



San Mateo County Food System Alliance

March 24, 2009

Meeting Results

Attendance

	Jim Anderson	√	Lisa Wasilewski	√	Gail Raabe
	Ryan Casey		Jim Howard	√	Francine Serafin-Dickson
√	David Kane		Jered Lawson		Susan Stansbury
		√	Scott Morrow	√	Erin Tormey
√	Tim Frahm		Kellyx Nelson	√	April Vargas
√	Robin Galas		Jack Olsen		Terry Witzel
√	Jennifer Gross		Pietro Paravanno		Marilyn Johns

Facilitator: Serene Cooper, Ag Innovations Network

We met at the Redwood Shores branch library in Redwood City, in rooms A & B. Thanks to Marilyn for arranging for such a beautiful meeting space. It is available for future meetings. In the future we could reserve Room B only. Thanks to April Vargas for taking notes.

INFORMATION SHARE

- Gail announced that San Mateo Co As Fresh As It Gets logo was introduced to the BoS on March 17. There have been many positive comments about the logo and the brochure. Erin is hopeful that the logo might be used at the Farmer's Market on a banner. Gail suggested that they talk with Jack Olsen of the Farm Bureau to determine what would be appropriate. The logo is reserved for use by San Mateo County producers only and there may be trademark issues yet to be resolved. Ag Innovations to post on the San Mateo FSA website as soon as issues are resolved.
- Tim suggested placards with the logo to be distributed at locations that feature San Mateo County grown products. Francine will hand out brochures on Earth Day at a local school. The Health Dept. has also requested a quantity of them. **Action Item:** *A pdf of the brochure can be sent to interested parties who can then print out their own supply.*
- Scott noted that this is the first countywide brand. It is essential to label local products to encourage the public to buy them. Identification at points of sale is necessary and agreements with local retail outlets will be forthcoming.
- Translation will be necessary of the brochure will be necessary. **Action Item:** *Scott mentioned that the county has a contract for translations and has volunteered to make this available. The brochure can be translated into Spanish, Tagalog, Chinese and other languages that are prominent in countywide communities.*
- Farm Day will be held on March 27 at the IDES Hall at 11:00 am. This will be the 40th anniversary of this event and features local foods and recognition for key leaders and volunteers in the agricultural and civic communities.
- Lisa announced that she will be a mom this coming fall. She will be taking a leave but wants to ensure that HEAL remains engaged in SFMSA.

- Serene announced that Yolo County AFA is drafting a letter of support for the Williamson Act Reform Bill, SB 715. Some counties rely heavily on the revenue benefits from this program. Yolo AFA will be requesting letters of support and individual farmer's statements from other AFA groups in the state. **Action Item:** *Serene to forward their letter to SMFSA. Our alliance will have to review the reforms included in the bill, and add our own recommendations before making a decision to support it.*
- Serene mentioned that Ildi Carlisle-Cummins of CAFF (Community Alliance with Family Farmers) is interested in our work and would like to attend a future meeting. Serene passed along Ildi's contact information to Jenn. The Farm to Institution committee will talk with her and determine what is useful to the committee.
- Scott raised an issue about there being a prohibition against eating the food grown in school gardens. At many schools with gardens, the produce is not eaten and this diminishes support for the programs. **Action Item:** *Lisa will research the regulations and state laws that cover these issues. There appear to be no single entity to certify the safety of the food and grant permission to consume it. Erin provided background on this issue and suggested that one county will have to organize and mobilize to reach a resolution. Serene suggested asking Ildi how they approach this issue.*
- Jenn announced a conference call hosted by HEAL and Kaiser on April 23 from 9:30-11:00. School to Garden programs will be discussed.
- Gail discussed a grant opportunity from DPR/Integrated Pest Management to find an alternative to two pesticides commonly used on Brussel sprout crops. Larry Jacobs of Jacobs Farm in Pescadero is organizing the local growers to participate in this project. All growers and two ag commissioners will be involved.
- Jenn mentioned another grant available through USDA for community school projects. Grants of \$10-300,000 are available as matching grants – a 100% match from another entity is necessary, either cash or in kind. Serene asked the group if we are interested in writing a grant. Jenn replied that it is worth considering. **Action Item:** *Scott volunteered the Health Department to write the grant.*
- Erin reported that the Farmer's Market promotion project has been reactivated. This provides grants that allow markets to accept EBT's (electronic benefits transfers – food stamps) and provide resources to hire adequate staff to administer the program. The grant deadline is April 27th. Coastside Farmers Markets is now applying jointly with David Kane of Collective Roots for the USDA grant to secure funds to implement EBT capacity in the East Palo Alto Market, the Half Moon Bay and Pacifica Locations. A support letter from SMFSA will be requested. Support letters from HMB and Pacifica mayors have been secured. **Action Item:** *Serene asked Erin send a request to her and she will distribute it to the group. Gail asked if individual members can write letters of support and she received an enthusiastic "Yes!" The Ag Commissioner's office can provide background information for inclusion within the grant application, if this would be helpful.*
- Robin reported on the Farm to Cafeteria conference in Portland Oregon. Projects are as simple as tastings in the cafeteria to introduce new foods to students. Oregon has a physician within their education department to oversee the Farm to School programs. An agricultural representative also participates. Participants discussed conflicts and challenges and Robin was pleased that our group works together so collaboratively. There was discussion about whether foods grown in schools gardens can eaten and there was no resolution to this question. It is a nationwide concern.

