

Marin Agricultural Support Action Plan

Near, Medium, and Long-term initiatives
to support the viability of Marin's
farmers and ranchers

2011

Contributors and Partners

Farmers and Ranchers and County of Marin with:

Agricultural Institute of Marin

College of Marin

Marin Agricultural Land Trust

Marin Agricultural Weights and Measures

Marin Community Development Agency

Marin Community Foundation

Marin County Farm Bureau

Marin Economic Forum

Marin Organic

Marin Parks & Open Space

Marin Resource Conservation District

United Markets

Western United Dairymen

University of California Cooperative Extension

Introduction

This plan conveys short (1-2 year), medium (2-3 years), and long-term (4 years or more) action items that will support the continued viability of Marin’s agriculture and the contributions that its farm families make to Marin’s sustainability. The specific action items come as a result of the Marin Agricultural Summit held in November 2010, at which more than 90 of Marin’s farmers, ranchers, and partners identified opportunities for agriculture’s continued success and the steps needed to realize those opportunities. The items also represent programs that partnering support organizations and agencies can develop and implement in response to the needs expressed at the Summit. At the request and convening of Supervisor Steve Kinsey, an Agricultural Advisory Group met three times from March to July 2011 to refine the Summit ideas and initiatives. This work included ten subcommittee meetings during that same timeframe. The action items represent and are organized in three broad categories:

Agricultural Production Needs – Initiatives focus on production, processing, and other farm business operation areas that will enhance production and availability of local agricultural products. **Page 2**

Public Support – With an overarching aim to cultivate a cultural commitment to agriculture, initiatives target ways to foster stronger customer relations between local producers and local consumers, and stronger working relationships and partnerships between producers and area organizations and agencies. **Page 8**

Regulatory Assistance – Initiatives offer steps to continue with progress already made for effective and efficient agricultural project review and approval. **Page 10**

Accordingly, this plan sets the course for the next leg on the path of success for Marin Agriculture that was started by the 1997 Marin Agricultural Summit and the 2001 Near-Term Agricultural Support Plan. The past and present achievements along this path are credited to Marin’s farmers and ranchers, the County of Marin, and the numerous partnering support organizations that have contributed resources and staff to that effort. These same contributions and partnerships are called upon to successfully navigate the future path through implementation of this Action Plan.

Innovation & Steps	Local Examples	Examples Beyond the Region	Timeframe (Short 1-2 years, Med 2-3 years, Long 4+years)	Key Partners
Agricultural Production Needs				
<u>Provide for agricultural product processing, packaging, and distribution needs through a centralized shared facility</u>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantify the current volume of producer need for this infrastructure taking into account market changes and opportunities for expansion 	Food hub distribution project by CAFF	USDA Rural Dev. Supported food hub groups	Short	Cheese Guild, UCCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify existing and developing opportunities for commercial kitchen rental 	CAM Food Works		Medium	UCCE, Cheese Guild
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop permanent farm-to-market infrastructure 	SF Ferry Plaza		Medium	AIM, County of Marin
<u>Secure meat harvesting, cut and wrap, storage, distribution, and marketing infrastructure capacity to meet local needs</u>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep in close contact with Modular Food Systems, Inc. efforts in Ukiah, CA to learn about their progress including costs and payouts, and waste water handling 	None currently	MFS in Washington, rentable poultry harvest in Placer County, CA	Short	MO, FB, UCCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review documented demand from earlier surveys 	Hardesty survey, Doran survey	USDA study, Placer survey	Short	UCCE, MO, FB
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantify the current volume of producer need for this infrastructure taking into account market changes and opportunities for expansion 	Animal agriculture working group	USDA study, Placer survey	Short	UCCE, MO, FB
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct consumer demand survey 			Medium	MEF, UCCE

