



Sonoma County Food Forum *Report to the Community*



Hosted by University of California Cooperative Extension, Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, and Sonoma County Food System Alliance.



COUNTY OF SONOMA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES





Sonoma County Food Forum *Report to the Community*

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An electronic version of this report can be found at <http://aginnovations.org/alliances/sonoma/action/#Forum>.

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Introduction

The Sonoma County Food Forum, held on February 24, 2011, represented the culmination of many hopes and much planning. It is the beginning of a broader-based conversation about the health of Sonoma County's agriculture, economy, environment and people.

This report attempts to capture the energy, excitement and ideas from the forum and is one step in a complex process of listening to one another and working together. The material presented here was gathered from panel discussions, presentations, table conversations, and responses to online surveys. Background information from the Sonoma County Food System Assessment was used where necessary to provide context.

This report was compiled by a subcommittee of the Sonoma County Food System Alliance. It is our hope that forum participants will find their voices, concerns, and experience reflected here, and that the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, the Sonoma County Food System Alliance, and other leaders will find this information useful in their continuing work on creating a healthy food system.

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Executive Summary

Over 300 people attended the Sonoma County Food Forum on February 24, 2011. They came from all across Sonoma County and represented a wide variety of stakeholders in the food system. Over the course of a highly interactive day, the group exchanged ideas, hopes, and fears about our continuing ability to farm in the county and have access to great tasting, healthy local products.

This forum was convened by forward thinking County Supervisors, organized by a large contingent of community leaders, and attended by the most diverse cross-section of the community ever assembled to discuss food and farming. The forum was the first ever expression of a shared aspiration by farmers, consumers, environmentalists, and hunger advocates for a better food system to serve Sonoma County. In holding this forum, Sonoma County joined with other counties in the North Bay and across California in recognizing the importance of a strong and just food system to the economic vitality of our community. While the challenges our farmers and our at-risk communities face are not small, neither are our aspirations and ideas to improve farm livelihoods and food access.

The participants of the event, through a series of dialogues carried out over the course of the day, identified several key recommendations for local government, businesses, and the community. These include:

- Develop more possibilities for in-county aggregation and processing of agricultural products. If we can aggregate and process more of our farm products in the county, we can increase access to these products, reduce costs for producers, and create new jobs.
- Strengthen community education about food and our food system to increase awareness of and demand for healthy, local foods. An educated public will choose to

support local business, creating a virtuous cycle of economic growth.

- Alleviate hunger and increase the affordability of fresh, local food. One strategy for this is to build neighborhood food security using a variety of urban farming, community garden, home garden, and micro-scale projects that are already underway.
- Increase the production of food on public lands to both provide opportunities for new farmers and increase production of food for food insecure communities.
- Strengthen local support, education and development opportunities for new farmers through internships and mentoring to help reverse the aging of our farming community.
- Improve the regulatory and permit processes for farmers to allow projects to move ahead more quickly and to reduce costly rules and legislation that do not improve environmental performance.
- Increase agritourism to both strengthen the bonds between urban and rural residents and as an economic development strategy.
- Focus on the needs for farm worker housing and transportation as a key to having and retaining the skilled workforce that modern agriculture requires.
- Recognize water as the key environmental issue in the county and find ways to balance interests of stakeholders in water resources.
- Establish a county staff position or positions to help further a healthy, local food system.

These bold recommendations are just a down payment on the attendees' willingness to roll-up their sleeves and help resolve long-standing challenges on our farms and in our communities. The single largest message from the event was a simple one: we care about and want to help create a future where agriculture can thrive in the county and every member of our community has access to healthy food.

Planning the Sonoma County Food Forum

In early 2010, Sonoma County Supervisor Valerie Brown, in a meeting with Supervisor Efren Carrillo and other county staff, proposed the idea of a forum to connect segments of the county's food and agriculture system. An overarching goal for the forum was to create new partnerships and relationships among the many segments of the local food system.

In the summer of 2010, Sonoma County Food System Alliance (SCFSA) members were recruited to join the planning committee, in addition to representatives from University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE), Sonoma County Department of Health Services, and the county's Community and Governmental Affairs Manager.

