Colo. and elsewhere

Fiber arts, blacksmithing, hide tanning, Rocky Mtn. Survival, Edible and medicinal plants, internships and more. [HTTPS://WWW.EARTHKNACK.COM](https://www.earthknack.com)

GALLUP NEW DEAL ART VIRTUAL MUSEUM

GALLUPNEWDEALART.ORG

The culmination of a nine-year project provides images of the works as well as scholarly information. Hand-carved wood furniture, Spanish-Colonial-style tinwork, prints, murals, western American paintings, Native art. [HTTPS://CONFERENCE.BIONEERS.ORG](https://conference.bioneers.org)

Save the Date!

Raices Sagradas Community Farm Grand Opening

Raices Sagradas (Sacred Roots) Farm combines innovative, sustainable design with traditional and ancestral agricultural knowledge to create a living example of what community-based agriculture can look like in a changing climate.



Saturday, October 24, 2026
10am - 2pm

1925 Citation SW, Albuquerque, NM 87105



Climate Adapted Agroforestry



**Statewide Aggregation and
Distribution**

