

# Emerging Business Produces and Markets North Dakota Fruit Products<sup>1</sup>

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Berry Dakota is a small business, in Jamestown, ND, that specializes in the production of jellies and syrups made from North Dakota grown fruit. Kay Eagleson spent ten years perfecting her products for sale at farmers' markets before she opened Berry Dakota in 1996. Some fruit is purchased from a Native American group, but much of it is picked by Kay from wild plants and conservation plantings. Kay personally prepares the jellies and syrups from chokecherries, buffaloberries, wild plums, crabapples, and sandcherries. The business serves both wholesale and retail customers. Retail sales are executed through the gift business, Gifts Dakota Style, which sells products that are reminiscent of North Dakota living. The jellies and syrups are sold individually and as components of gift baskets. The baskets are supplemented with some out-of-state products to increase variety and attractiveness,

making them irresistible to holiday customers. Gifts Dakota Style retails through a shop located at the Buffalo Mall in Jamestown, ND. Jellies and syrups are also included in a gift catalogue (circulation of 40,000 to 50,000) printed for Gifts Dakota Style. Berry Dakota products comprise about 10% of the total sales generated by the catalogue. Jellies and syrups are wholesaled to other gift shops across North Dakota. One of these shops, the National Buffalo Museum purchases buffaloberry jelly from Berry Dakota due to the image of a bison carried on the label. Approximately 500 gallons of fruit were processed during 1997. Demand for the products made by Berry Dakota continues to grow, but the supply is currently balanced with demand. Kay says that she finds her business to be extremely rewarding, but highly demanding, especially during the holidays.

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