



San Mateo Food Alliance – Meeting Results
July 24, 2007, 2-5 pm
 Pie Ranch

Attendance

X	Jim Anderson	X	Jim Howard	X	Francine Serafin-Dickson
X	Ryan Casey	X	Jared Lawson		Linda Shak
X	Ned Conwell		Anne LeClair		Susan Stansbury
	Aaron Dinwoodie		Mary Jane Marcus	X	Erin Tormey
	Dale Djerassi	X	Scott Morrow		Jason Troia
	Tim Frahm	X	Kellyx Nelson	X	April Vargas
X	Robin Galas	X	Jack Olsen		Holly Van Houten
X	Jennifer Gross	X	Pietro Paravanno	X	Alane Weber
	Dee Harley		Maureen Perron		Terry Witzel
X	Karen Heisler		Gail Raabe		
X	Lisa Hellerich		Lennie Roberts		

Facilitators: Joseph McIntyre, Lindsey Roark, Ag Innovations Network

Information share

- If anyone wants tickets to the kick-off party for the fair, contact Jack Olsen. The theme is “Got to Grow”
- There is a new Buy Fresh Buy Local guide out. If you don’t have a hard copy you can access the information online at www.cafff.org.
- Master Composter lecture series continues with Alane Weber on August 28th at the San Mateo Garden Center from 7:00-9:00.
- Friday August 3rd Jered and Pie Ranch will be hosting movie night.

Group Progress Check

The SMFSA members began the meeting addressing the question “Are you ready to start taking action, and if so, are you willing to revise today’s agenda we created at the June meeting?” They group as a whole did feel ready to push ahead into action and. Joseph reminded the group that at this point in the SMFSA group formation, the members need to be developing a constitution,

launch plan, and a first project to take on. The following are some highlighted comments from that conversation:

- We are ready to take action
- There seems to be a disconnect between goal and process. How can we connect those two things and move on?
- I think it is important that we know what to call ourselves as a group, who we are. We need our elevator talks.
- Our membership is still not representative.
- I would like to get opportunities to receive input, an advisory option, from people who wouldn't want to be involved in this group.
- At this point I feel we can trust each other. I get to work with people I wouldn't ordinarily get to work with.
- I am concerned this can get too bureaucratic with a bunch of committees.
- I'd like to encourage more people here to contribute

Farm Bill Committee Update

The Farm Bill Committee (Jennifer Gross, Karen Heisler, Erin Tormey, Susan Stansbury, and Tim Frahm) began with Erin circulating a number of potential drafts of letters to encourage local leaders to be involved with the Farm Bill. Karen shared the difficulty experienced by those researching the Farm Bill as the complexity of the bill itself continues to be hard to keep up with. The group agreed to focus efforts on the next Farm Bill (in 5 years), but identified opportunities for action with the current Farm Bill. The following possibilities/comments were shared during this discussion:

- The Farm Bill is big, but maybe we can take a stance
- We need to agree on some principles for us to support collectively
 - we want more resources in California that focus us in a direction that matters (ecologically sound)
 - Community Food Project grants empower communities to engage the food system
 - Local, Healthy, Eco-Friendly, Sustainable food supply
- Maybe we can utilize language that is already written about the Farm Bill in other sources and put out a letter from the SMFSA
- We can support and encourage those who know about and work on the Food and Farm Bill.
- Let's us a vehicle that is already moving, like sending letters to the local Mayors, Congressmen, Speakers

The group agreed to send a letter to the Mayors encouraging them to sign on along with a cover letter that explains who the SMFSA is.

ACTION

The Farm Bill Committee will be in charge of coming up with and letting the entire group know of the action steps that need to take place to get the letters out. Scott

Morrow will provide a list of Mayors and Jack Olsen will help navigate the letters where they need to go.

Principles

Building upon the group's request to be able to clearly speak about who they are as an entity, they moved into a discussion about principles. Principles are descriptive, deeply held beliefs that define how members will work together and can be organized into two types: Principles of Organization and Principles of Practice. These principles will clarify the:

1. Ethics of how we will behave when we decide we belong together
2. Means and conduct by which the purpose will be pursued
3. Fundamental beliefs against which all subsequent decisions and actions will be judged

The group had begun brainstorming principles at the May meeting, and continued that brainstorm with the following:

Principles of Organization

- We push each other to find the most effective, honest, and respectful way to understanding others perspectives and concerns.
- We are open to innovation and encourage creativity of form and roles. We do not limit ourselves.
- We are open to new ways of understanding.
- We are honest with each other and make all attempts to be clear in how we communicate.
- We look for long range solutions, not temporary fixes.
- We will work from the spirit of "never give up" working hard to bring optimism to the situations at hand.
- We work with the assumption that we are not a temporary group, but one that will continue to grow and develop power in our future.
- Our primary focus is on our local food system in San Mateo County
- When we are missing something we will utilize our organizations and networks as resources drawing support, strength, and information from each other and those in the community.
- What we decide to work on includes follow-through and is something that makes a difference for our community.
- We believe the more clearly we can communicate who we are and what we are doing the more effective we will be. To reach that clarity we will work to turn our ideas into tools/documents as needed.
- We believe the best way to make change is to focus on how food money is spent in San Mateo County.
- We believe by being part of the SMFSA as individuals rather than our organizations we are quicker, more nimble, and may be more powerful.

2) Principles of Practice

- We believe that all parts are interrelated and that a change in one area may impact others.
- We operate from the fundamental belief in collective wisdom, where the wisdom of us as a whole is more powerful than each of us working alone.
- We believe we need to be deeply informed to be able to be effective.
- We believe in the effectiveness of bridging and making connections across communities within and outside of our food system
- We believe it is important to start our work where it connects to the people. We will leverage the mainstream concerns and efforts
- We will expand our area of influence by taking what we are doing and bringing it to the groups we work with

The group discussed beginning to create a constitution to guide their work together. Jered Lawson, Jim Howard, Erin Tormey, and Lisa Hellerich will be the committee that begins to craft that document.

ACTION: Ag Innovations will put these and the May brainstormed principles on the San Mateo Food System Alliance online collaboration tool “wiki.” More information about the wiki will be distributed via e-mail.

Tabled: Farm Bureau “Talking Points”

Tim Frahm mentioned to the group in the June meeting that the San Mateo County Farm Bureau crafted some “Talking Points” with the intention of having a message to deliver to agencies, newspapers or the interested public when asked if agriculture can be sustainable on our coast. Tim asked for input from the SMFSA group to make them more complete. This is something the group plans to discuss at the next meeting.

ACTION: Ag Innovations will put the talking points on the San Mateo Food System Alliance online collaboration tool “wiki.”

Ongoing: Mapping the San Mateo County Food System

The group did not discuss the mapping of the county food system at the July meeting, though more resources being shared is welcomed at future meetings.

ACTION: Ag Innovations will post the progress so far in identifying who is working in the food system and what issues are facing those working in natural resources, production, distribution, and consumers on the online collaboration tool “wiki” for the San Mateo Food System Alliance members to update and utilize in the future.

Next Agenda and Meeting Logistics

The next meeting will be from 2:00-5:00 on September 25th, 2007 location TBA via e-mail.

The following are the discussed tentative meeting locations:

- September 25th: East Palo Alto YMCA (Robin Galas)
- October 23rd: ENSO (Erin Tormes)
- November 27th: Board Room at the Events Center (Jack Olsen)