

CARRE BROWN  
Supervisor  
First District



OFFICE PHONE: (707) 463-4221  
OFFICE FAX: (707) 463-7237  
BROWNCJ@CO.MENDOCINO.CA.US

**COUNTY OF MENDOCINO**  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
501 Low Gap Road • Room 1010  
Ukiah, California 95482

May 6, 2012

Mr. David J. Lewis  
University of California Cooperative Extension – Marin County  
1682 Novato Blvd., Suite 150B  
Novato, California 94947

**Re: Letter of support for the North Bay Food Systems Advisor (NBFS) position**

Dear Mr. Lewis:

I want to express my strong support for the position of a UCCE North Bay Systems Advisor based in Marin County to further the work of the North Coast Regional Food Systems Network (NCRFSN) currently funded by a USDA Rural Development grant. As you are aware this current initiative, the NCRFSN, launched by Supervisor Valerie Brown of Sonoma County and myself late in the fall of 2010 encompasses the five county region of Lake, Marin, Mendocino, Napa and Sonoma. A great deal of work has been accomplished to provide for the economic viability and regional growth of food production, processing and distribution. However, there is further need for facilitation and coordination of these objectives and entities for maximum effectiveness as the USDA grant funding for this project draws to a close.

The NBFS position will be invaluable to carry forth on all that has been previously gained by assisting the region to be successful in meeting many of the larger scale requirements to grow the viability of our area farmers and ranchers. The assignment area for the NBFS position has a \$1.3 billion annual agricultural production value. The area is characterized by 5,700 family farms that raise livestock and/or dairy, or grow tree and row crops. Many of these operations are currently supported with off-farm incomes and include small-scale, urban farms close to the Bay Area. The advisor position is needed to deliver marketing, business, and enterprise transition management (succession/regulatory) extension programs for producers, processors, and related groups. In addition the advisor position can provide an agricultural value chain and regional economic data and analysis to county governments, business councils and leaders, and other organizations to improve and coordinate policies and programs that facilitate production of value-added agricultural products, and therein, the development of sustainable food systems. Information and analysis is also needed on the levels and trends in consumer demand for agricultural products to assist retailers and agricultural producers in their decision-making about product market development, processing, and distribution.

David Lewis

Page 2 of 2

I am very pleased to learn the NBFS position is under consideration to carry out the role of coordinating a healthy food system to provide for the continued economic viability of regional food production, processing and distribution especially during these times of uncertainty. I am always available to further assist in gaining approval for the position and sense my colleagues in the other counties within the region will be strongly in support as well.

Sincerely,

*Carre Brown*

Carre Brown, First District Supervisor  
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

CC: John Harper, UCCE Mendocino County Director