The committee met every other week to develop details of the shape and flow of the forum to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Engage and educate the Sonoma County community about the strengths of the Sonoma County food system.
2. Identify strategic opportunities to create a vibrant agriculture and food economy.
3. Gather community recommendations on activities and next steps.
4. Propose Sonoma County policies to best support a strong agriculture and food economy.

To accomplish these outcomes, the committee met frequently to develop the agenda content and process details, identify keynote speakers and panelists, develop a plan for community outreach, identify sponsors, and arrange for event logistics. To create ample opportunity for dialogue among participants, the day was deliberately designed to balance the presentations with small table discussion groups, using a format known as "World Café" conversations.

The committee developed the following key

questions to set the stage for conversations at the forum:

- Where should Sonoma County agriculture and food systems be in ten years?
- What are the opportunities and barriers to creating a vibrant agriculture and food economy in Sonoma County?
- How do we improve access to local foods?

The questions were included in the online registration form and collected to gather baseline information from participants. Participants were encouraged, but not required, to respond.

Community response to the Food Forum invitation surpassed expectation. The event reached capacity, with more than 300 people registered before the registration deadline.

A Participant's View of the Day

On the day of the Sonoma County Food Forum, enthusiastic eaters, farmers and ranchers, health workers and advocates, food providers, students, environmentalists, non-profit staffers and Sonoma County elected representatives, all gathered in the Showcase Cafe at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds.

The session opened with a welcome from Supervisor Shirlee Zane who reminded participants that food is more than fuel. It also provides nurturing support within a community.

Keynote Address

Richard Rominger, former U.S. Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, placed Sonoma County's activities in the context of California's adoption of Ag Vision 2030 by the CDFA, while highlighting the advantages of diversified production and broad scale distribution of agricultural products grown on a large California farm.



Paul Vossen, Farm Advisor for the University of California Cooperative Extension, emphasized Sonoma County's uniqueness, characterized by the

regionally diverse micro-climates and innovative farm products. Since the 1940's Sonoma County has lost production of many of its historic crops, including cherries, prunes, apples, and berries. Vossen highlighted the phenomenal opportunities for Sonoma County specialty crop production, such as the renewed local interest in saving the Gravenstein and other apple varieties.

Morning Producers Panel

Panelists included Keith Abeles, co-owner of Quetzal Farm; Joe Pozzi, Sonoma County lamb producer; Doug Beretta, owner of Beretta Dairy; and Sheana Davis, cheese producer and

owner of Epicurean Connection Shop. Panelists discussed the business challenges in their production processes and goals for their future in Sonoma County. The challenges discussed varied from the difficulty in keeping labor all year round to the higher costs of livestock feed. In spite of the challenges, the panelists shared one unifying vision: to be able to stay in the business of agricultural production in Sonoma County. Davis proposed individual producers working together and sharing facilities, manufacturing, and distribution as a key to success for small farmers.

Morning Working Groups

Where should Sonoma County agriculture be in ten years? The many suggestions and questions were recorded on large sticky notes and posted on the wall. The need for access to healthy food and education about its value for all was a common theme. Other topics included the need to increase community gardens, link farmers to schools, and change regulations toward more farmer-friendly policies. Aggregation, processing and distribution infrastructures, and local meat processing facilities were identified by participants as key food system enhancements needed to provide better access to locally produced food.

Forum participants enjoyed a beautifully prepared lunch of flavorful and seasonal locally-sourced food. Green Mary, organizer of no-waste events and Sonoma Compost, ensured that lunch was "green and local" from product sourcing to waste management.

As lunch ended, James M. Gore, Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Administration, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), encouraged Sonoma to make use of national resources.

Afternoon Health & Access Panel

Dr. Mary Maddux-González, retired Sonoma

County Public Health Officer, highlighted the strong relationships between food, nutrition, and obesity. The incidence of obesity is on the rise in Sonoma County, contributing to high-cost, long-term chronic disease, such as diabetes and cancer. While there are considerable barriers to accessible, affordable, healthy food, Dr. Maddux-González highlighted some local efforts, such as Health Action’s 2020 Vision, to increase healthy food consumption and physical activity.

