

Marin Food Policy Council
Meeting Notes
October 15, 2019
HHS Wellness Campus, 3240 Kerner Blvd, San Rafael

Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 19, 2019, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. at the HHS campus, Room 110

Attendance:

* = Voting members

X	Alexandra Danino, SF-Marin Food Bank*		Madeline Hope, West Marin Waste Education*
X	Bonnie Nielsen, UCCE		Marv Zauderer, ExtraFood.org
	Bonny White, West Marin Com Services*		Melanie Raquel, Marin Housing Authority
X	Bruce Richard, Envi. Forum of Marin		Paula Freeman, Covia
	Casey Poldino, Zero Waste Marin*		Reba Meigs, HHS Public Health*
	Cathryn Couch, CERES	X	Steve Schwartz, Interfaith Sus Food Collaborative*
	Elaini Negussie, HHS Nutrition Wellness		Susan Lopes, Mill Valley Chamber of Commerce
X	Felicia Chavez, Systems Thinking Marin		
	Gueidi Beltran, WIC*		
	Heather Bettini, CAM		
	Janet Brown, AllStar Organics		
X	Julia Van Soelen Kim, UCCE*		<i>Guests:</i>
	June Farmer, Marin City CX3*		
	Kathy Carver, ExtraFood.org*	X	Maggie Gori, Catholic Charities
	Kathy Koblick, HHS Public Health	X	Marchon Tatmon, SF-Marin Food Bank
	Lauren Klein, Comm. & School Gardens	X	Wendy Tobiasson, citizen
X	Liana Orlandi, Ag. Institute of Marin*		
	Lorenzo Cordova, BOS*		
X	Lori Davis, Sanzuma*		
	Madelene McCann, Marin Child Care Council		

Welcome and Announcements – Alexandra Danino and Lori Davis

- Lori: Sanzuma farm at San Pedro school has served over 2 million student meals since September 2015.
- Alexandra: Public Charge law proposed by current administration has been blocked by federal judges (families were disenrolling from benefit services in the face of this). Local group Public Charge Working Group – contact Shirin with Marin Community Foundation if you are interested in getting involved.
- Wendy: shared cider pressing in Tam Valley good community event, working on connecting food bounty with food needs.
- Al: this month is Good Earth’s 50th anniversary of being open
- Steve: still one Americorps VISTA position open, contact Steve if interested
- Julia: November MFPC meeting will tie together past two themes (Climate Change, and Local Food Supply Chain), no MFPC meeting in December

Council Business – Julia Van Soelen Kim

New member presentation: *Melanie Raquel, Marin Housing Authority*

- Family Self Sufficiency Case Manager – works with families with section 8 vouchers. Try to help individuals to increase their income (if you do, Marin Housing Authority invests, as well as subsidizes accounts). Work with residents on employment, financial literacy, budgeting, health. Funded by grants, partner with HEAL 2.0 Built Environment subgroup, SparkPoint, and others. Looking to broaden her perspective, gain insight. Alexandra: dual-integration of access to CalFresh with Marin Housing Authority?

CFFN membership

- MFPC voted to join CA Food and Farming Network (Beth Spitler presented to MFPC in July). Run out of CAFF in Davis. Statewide network of orgs working on food and farming issues, stepping into place of CA FPC. MFPC is a member of both groups, both represent our issues at the state level. Steve is our representative for the CFFN. Monthly phone call meetings and one annual in-person meeting if interested in attending – January 15, 2020. Individual working groups on specific topics (including CalFresh and school food procurement, etc.)

Policy Updates – Steve Schwartz

CAFFN and Senator McGuire Update:

- Update on CFFN meeting with Senator McGuire: CFFN looking at doing a meeting with Senator McGuire in Marin, potentially the second Friday in November – look for email announcement.
- Food Day Resolution: MFPC to co-sponsor Food Day Resolution with BOS on Tuesday 10/29 BOS Board Meeting – members can show up to support or provide public comment. Resolution language is being drafted by MFPC, HHS, HEAL taskforce, will share with Council.
- Update on CA bills supported by MFPC: Steering Committee moved forward on each of the bills voted on at last month's MFPC meeting. Governor signed AB 614 and AB 1377.
- Older Americans Act reauthorization happening now as well, key funding source we get for seniors in Marin; MFPC reached out to people working on aging in Marin and found out that it is already in-process, almost a done deal.
- Another proposed SNAP rule change to how eligibility is calculated – utility considerations (if you live somewhere where your utilities cost more you may be eligible for more \$ - the proposed change would eliminate this). MFPC can vote to submit a comment (un opposition) at the November meeting. Public Comment period ends on December 2. 14th rule change with the current administration.

