

Marin Agricultural Support Action Plan

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

2013 Update

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

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Western United Dairymen

United Markets

University of California Cooperative Extension

Agricultural Production Needs**Provide for agricultural product processing, packaging, and distribution needs through a centralized shared facility**

- Quantify the current volume of producer need for this infrastructure taking into account market changes and opportunities for expansion
- Identify existing and developing opportunities for commercial kitchen rental
- Develop permanent farm-to-market infrastructure

CAFF Study published July 2011 documenting this need for Sonoma, Napa, Mendocino, and Lake Counties.

Marin Commercial kitchen originally available for co-packing @ CAM Foodworks is transitioning to Petaluma.

In 2011, the Buckelew Foundation initiated "People's Harvest," a social enterprise that would combine workforce development goals with the need for aggregation and processing in the region. This concept and approach is currently being explored in partnership with the Redwood Empire Food Bank.

Marin County and Agricultural Institute of Marin MOU for farmers market pavilion.

New UCCE Food Systems Advisor position secured with recruitment to begin in Spring 2013.

Secure meat harvesting, cut and wrap, storage, distribution, and marketing infrastructure capacity to meet local needs

- 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
- Review documented demand from earlier surveys
- Quantify the current volume of producer need for this infrastructure taking into account market changes and opportunities for expansion
- Conduct consumer demand survey

Kathryn Quanbeck is working for Mendocino UCCE/SFP to coordinate the on-going effort in Mendocino County to build a USDA inspected, multi-species meat processing facility.

In Sonoma, Rancho added hog processing and Golden Gate Meats has plans for expansion.

Meat Industry Capacity and Feasibility Study of the North Coast Region of California.

Secure meat harvesting, cut and wrap, storage, distribution, and marketing infrastructure capacity to meet local needs (continued)

- Facilitate a cross-county meeting with Supervisor Kinsey, Supervisor Rabbit, and producers from both counties potentially leading to meeting with other partners
- Gather information about existing facilities to learn what will help them stay in business
- Gather information about pilot programs as options
- Reach out to other partners - Field to Family, Whole Foods, Rancho, SRJC, COM
- Identify and evaluate potential sites for new facilities

This meeting occurred in late 2011 with Rancho owners. Rancho has begun processing swine and will continue to explore other expansion opportunities including processing organic products.

The lack of processing capacity is the real bottleneck when it comes to getting local meat to local customers. At best, these businesses are barely profitable. It costs several million dollars to build a full-service brick and mortar, slaughter plus aging, cut & wrap, value-added processing, and delivery facility. Site development and permitting quickly adds in another half a million. Operating costs can easily be \$50k/month, or more. If your only source of revenue is \$100 kill fees and \$1.00/lb. cut & wrap charges, it is pretty difficult to meet payroll, keep the lights on & pay off your debt. That is why so many processors sell their own-branded product, the money is in selling meat, not in cutting it for other people. Need to be really creative in terms of financing, ownership to reduce infrastructure costs to build small-scale meat processing facilities.

Maximize available water to meet agricultural water demand

- Identify opportunities for water and land availability
- Document agricultural water demand and sources to meet that demand
- Provide assistance with permitting and development of water resources
- Develop support including plan development for sustainable groundwater management

Marin Agricultural Ombudsman completed this project in 2008 and she created a water source map for agricultural needs.

MRCD is completing Pine Gulch Project in collaboration with produce growers.

Agricultural Ombudsman provides permitting assistance as it relates to ag water systems (e.g. cheese plants).

MRCD, MALT, UCCE, and MCFB provide assistance for livestock pond registration.

County of Marin will be developing groundwater management plan.

Maximize the mutual benefits of agricultural production on public lands

- Convene working group of public land managers and agricultural producers to identify mutual benefits and the instruments to realize them
- Continue support of ranch and dairy families on public lands, including PRNS and GGNRA

Marin Parks is expanded grazing applications on open space land with technical support from UCCE.

Currently exploring expansion of educational signage project (UCCE) for open space and land trust properties communicating ecological interactions with livestock grazing.

Point Reyes National Seashore Rancher's Association working on viability and lease agreement issues.