The afternoon panelists explored opportunities for healthy eating for all, addressing food security and hunger within the county. Jane Doroff, Director of Senior Nutrition for the Council on Aging currently delivers 260,000 freshly-prepared meals to seniors age 60 and older each year. David Goodman, Executive Director of the Redwood Empire Food Bank (REFB) noted that the current level of produce production in Sonoma County is low relative to the population and potential demand. He said that REFB could easily use all of the produce grown in the county just to serve its clients.

A local review of the buying habits of Sonoma County residents was provided by Tom Scott of Oliver’s Market, a three store locally-owned grocery chain. Scott stated Oliver’s commitment to buying locally produced food, and explained that currently 23% of their sales are from Sonoma County products, but less than 2% of those sales are from fresh produce grown in the county.

Afternoon Working Groups

The afternoon table discussion explored and prioritized next steps to accomplish the visions for the Sonoma County food system. Table leaders captured these recommendations on large sticky notes and posted them where forum participants and members of the Board of Supervisors could review them. Ideas included using a Sonoma County-grown label for promotion, increasing production, adding processing facilities, increasing farmers’ markets, easing regulations for small farmers and educating the public about where their food comes from. The suggestions leaned heavily toward farming and agricultural practices and were limited in suggesting ways to use Sonoma

County agricultural production in helping with the issues of food insecurity and affordable, fresh, local food.

Closing

The four members of the Board of Supervisors present, Mike McGuire, Efren Carrillo, Shirlee Zane and David Rabbitt, offered informal responses to the visions and recommendations of forum participants. They expressed enthusiasm for Sonoma County agriculture as good for the economy and good for the environment, thanked forum participants for their day’s work, and noted their intention to put ideas into action.

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 In spite of the challenges, the panelists shared one unifying vision: to be able to stay in the business of agricultural production in Sonoma County.

Recommended Areas for Action

Eleven major themes, or recommended areas for action, were suggested during the Food Forum. For each issue area, the report provides a brief summary of some current activities, programs, or policies in place to help provide some context for the local situation and opportunities. This review is by no means exhaustive, but is intended to provide some context for concerns expressed at the Food Forum. Finally, each section concludes with some brief commentary on how action in this area corresponds with the ten-year visions expressed during the Food Forum morning session. The summary is intended to capture the essence of the conversation among diverse food system stakeholders during the one-day event. Any future policy or programmatic efforts will require a more in-depth analysis of issues, existing policies, and potential impacts. This summary is intended to spark the dialogue and collaboration needed to address these pressing issues. These recommendations are not listed in order of priority.

Increase opportunities for in-county aggregation and processing of agricultural products

Institutional buyers who seek larger quantities of local produce express frustration with their search, and farmers and ranchers seek ways to simplify their marketing and reduce travel miles. In 2009, University of California Cooperative Extension studied the feasibility of smaller regional slaughterhouses, based

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"It is crazy that small farmers have to haul pigs and poultry to Modesto and back just to be slaughtered."
.....

-Food Forum participant

on an innovative New Zealand model. USDA regulations and procedures are a factor in meat processing. Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) is now studying the feasibility of a multi-county aggregation hub for local products from small and medium sized family farmers and ranchers.

At the forum, meat producers discussed the need for a multi-species processing facility closer to home. "It is crazy that small farmers have to haul pigs and poultry all the way to Modesto and back just to be slaughtered," one participant stated. Another rancher who hauls

animals to the Central Valley for processing expressed concern about the environmental impact of such trips, saying "Our carbon footprint is a size 16!" On the pre-forum survey, a produce grower noted that "truck distribution of small product quantities is inefficient."

If progress were made in this area, in ten years Sonoma County would have a more secure local food system, with a reduced impact on climate change. Improved aggregation and marketing would make it easier for institutions to source local food in the quantities they require at an affordable price. Hubs, whether regional or smaller in scope, could serve as meeting places, fostering stronger relationships among farmers and between them and their customers, and enabling the sharing of information among farmers. In-county aggregation and processing might also improve access to healthy food for more Sonoma County residents. Building regional aggregation and processing infrastructure would contribute to establishing Sonoma County, along with its neighboring counties, as a leader in vital, local food systems - a vision expressed by many forum participants.