Local Food Supply Chain Panel – Al Baylacq, Good Earth Natural Foods; Moira Halloran Kuhn, Marin Roots Farm

Objectives: to learn our local food supply chain in our area. How food is getting to the consumer, different steps it goes through. Today's panel includes a grocer and a farmer to get a more complete picture.

Al Baylacq, Good Earth Natural Foods

- Al interested in natural food industry through organic produce, began dealing directly with farmers (learned what it took for farmers to get their product to consumers). Worked with farmers on where the end product quality needs to be to make the sale. Struggle 25 years ago, still a struggle today. Produce buyers find it difficult to have relationships and

expectations with farmers clear enough. Buyers work with farmers to plan what to plant, as well as during the growing season, around market forces (prices). Challenging to land on an equitable price for everyone involved.

- Challenges: quality of end product, shelf-life of end product, price, presentation
- Restaurants may be better off at being the end user than grocery stores.
- Goal is to walk the local line (produce, dairy, meat, body care)
- Committee discussing what to do with culls before turning it into compost. Redirect ugly produce before it goes to the shelf. But the premium is made on the shelf. Taking the middleman (distributor) out of the equation when they have a direct relationship with a farmer, this is when they can give more \$ to the farmer.
- Work with local farmers directly, also work with large distributors (80% comes from beyond 100 miles). Two distributors that sell only organic: Earl's Organics and Veritable Vegetable (out of SF).
- Farmers are generally good at farming, the business side of things can be more difficult to work out. Marin and Sonoma farmers need support in refrigeration, transportation, etc. (FEED Sonoma and Marin Sonoma Produce are examples of it working out being a middleman doing the business organization for farmers).
- GE Congregant Meal program: 7 different locations in Marin, serve between 1-5 days a week. Losing money on the program, but GE wants to do it. Creative lunch relative to school lunches. Primarily organic
- School lunch program: lost Larkspur school district, gained Kentfield school district (down from 1800 meals to 1500 meals a day). Happens every day from scratch out of Novato. 100% organic. Began with 4 private schools in 2003, wanted to make organic whole grain from scratch, and close to zero waste lunches. \$5.50-7.50 per lunch each day. 7 school lunch vans, 25 people that work in Novato in the Bel Marin Keys commercial kitchen. NOT the answer to feeding kids in schools; also works with Conscious Kitchen on getting organic food as the standard for kids in public schools.
- Strong belief that organic food is an answer to the climate change issue. Excited by regenerative agriculture and carbon farming potential. Regenerate soil with organic food coming out of it. Transition options for helping big farms move from conventional to organic and regenerative. Extensive value of spreading compost on the land.
- What else could be done with ugly food? Is there a way to sell it? Promote the idea? Way to market the ugly produce?

Moira Halloran Kuhn, Marin Roots Farm

- How does produce get from farm to plate? Farm started 19 years ago, wanted to grow for farmers markets and grocery stores, the popular "Big 8." Moira joined the farm and suggested selling direct to restaurants mainly, with some to farmers markets and grocery stores, because larger farms can do the Big 8 better, more consistently, and cheaper (using machines and large crews). Still sell some to grocery stores, but can't price match consistently, so they don't crop plan for grocery stores.
- Accounts: restaurants, farmers markets, FEED Sonoma, and some grocery stores.
- Income from farmers markets has been dropping in the past 7 years (since the convenience of online sources like Blue Apron and Good Eggs). Farmers markets will need to up their convenience factor and the farmer-feel interaction to compete with online sources.

- Crops: niche markets enable farmers to set their own prices (if they are the only ones who grow them).
- How to succeed: grow product better, faster, cheaper OR unique.
- Policy opportunities? Problems with no solutions:
 - Bay Area middle class is becoming more food insecure. Find a way to stretch out CalFresh, work with how market match works? Lots of farmers are on CalFresh, even though they grow the food! Would like to see stricter rules on what you can purchase with CalFresh (regarding healthiness). Certain communities still want the less healthy options to be eligible for CalFresh because every dollar counts and they may just need to buy the cheapest options. Could a percentage of monthly balance be held for the most nutritious options?
- Climate change comments? Research now is supporting what organic farmers have known for decades around the importance of organic farming. Education is critical for conventional-organic move, as is money to incentivize and cover the transition, bilingual certification aid. EDUCATION. Organic food in CA public schools is an educational move. GE looks to the next generation. GE advocates for more \$ in the Farm Bill for organic every year. Nationally, less than 5% of farming is organic. Although organic is “better,” USDA (via OMRI) still allows for a lot of things to be sprayed on organic products.
- What causes the biggest carbon footprint? Transportation vs. putting pesticides in the ground and waterways? Not an easy question with yes/no answer. The externalities of conventional farming are larger than those of organic farming.

Closing – Alexandra Danino and Lori Davis

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

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