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SMALL SCALE  
FOOD PROCESSOR  
Association (SSFPA)

## Sound Bites

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# Membership Drive /Western Grocer Magazine Report From Candice Appleby

Whew! I have been on a marathon, a steep learning curve...full of pleasant surprises and chance encounters. Over the last few months I have spoken with numerous processors, producers and supporters of the SSFPA. The stories that come along with each product and/or service are absolutely incredible. The SSFPA members represent every aspect of the food chain. The cross representation of members gave me a glimpse at the vast network of people involved with getting the food from the field to the table.

The directory for the Western Grocer Magazine is almost complete and over 90 of our members chose to be included. We do however have members, who are in the early stages of product development, and they chose to opt out of this year's directory. Stay tuned for next year's directory to see who is waiting in the wings.

Back to the stories.....

One of our members refers to her establishment as "World Central", being a producer and processor and marketer and distributor and bookkeeper and janitor and human resource specialist and public relations specialist, agri-tourism specialist, food safety specialist and the list goes on and on and on.... Yes, it is an all-encompassing experience to enter the realm of the food industry on a small-scale. "We're Big on Small" makes sense to me now.

The members that I spoke with had so many accolades for the work that is being done by the organization that they chose to rejoin the SSFPA. When it comes to the needs of small-scale food processors and producers, the SSFPA had representation sitting at the table of the organizations that are working towards positive change for the industry. The volunteer efforts of the members and the Board of Directors has not gone unnoticed by the



general membership. The issues affecting the industry were consistent between all the members I spoke with.

The members were also very encouraged by the progress that has been made towards supplying them with the services that they had requested at the various meetings and forums held over the past few years. Most of the members I spoke with were very interested in the flexible marketing and manufacturing network that is coming together. The group benefit plans currently being negotiated was also well received by the members. For the most part the members recognized that participation in the SSFPA was a very cost

effective way for them to have current information affecting their business and gave them a vehicle to express their concerns as well. The Western Grocer Directory was definitely recognized as adding incredible value to their membership this year.

For me, the most interesting part of my involvement in the membership drive was the genuine willingness of the members to bring forward their suggestions and offers of assistance with any aspect of ensuring the success of the SSFPA. Most people when asked said they would sit on a committee or participate in a regional meeting or provide assistance in their area of expertise. I did hear concerns, however, they were usually followed immediately by possible solutions to the concerns. With this kind of co-operation and collaboration I understand how the organization has progressed at a such a rapid pace. I would like to thank you all for the consideration you showed me and I look forward to hearing from you.

Till next time...Candice