2 Strengthen community education about food and our food system

Currently there are a number of community education programs in various aspects of the food system, such as food gardening and how to cook with local produce. Ceres Program, Daily Acts, Occidental Arts and Ecology Center (OAEC), Petaluma Bounty Community Farm, Santa Rosa Junior College, and Sonoma Ecology Center all offer a variety of educational opportunities, and University of California Cooperative Extension has added a Master Gardener Food Gardening Specialist Program to its offerings. The iGROW website provides links to these and many other organizations on its resources page. In addition, Sonoma State University (SSU), the School Garden Network and OAEC are working together to survey the 270 schools within the county; as of this writing, results show that 130 of the 237 schools surveyed have school gardens. Additional survey findings will enable school gardens to learn from one another and build on successful initiatives in garden-based learning.

At the forum, panelist Tom Scott of Oliver’s Market underscored the role that retail markets can play in educating consumers. Markets are the place where people interact with their food supply. The value added to local produce need not be only in processing, but may be in giving information and building relationships between consumers and farmers.

Forum table conversations focused on three key areas of potential action in community education. First was to extend the conversation begun at the forum to include more people in the broader community. One suggestion, for example, was to facilitate a dialogue among all those concerned with school meals and school-based education about healthy food. Expanding “Farm-to-School” efforts was viewed as an opportunity to improve methods for local producers to sell their products, while also improving the health and education of local youth. Second, there was a thread of interest

in linking marketing and consumer education. Some retailers in the county already do this, and a forum participant suggested that the proposed permanent public market could include a community kitchen for teaching events. Third were celebratory suggestions, combining learning and fun, such as school harvest days and more events at Grange Halls and other public venues.

If progress were made in this area, in ten years there would likely be a more widely shared understanding of the real cost of food and of the work and issues of farmers. Increased activity in food system learning activities would equip eaters for making consumer choices that further their well being and support the local agriculture and food economy. Better community education could also help build vision for the county’s food system that is widely shared, culturally inclusive, and multi-generational, all values expressed by forum participants.

3 Alleviate hunger and increase the affordability and availability of fresh, healthful, and local food

Currently the percentage of households in Sonoma County experiencing food insecurity is increasing, as are indicators of an unhealthy diet.

At the forum, afternoon speakers spoke directly to the need to alleviate hunger and improve access to local, healthy, fresh food for low-income residents. Questions from the floor considered how to meet this challenge. Issues of affordability and access to food were the second most common response when survey participants were asked to identify barriers to creating a vibrant agriculture and food economy. One table conversation in the morning stated the goal clearly:

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In ten years, the diets of the food insecure could improve significantly.
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“Affordable access to fresh, local food is enjoyed by all Sonoma County eaters.” Yet no recommendations from the forum’s afternoon table conversations spoke directly to alleviating hunger and improving access to local, fresh food for low-income residents in Sonoma County. A next step might be to convene those who work to address issues of food insecurity and economic justice with representatives of other sectors of the food system to focus on developing more win-win strategies for addressing both hunger and the agriculture economy.

If progress were made in this area, in ten years the diets of the food insecure could improve significantly. Bringing together a focused conversation on hunger and affordable food would extend the work of the forum while strengthening working relationships over the long term among those involved in the solutions.

4 Build neighborhood food security

Neighborhoods lacking retail outlets for fresh food within walking distance of residents are sometimes referred to as “food deserts.” Current efforts to increase access to local produce in food deserts in Sonoma County are already making a positive impact on neighborhood food security. As one forum survey participant said, “There’s no need to reinvent the wheel. Take advantage of, fund, and assist existing programs to increase access to

local food.” Petaluma Bounty was mentioned as an example. Food pantries or food bank pick-up points at churches, many of which also have community gardens, are now happening

in Santa Rosa. Produce swaps and workshops have been held at some community gardens, and could be multiplied. The iGROW website has been a good source of information about

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 “Take advantage of, fund, and assist existing programs to increase access to local food.”