Address financial and capital resource needs

- 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
- Initiate producer mentoring for business development and securing capital
- Create a formal network and process for learning about funding sources and opportunities – loans, grants, easement payments
- Develop a loan fund process through multiple options (bank consortium, micro finance, local foundation, long-term revenue contracts)
- Develop long-term funding for conservation easements resulting in capital to farm families and expansion of land conservation
- Research and facilitate retailer/restaurant advances and commitments
- Document and demonstrate the potential revenue and income of example diversification projects – Case studies

North Coast Food System Network conference on financing and options for capital held in November 2012.

Release of *Getting Started in Farming* factsheet by UCCE.

AFT issued RFP for Business Case & Feasibility Study for a Bay Area Ag & Food System Econ. Development Investment Strategy - [Bay Area Agricultural Sustainability Initiative](#)

Measure A passed and being implemented.

Grown In Marin workshop being planned for winter 2013. Other examples and opportunities include Whole Foods programs and AIM member support programs.

Coming of Age documented this for dairy product diversification; Robert Eyler value chain reports for dairy, beef and grains are available.

Realize the opportunity for incoming and outgoing agricultural rail freight

- Maintain connection with North Coast Railroad Authority on projected opening of rail for freight
- Connect agricultural producers and supporting businesses with freight distributors

Rail began freight shipments in to feed mills in Petaluma in July 2011.

Some producers are already buying directly through rail, most are relying upon the feed mills to be the intermediary for commodities.

Develop and support the next generation of farmers, ranchers, and agricultural sector employees

- Establish an agricultural apprenticeship program
- Initiate "work experience" course for farm and ranch enterprises
- Network producers and internship organizations to increase opportunities for local farms to host interns and apprentices
- Create farmer-to-farmer mentor opportunities for business and farm operation coaching

This program was created in 2011 through collaboration between Industrial Relations Board Apprenticeship Program, Peter Martinelli, and the College of Marin.

College of Marin has established a work experience program for its students to learn on sponsoring farms. UCCE and MO have recruited farms and are ready to go.

Many other training opportunities e.g MESA, ALBA etc

Grown In Marin *Farm Innovation Workshop* in December 2012 is the start of this.

Restoring pasture production through removal of invasive plants

- Provide financial and technical assistance on removal and prevention of introduction and spread for species of concern
- Map location and spread of invasive plants

Sonoma/Marin Weed Management Area will be hosting a thistle management workshop with MALT, Marin Ag. Dept., MRCD, and UCCE.

Marin Ag. Dept. providing financial assistance for a second year and coordinating a larger effort with multiple partners for a third year.

Pasture Club and Mike Griffin, Organic Valley, hosts dairy trainings.

Purple Star Thistle and Woolly Distaff Thistle management trials in place for a second year of UC Davis Study.

Public Support

Make local Marin agricultural goods and services accessible through a "united campaign"

- Check with producers about the idea of a name and logo for campaign via online survey and in-person.
- Create a logo or mark by committee if majority of producers agree, incl. AIM, MALT, MO, UCCE, FB & County
- 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
- Form an ad hoc committee organized to figure out how to use/sell/manage the use of the mark/seal

Grown Local is launching pilot program in January 2013 to support 35 Marin producers to participate in the program. This is a collaboration with Sonoma GoLocal and the North Coast Food System Network (Marin, Napa, Sonoma, Mendocino, and Lake Counties). County of Marin provided pilot program launch funding support. UCCE developed the terms of agreement with Network. AIM is serving as fiscal agent with advisory committee members including Sarah Darcey Martin, Juliet Braslow, Kevin Maloney, Julie Rossotti, Lyn Giacomini-Stray, Liza Crosse, Gibson Thomas, Ellie Rilla.

Second run of the Sonoma-Marine Cheese Trail Map lead by Vivien Strauss with collaboration and sponsorship from AIM, MALT, UCCE, California Milk Advisor Board, Marin Convention & Visitors Bureau, Marin County Board of Supervisors, Sonoma County Ag. Preservation and Open Space District, Sonoma Land Trust, Sonoma County Tourism Board, Sonoma County, and others - http://cheesetrail.org/?page_id=55.

Marin Visitor & Convention Bureau listing of agritourism on its website and other materials - http://www.visitmarin.org/things_to_do/Agri-Tourism.html.