Innovation & Steps	Local Examples	Examples Beyond the Region	Timeframe (Short 1-2 years, Mid 2-3 years, Long 4+years)	Key Partners
<u>Secure meat harvesting, cut and wrap, storage, distribution, and marketing infrastructure capacity to meet local needs (continued)</u>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate a cross-county meeting with Supervisor Kinsey, Supervisor Rabbit, and producers from both counties potentially leading to meeting with other partners 	Numerous JPAs and multi-county initiatives		Short	Supervisor Kinsey, Supervisor Rabbit, FB, UCCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather information about existing facilities to learn what will help them stay in business 	Coming of Age – The Status of North Bay Artisan Cheesemaking		Short	MEF, UCCE, FB
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather information about pilot programs as options 	Hardesty et al study		Short	UCCE, FB, MEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach out to other partners - Field to Family, Whole Foods, Rancho, SRJC, COM 	Food hub distribution project by CAFF	USDA Rural Dev. Supported food hub groups	Medium	County of Marin, UCCE, MO, FB
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and evaluate potential sites for new facilities 	SMART station analysis, OES Command Center selection	USDA study of harvest facility locations	Medium	UCCE, MEF
<u>Maximize available water to meet agricultural water demand</u>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities for water and land availability 	Map and GIS soil and water analysis	Mendocino County Report on Ag. Water Demand	Short	UCCE, MRCD, MMWD, NMWD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document agricultural water demand and sources to meet that demand 	Mendocino County Water Agency Study	California agricultural water use survey	Short	UCCE, MRCD, MMWD, NMWD

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<u>Maximize available water to meet agricultural water demand (continued)</u>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide assistance with permitting and development of water resources 	Pine Gulch Project	Mattole River and Salmon Creek Water Projects	Medium	MRCD, UCCE, NRCS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop support including plan development for sustainable groundwater management 	Sonoma GW Management Plan	State GW management plan requirements	Medium to Long	County of Marin
<u>Maximize the mutual benefits of agricultural production on public lands</u>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene working group of public land managers and agricultural producers to identify mutual benefits and the instruments to realize them 	Agricultural working group	Ag Vision 2030	Short	Marin Parks, PRNS, GGNRA, MMWD, State Parks, FB, UCCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue support of ranch and dairy families on public lands, including PRNS and GGNRA 	Ranchers Association	Stewardship Begins with People (Diamant et al 2007)	Continuous	Ranchers Association, PRNS, GGNRA, UCCE, MALT, County of Marin
<u>Address financial and capital resource needs</u>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a resource list of estate planners with agricultural experience and tips for what to look for in doing estate planning and working with a planner 	UCCE Publication 21515	Agriculture.com	Short	MEF, MALT, UCCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate producer mentoring for business development and securing capital 	Row crop farmer network	Alabama Sustainable Ag. Network	Short	FB, West Marin Chamber, MEF

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<u>Address financial and capital resource needs (continued)</u>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a formal network and process for learning about funding sources and opportunities – loans, grants, easement payments 	Informal Partner Network	American Grants and Loans Catalog	Short	MEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a loan fund process through multiple options (bank consortium, micro finance, local foundation, long-term revenue contracts) 	Whole Foods Loan Program	Montana Dept. of Ag. Beginning Farm/Ranch Loans	Medium	MEF, AIM, MALT, UCCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop long-term funding for conservation easements resulting in capital to farm families and expansion of land conservation 	Sonoma County Bond Measure	Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation Association	Medium	County of Marin, Marin Parks, MALT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and facilitate retailer/restaurant advances and commitments 	Whole Foods programs	Montana Farm to Restaurant Connection, Vermont Fresh Network	Medium	AIM, MEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document and demonstrate the potential revenue and income of example diversification projects – Case studies 			Medium	MEF, UCCE
<u>Realize the opportunity for incoming and outgoing agricultural rail freight</u>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain connection with North Coast Railroad Authority on projected opening of rail for freight 			Short	SMART, North Coast Rail Authority, Farm Bureau
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect agricultural producers and supporting businesses with freight distributors 			Medium	SMART, North Coast Rail Authority, Farm Bureau

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<u>Develop and support the next generation of farmers, ranchers, and agricultural sector employees</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="170 396 789 422">Establish an agricultural apprenticeship program 	High tech industry and trades apprenticeships	High tech industry and trades apprenticeships	Short (initiated March, 2011)	COM, IR AS, P. Martinelli, UCCE, County of Marin
<u>Develop and support the next generation of farmers, ranchers, and agricultural sector employees (continued)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="170 623 968 649">Initiate "work experience" course for farm and ranch enterprises <li data-bbox="170 792 919 847">Network producers and internship organizations to increase opportunities for local farms to host interns and apprentices <li data-bbox="170 889 1010 945">Create farmer-to-farmer mentor opportunities for business and farm operation coaching 	Nursing, Automotive, and other Work Experience at COM	Work experience at Community Colleges throughout State and Nation	Short	COM, UCCE, participating farms and ranches
	COM	MESA, Farmlink	Short	MO, UCCE, FB
	Marin and West Marin Chamber	FB Young Farmers and Ranchers	Medium	FB, MALT, MO, UCCE
<u>Restoring pasture production through removal of invasive plants</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="170 1058 1031 1114">Provide financial and technical assistance on removal and prevention of introduction and spread for species of concern <li data-bbox="170 1205 722 1230">Map location and spread of invasive plants 	Marin Ag. Commissioner, UCCE		Short	Marin Ag. Com., MALT, MRCD, NRCS, UCCE, PRNS, GGNRA
	Sonoma Marin WMA	Cal-IPC	Medium	MALT, Sonoma Marin WMA, MRCD, Marin Parks, NRCS, PRNS, GGNRA