-Food Forum participant

workshops and events for gardeners, and might include more information about how community gardens can share produce and become neighborhood food hubs. The Sonoma County Healthy Food Outlet Project is working to improve retail options in several low-income neighborhoods.

At the forum, participants offered a number of suggestions for improving neighborhood food security. Some suggestions involved new initiatives, such as smaller farmers’ markets in low income neighborhoods; more farmers’ markets where people already gather such as parks, school parking lots, and large businesses; changing zoning regulations to allow mini-grocery stores (called pulperias in Central America) in residential neighborhoods, or sales of produce from gardens (e.g. new urban agriculture zoning ordinance in San Francisco). Other suggestions involve building on what’s working now, such as expanding the use of CalFresh, with more vendors, venues, and participants. Adding activities at existing venues, particularly community gardens, was another strong emphasis. Given the many ideas, coordination and communication of successful approaches is what is most needed.

If progress were made in this area, in ten years neighborhood access to produce and the health of residents would be improved. Neighborhood food hubs would also contribute to a stronger sense of community and the potential for local resilience in the face of environmental disaster or civil disturbance. Improving neighborhood food security also has the potential to involve more people consciously in the local food system, increasing their food knowledge and sense of ownership.

5 Increase the production of food on public lands

Currently there is strong interest in multiplying effective strategies for growing food on public lands. A week before the forum, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors endorsed a

process to evaluate the potential use/lease of county-owned lands for community gardens, agricultural production, and grazing. This will include lands in addition to those already a part of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (SCAPOS). SCAPOS currently leases some land for grazing and small scale produce farming, for example, Tierra Vegetables in Santa Rosa.

This year Sonoma County Regional Parks is launching a community garden in Larson Regional Park in the Springs area of the Sonoma Valley. Additionally, Bayer Farm was identified by some forum participants as a model of a city/non-profit partnership that provides small plots for households and is a resource for increased neighborhood food security with culturally appropriate foods, education and celebrations. iGROW and the 350 Garden Challenge stimulated interest and activity in backyard and community gardening, and the iGROW website continues to be a resource for home and community gardeners.

At the forum, participants affirmed that there is a need and opportunity to grow more food on public lands - in community gardens, neighborhood urban farms, school gardens and small farm businesses. Both county and city lands should be considered. Given the high cost of land in Sonoma County, access to public land would be a great benefit to those entering farming as an occupation. Greater access to small parcels of urban land could multiply community gardens and related initiatives.

If progress were made in this area, in ten years growing food on land that is now fallow would increase the availability of local produce, and increase the number of households participating in community gardens or communal urban farms. It's likely that increased production in small plots of public land by a variety of farmers, organizations and individuals would also increase the diversity of species and varieties grown and encourage seed saving. "Local" and "diverse" were two key values expressed by table groups at the forum and in the online surveys.

Using public lands for agriculture could help

Sonoma County continue as an agricultural county, including increasing its organic/sustainable acreage. Keynoter Paul Vossen reported that Sonoma County is currently ranked third in California in the percentage of agriculture in organic production.

Children and youth of Sonoma County would benefit from participation in community and school gardens on public land, furthering knowledge of healthy eating and food preparation, and promoting outdoor exercise.

6 Support, educate, and develop new farmers through internships and mentoring

Currently there are a number of programs for new and aspiring farmers. California FarmLink (CFL) matches mentors with new farmers and is exploring more ways to use communication technology for mentoring. University of California Cooperative Extension is awaiting the announcement of a USDA grant opportunity to develop a beginning rancher and farmer program in Sonoma County.

Internships on farms are difficult because of labor laws; interns either must be paid minimum wage or spend their time in instructional activities of a recognized educational institution. Farms are being fined for not paying apprentices and interns, who are deemed workers under federal law. College of Marin has developed an apprentice program in sustainable agriculture, and Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC) is considering developing a similar program. A few local farms have worked creatively to develop on-farm education that satisfies the requirements of the law.