COMMUNITY WORK GROUP UPDATES

Garden Based Education

- Robin and Lisa are working on white papers. Robin found a relevant document with references that is well written and persuasive. They will work on reducing the size of the document for eventual distribution. Rather than writing documents, they will continue to search for existing documents that are relevant and useful for public outreach. There may not be sufficient material available on

social justice issues. Serene mentioned the group Food For All which may have some social justice resources. <http://www.foodforall.org/hungerlinks3.html>

Farm to Institution

- Scott has found many challenges to implementing this plan. There are no distributors connecting farm grown projects to institutions. In April they will organize a “speed dating” experiment, bringing together representatives from institutions who will list the items they need and farmers who will report on what they grow. Once this has been accomplished, meetings will be arranged with three distributors: Lee Ray Tarrantino (Fresh Point), Grower’s Collective, and Vegi Works to determine how progress can be made. Lack of food knowledge and the inability to prepare food are key challenges.
- Gail reported that Tarrantino is becoming Fresh Point. She asked if there had been discussions about founding a grower’s collaborative to create their own distribution system. CAFF may be helpful in this regard. Serene encouraged the committee to follow up with Grower’s Collaborative. **Action Item:** *Serene to send Scott the contact information for Bob Corshen, the general manager of Grower’s Collaborative.*
- Tim said it was important to know if distributors will carry processed only or unprocessed food as well.
- Jenn talked about the rates of obesity and numbers of students at county schools. who take advantage of the school lunch programs. She has a list of companies that provide food for the public school districts within the county. Lisa asked if they had been rated. Robin suggested asking what fruits and vegetable they provide and where the produce originates. Food standards can create challenges – weight and ingredient/nutritional guidelines must be followed.

Land Use Committee

- Tim reported that the Ponds Project subcommittee has drafted a letter to non-profits who are working on this issue. Those receiving the letter will be invited to a meeting. **Action Item:** *The subcommittee will revise the letter as needed and send to Serene to distribute the final draft for review and approval of the whole group.*

Membership Items

- Jenn reported that Gladwyn d’Souza is no longer able to attend our meetings. The alliance has decided that we would like another member from that organization. **Action Item:** *Jenn will ask Gladwyn to recommend a colleague from his organization.* Gail was invited to do a presentation on agriculture at the Sustainable San Mateo County’s monthly indicators roundtable, so potential nominees will have change to be better informed about the alliance.
- Lisa reported that some people on our membership list are no longer active. There is a requirement that sitting (active) members attend 8 meetings per year. The alliance should review and select by consensus those members who have not been attending to become associate members, who are not subject to membership expectations.
- Gail asked if we have formalized the associate member category. It is included in the bylaws but no members have been designated as associate members. **Action Item.** *Erin agreed to take Robin’s place on the membership committee. Erin volunteered to work with Lisa to contact members who have not been attending meetings to assess their ongoing interest to continue as associate members and be encouraged to send in items of interest to the group on a monthly basis.*
- Of the 22 listed members, our sitting members number 14. Our constitution requires a minimum of 20. We may need to begin recruiting new active members. The membership committee will make

recommendations for a policy decision but feel that the whole group should recommend new candidates for membership.

- Jenn suggested recruiting younger people and advocacy groups like PIA (Peninsula Interfaith Action) and Latino/African American community leaders. The membership committee will need to review the composition categories in the alliance constitution for guidance.
- Per the constitution, any active or departing alliance member can nominate an individual for membership consideration. There must be group consensus in order to decide on the nominee.
- Lisa checked in with members via email and during the March meeting to assess the group's decision on April's ongoing membership in the group now that she is a candidate for the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors. There was a brief discussion about potential conflicts.
- Gail made a motion that there be a differentiation between candidates who are running and elected officials in the bylaws. **Action Item:** *The proposed change was that individuals running for office must sign a statement not to violate SMFSA rules during their campaign and will move to associate membership. If they become an elected official, then the alliance will need to determine if member may remain as an associate member or be asked to remove themselves for the duration of their political term. Scott seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. (Membership committee please review attached draft statement and proposed changes to constitution).*
- Due to April Vargas' campaign activities, she withdrew from coordinating fund raising efforts for the group and another active member will need to be recruited to take on this responsibility. This will be discussed at the April meeting.

2009 Meeting logistics

- April 28th, Harley Farms confirmed by Erin.
- May 26th, Second Harvest Food Bank, San Carlos, confirmed by Terry
- June 23rd, EPA, confirmed by Robin
- *NOTE: Mauro was quite embarrassed that he was not at Enso to ensure all was well when we arrived, and has offered another use of the facility gratis to make up for the faux pas -- Please let me know when you'd like to arrange to use Enso again.*

Notes prepared by April Vargas & Serene Cooper of Ag Innovations Network