Sustain and strengthen relationships and partnerships between agriculture and the community that forges a cultural commitment to agriculture

- Establish shared directory of agricultural and community organizations
- Provide presentations to respective organization Boards and meetings
- Provide contributions for respective organization newsletters and member email communications

2012 Marin Fair with agriculture theme, historical ag photos exhibits, meet the farmers, GIM pavilion, MALT and AIM venues, food talk and demos, amateur contests tied to local food products including cheese and oysters.

Marin County Farm Bureau continues to host meetings with Supervisors, local leaders, and community representatives.

Education to cultivate cultural understanding and commitment to agriculture

- Facilitate on-farm access for consumers and general public to interact with agricultural producers, learn about agricultural production, and purchase local products
- Establish infrastructure and continue programs that provide off-farm learning opportunities about Marin agriculture and access to products

MALT & MO tours for the public. MALT hand-off of Farm Field Studies to Marin Organic Fall 2012.

2012 Marin Fair with agriculture theme, historical ag photos exhibits, meet the farmers, GIM pavilion, MALT and AIM venues, food talk and demos, amateur contests tied to local food products including cheese and oysters.

Marin County and AIM MOU for permanent farmers market pavilion. AIM Farmers Market tours.

College of Marin Indian Valley Organic Farm & Garden program and cheese certificate program (100 graduates)

Marin Ag. Institute planning for 2013 or 2014 delivery underway.

Regulatory Assistance**Develop and continue support of permitting and regulatory assistance initiatives**

- Convene a working group to identify solutions for design and review of retail sales projects around environmental health needs
Cheesemaker social held with Environmental Health Services staff 2011 to discuss mutual resolution to EHS concerns.
- Develop permit guide flow chart for County use permit
Making a permit flow guide is proving to be too complicated to make a general pathway for all projects because each project has specific conditions and a specific path for review and approval.
- Maintain support and value of MRCD permit streamline program
Program was ratified in November 2010 for an additional five years. Requires funding support for corresponding monitoring of permitted restoration projects.
- Maintain and enhance Marin Organically Certified Agriculture program
Ag Commissioners Office has ramped up staffing on MOCA program.
- Maintain and enhance agricultural ombudsman program and agriculture orientated county staff within key departments - Farm Advisor, AWM, CDA, DPW, Assessor
Article in summer 2012 GIM issue about role of ombudsman program; Sonoma County has hired a similar Ag Ombudsman and San Mateo County is developing plans to do the same.
- Complete Agricultural Worker Housing Project and launch pilot project for rehabilitating, developing, and maintaining new affordable agricultural worker housing in West Marin
UCCE with Community Development Agency and Department of Public Works planning cross-staff training for agricultural project development and review.
- Build consistency in agricultural project review and approval across area counties
Community Development Agency, Marin Housing Authority, Marin Resource Conservation District, Marin Community Foundation, Marin County Farm Bureau, Community Land Trust Association of Marin, Marin Agricultural Land Trust are implementing the Marin Farm Worker Housing Program currently.

Local Coastal Program review and input is being provided by multiple partners including Marin County Farm Bureau, UCCE, Marin Organic, California Cattlemen's Association, and others.

Develop and continue support of permitting and regulatory assistance initiatives (continued)

Marin County Farm Bureau has met and continues to meet with Marin staff and Supervisors, as well as local environmental organization representatives to find solutions for land use policy in the LCP.

Suggestions for revisions and updates to the Marin Development Code are being generated and provided to Community Development Agency for review after the LCP update is further in its process.

MRCD, MALT, UCCE, and MCFB provide assistance for livestock pond registration

Foster and enhance Agriculture and County working partnership

- Continue to host and facilitate opportunities for producers, Supervisors, and staff to meet and build relationships

Cheesemaker social held with Environmental Health Services staff 2011 to discuss mutual resolution to EHS concerns.

Supervisor Kinsey 7th Ag. Roundtable.

Meetings between Supervisor Kinsey and Supervisor Rabbit about programs and policies to support local agriculture.

Cross departmental training.

Marin County Farm Bureau continues to host meetings with Supervisors, local leaders, and community representatives.



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