At the forum, participants recognized that Sonoma County needs to cultivate young farmers to increase local food production. More mentorships, internships and programs will be needed, as well as help with the costs of entering the profession, from start-up cost to the cost of land, and more.

If progress were made in this area, in ten years the average age of farmers would decrease, and it is likely that the percentage of

women and minority farmers would increase. It is also possible that there would be an increase in organic, sustainable farms. Affordability for consumers and economic well-being for

farmers could be in better balance, an important value expressed by forum participants.

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Participants spoke about the need to simplify regulations and the permit process for small farmers.
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7 Improve regulatory and permit processes for farmers

Currently regulations governing agriculture, food processing and other sectors of the food system reside in a variety of county, state and federal departments and agencies.

In Sonoma County agricultural practices are overseen by the Agricultural Commissioner's Office. Regulation of land use is determined by zoning of the General Plan. Currently a permit is needed to plant from 1/2 acre to 10 acres of orchard or vineyard and costs \$ 436.00. A permit to develop 10 to 50 acres of orchard or vineyard costs \$988.00. Some small-scale growers find these and other fees daunting. As this report goes to press, the planning commission is reviewing some of the regulations relating to agricultural land use.

The California Land Conservation Act, a property tax benefit for land in agriculture, also known as the Williamson Act, is in place in Sonoma County. Inclusion in the program under the Williamson Act requires a minimum of 10 acres. The Board of Supervisors supports the Williamson Act. California budgetary struggles, though, threaten funding for the Act.

At the forum, participants spoke about the need to simplify and coordinate regulations and the permit process for small farmers and

to tailor regulations for various farm sizes. The simplification needs also apply to permits for agricultural buildings, as well as easing regulations to allow farm volunteers and interns. The importance of continuing support for the Williamson Act was stressed.

If progress were made in this area, in ten years improved regulatory and permitting processes would reduce the burden on small-scale farmers, increasing their economic competitiveness without compromising human or environmental health.

8 Expand engagement with agriculture by increasing agritourism

Agritourism includes both getting Sonoma County children and families out to county farms and bringing more visitors to the area. Farm Trails has been a leading organization encouraging farm visits in Sonoma County through their annual events and published guide. Barriers to more on-farm visits include few facilities for day trippers, complex and expensive single-use permitting and application processes for agricultural education events, liability issues and regulatory challenges. School field trips to area farms do happen, but stretched budgets make these enrichment activities unaffordable for many classrooms.

At the forum, panelist Doug Beretta offered a vision of a farm parking lot that has as many visitors' cars as a winery tasting room. In their table conversations, Forum participants paid considerable energy and attention to increasing agritourism. Forum surveys revealed some synergistic thinking about farm tours. Could they be packaged and marketed as winery tours are? Would the future Smart Train offer an opportunity to provide an agriculture and ecology tour, using efficient public transport to bring visitors to Sonoma County to see sustainable agriculture firsthand? One identified need in this area is to review regulations affecting agritourism.

If progress were made in this area, in ten years food and agriculture literacy among residents and visitors would increase, as they grew in understanding of the real cost of food and the work and concerns of farmers. Agritourism could also be an entry point for those considering more extensive educational programs or farming as a vocation. Agritourism would also supplement farm income. More people with direct knowledge of farming would create a climate that supports the preservation of the county's agricultural heritage and would further Sonoma County's reputation for excellence in agriculture and food, two goals expressed by forum participants.

9 Address needs for farm worker housing and transportation

Efforts to improve public transportation, pedestrian and bicycle access are underway by local governments and community organizations such as the Sonoma County Transportation Authority and the North Bay Sponsoring Committee. Concern for climate change by government and non-governmental organizations is driving the search for alternatives to private cars carrying people to and from work. Making bicycling and walking safer and easier, improving bike and pedestrian access to existing bus routes, and van pooling from urban neighborhoods could all contribute to more efficient and lower impact transportation for farm workers.

Some efforts have been made to improve farm worker housing in several communities in the county. Napa County has addressed some of the issues of farm worker housing with three housing centers for a migrant workforce. Learning from these projects - about both best practices and obstacles - would enable county and city officials, as well as farmers, to review options and develop local solutions.