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Public Support				
<u>Make local Marin agricultural goods and services accessible through a "united campaign"</u>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check with producers about the idea of a name and logo for campaign via online survey and in-person. 	CAGrown, CAFF's Buy Fresh, Buy Local, and Sonoma Made Local	Fenstra et al. Report	Short w/evaluation for long-term	AIM, MO, MALT, UCCE, FB & County of Marin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a logo or mark by committee if majority of producers agree, incl. AIM, MALT, MO, UCCE, FB & County 	Sonoma Select	Placer Grown	Short w/evaluation for long-term	AIM, MO, MALT, UCCE, FB & County of Marin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach the Marin BOS about their political and financial support for a yearlong United Grown In Marin PR Campaign that would be co-marketed and run w/ existing organizations 			Short w/evaluation for long-term	AIM, MO, MALT, UCCE, FB & County of Marin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form an ad hoc committee organized to figure out how to use/sell/manage the use of the mark/seal 	Sonoma Select	Placer Grown	Short w/evaluation for long-term	AIM, MO, MALT, UCCE, FB & County of Marin
<u>Sustain and strengthen relationships and partnerships between agriculture and the community that forges a cultural commitment to agriculture</u>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish shared directory of agricultural and community organizations 			Short	Farm Bureau, UCCE, MRCD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide presentations to respective organization Boards and meetings 			Short, continuous	Farm Bureau, UCCE, MRCD, MALT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide contributions for respective organization newsletters and member email communications 			Short, continuous	Farm Bureau, UCCE, MRCD

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<u>Education to cultivate cultural understanding and commitment to agriculture</u>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate on-farm access for consumers and general public to interact with agricultural producers, learn about agricultural production, and purchase local products 	MALT and other farm sponsored tours and events, on-farm retail sales	Outstanding In The Field tours	Short, continuous	County of Marin, MALT, MO, FB, UCCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish infrastructure and continue programs that provide off-farm learning opportunities about Marin agriculture and access to products 	Farmers markets, COM Farm, STRAW teacher training, Class-room curriculum		Medium	County of Marin, AIM, COM, UCCE, MO, MALT Board of Education, municipal partners

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Regulatory Assistance				
<u>Develop and continue support of permitting and regulatory assistance initiatives</u>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene a working group to identify solutions for design and review of retail sales projects around environmental health needs 	Cheese makers social	Sonoma Marin Animal Resource Committee	Short	CDA, UCCE, FB
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop permit guide flow chart for County use permit 	Fact sheet on cheese making permitting		Short	CDA, UCCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain support and value of MRCD permit streamline program 	Existing program	Pilot program in Mendocino County	Short, continuous	MRCD, County of Marin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and enhance Marin Organically Certified Agriculture program 	Existing program	CCOF	Short, continuous	AWM, MO, UCCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and enhance agricultural ombudsman program and agriculture orientated county staff within key departments - Farm Advisor, AWM, CDA, DPW, Assessor 	Existing program	Efforts to replicate in other counties and with CDFA at State level	Short, continuous	County of Marin, CDA, DPW, UCCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Agricultural Worker Housing Project and launch pilot project for rehabilitating, developing, and maintaining new affordable agricultural worker housing in West Marin 			Medium	CDA, Marin Housing Authority, MRCD, MCF, FB
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build consistency in agricultural project review and approval across area counties 	Accessory structure use in Marin and Sonoma	ABAG for other uses	Medium	CDA, FB, area partners, UCCE

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<p><u>Foster and enhance Agriculture and County working partnership</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to host and facilitate opportunities for producers, Supervisors, and staff to meet and build relationships 	<p>Cheese maker social, Agricultural working group, Ag. Roundtable</p>	<p>Ag. Vision 2030</p>	<p>Short, continuous</p>	<p>FB, County Supervisors, UCCE, AWM, MRCD, MALT, MO, AIM</p>

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E = Expert

F = Facilitator

M = Moderator

P = Presenter

R = Recorder

TH = Table Host



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