At the forum, there was a thread of concern for farm labor throughout table discussions and online surveys. Panelist Keith Abeles, from

Quetzel Farms, noted the difficulty of keeping labor year-round with a seasonal farm produce business. As few representatives of labor were present at the forum there was no clarity around specific projects or policy changes. A possible next step is to bring together, perhaps as a research project, those who work to address the issues of farm laborers, including transportation and housing. Farm workers, representatives of labor and economic justice organizations, farmers, and members of the Sonoma County Food System Alliance could collaborate to identify issues and begin to articulate solutions that could benefit farm workers and the agriculture economy.

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 Farm workforces that are more stable generally receive better pay and benefits with more opportunities for advancement.

If progress were made in this area, in ten years improved and increased housing for farm workers would enable Sonoma County farmers to compete more effectively for workers. More transportation options would improve the quality of life of farm workers by reducing transportation time and costs. Better working and living conditions for farm workers could increase the stability of the farm workforce. Farm work forces that are more stable generally receive better pay and benefits with more opportunities for advancement. And farm workers with more time and money can devote more of both to providing a healthy diet for themselves and their families.

10 Focus on water as a key environmental issue and balance interests of stakeholders in water resources

Access to water is critical to farmers and can limit new, diverse ventures. Forum keynote speaker, Paul Vossen of UCCE noted that there is not enough water in Sonoma County to

sustain a more robust apple industry. Some areas of Sonoma County have undependable ground water resources due to their geology. The Sonoma County Draft Environmental Impact Report for the General Plan 2020 contains detailed information. Attention is currently being paid to the impact of agricultural practices on water quality, particularly in vineyards and on grazing land. While the Federal Clean Water Act mandates a biennial survey of pollution in bodies of water, there are no existing regulations to monitor the amount of water used by production agriculture in Sonoma County. The State of California is moving toward limiting water used for frost protection in vineyards in order to protect coho salmon populations from reduced flows in the Russian River. A period for public comment on a rule making document and environmental report begins as this report goes to press. A recent California Energy Commission study found that water related to energy use consumes 19% of all California electricity, linking water use with greenhouse gas impacts.

At the forum, and in online surveys, participants named water as the most pressing food system environmental issue. There is a need for all stakeholders - the various agricultural sectors, households, and fisheries - to continue and further develop existing conservation, water storage and water quality practices. Forum participants suggested exploring opportunities for dry farming, rainwater catchment, reservoirs, and more efficient water distribution.

If progress were made in this area, in ten years Sonoma County will be better positioned to cope with drought, the effects of climate change, a growing demand for local food, and increasing population. It is likely that water will remain a key issue around which to build the continuing cooperation among all food system sectors.

Establish a county staff position or positions to help further a healthy, local food system

Currently regulations governing agriculture, food processing, and other sectors of the food system reside in a variety of county, state, and federal departments and agencies. Although the Sonoma County General Plan 2010 calls for the promotion of Sonoma County agricultural goods to increase profitability and identify awareness of county agricultural products, there is no coordinating or staff role serving all sectors of the food system in Sonoma County. Forum participants recognized the need for a county level position to enhance the economic development of local farms and ranches, while coordinating food systems work across county departments and community groups to enhance food access and public health. This proposed position would also exist to assist in the lengthy and complex processes needed to gain the necessary permits for agricultural operations.

A number of county departments have some responsibility for tracking and supporting food system issues, most notably the office of the Agricultural Commissioner, UCCE, the Economic Development Board, and the Department of Health Services, including Environmental Health. In fiscal year 2010-2011, the Department of Health Services created a Food System Coordinator position to bridge food systems work with public health initiatives. This position does not, however, handle the range of issues identified during the Forum such as agricultural production and marketing, economic development, or regulatory and permitting processes.

Select! Sonoma, which was an effort to promote local products from 1989-2002 was not sustained. Some forum participants expressed the need to create a similar initiative, and believe a dedicated county level staff person could spearhead this effort.

Marin County officials and UCCE collaborated to create the position of agricultural ombudsman, which is funded by the county. Responsibilities include informing county officials and staffers of the concerns of agricultural producers, and helping farmers and ranchers thread the maze of permitting and regulatory procedures.

At the forum, a number of table conversations explored the needed role for a county staff person dedicated to supporting economic development and sustainability of the local food system. Some saw this as a regulatory ombudsperson, helping farmers navigate the complexities of regulations and coordinating efforts for policy change and regulatory simplification. “The county needs to streamline the red tape and expense that local producers have to go through,” noted a participant on the pre-forum survey. Keynoter Paul Vossen and panelist and dairy farmer Doug Beretta advocated for a position which would be primarily involved with marketing, increasing consumer food literacy, and promoting Sonoma County products. Some tables envisioned a comprehensive position, covering “...all regulatory, marketing, and policy issues.”

If progress were made in this area, in ten years farmers and ranchers would benefit economically, and their concerns would be better represented to county decision makers. Promotion, coordination, and support across the spectrum of food system stakeholders could also stimulate greater economic development and job creation in food processing, distribution, and retail sectors. In addition, a central staff role could promote some of the broader values and goals expressed by forum participants in their survey responses and table conversations. Sonoma County could exercise leadership, with a national reputation for a local, diverse, sustainable food system, and a key staff person could lead in its promotion.

A pervasive theme in the online surveys and forum evaluations was the need for further communication, cooperation, and collaboration among members of various sectors of the food system. While all segments of the system share responsibility for keeping the conversation going

and seeking new collaborations, a dedicated staff position could provide coordination and an informational clearing-house. Supporting a staff coordinator for the various sectors might also be an opportunity for a new partnership between all relevant agencies and organizations.

.....
There is no coordinating or staff role serving all sectors of the food system in Sonoma County.
.....

Conclusion

While the conclusion of a document generally addresses next steps, this report serves primarily to pull together the voices of the forum for all who attended, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, and the Sonoma County Food System Alliance. The next steps will be determined as we go forward together. Some



important themes, however, bear noting, although they did not fit neatly as either recommendations or aspects of a vision for our food system.

During the forum there was positive recognition that so many representatives of the various sectors of the food system

had come together for a day of conversation. The possibility of overcoming the animosity of past campaigns - over issues such as genetically engineered crops, competition for water resources, and other environmental concerns - offers hope for future collective action.

.....
How can we set the table, so that the next round of public conversation includes representatives of all sectors of the food system?
.....

Farmers and ranchers want to carry Sonoma County's agricultural heritage forward, pulling from the best of our past practices and values to carry us into a preferred future, just as consumers want to see

their grandchildren grow up healthy, enjoying and respecting fresh, local food and those who provide it.

At the forum, moderator Stephanie Larson of UCCE Sonoma County began the morning by asking, "What is local?" She noted that it might mean our backyards and tables, or our neighborhood, or our county or region.

Panelist and supermarket manager, Tom Scott, echoed this question and answered that for his purchasing and marketing purposes, local means Sonoma County. But clearly local is a plastic concept, and no one definition suits every application of this food system value.

From time to time throughout the forum, and as we worked on this report, we realized that significant sectors were missing from the table, and some voices were not as loud and clear as we would have liked. Farm workers and food preparation workers were underrepresented. The diversity of race, culture, and language we find in Sonoma County was not reflected among those gathered. As the work of the Food Forum flows into next steps - projects, programs, research, advocacy, more public forums - we will all need to ask again and again who is missing at the table. How can we set the table - schedule, organize, and facilitate - so that the next round of public conversation includes representatives of all sectors of the food system and the community of eaters of Sonoma County?

Shifting any large-scale system takes dedication and time. Emerging issues with the local food system can no longer be ignored. We hope this forum report highlights the proposed recommendations and opportunities to build a system to truly serve Sonoma County's changing needs. As the linkages between food production, the environment, public health, and economic resilience become more visible, Sonoma County can be in the forefront of a growing movement to create a healthy and viable local food system for its community members.

The Sonoma County Food System Alliance is committed to working on these issues with the Board of Supervisors and the community, and will report on its action plans and further recommendations.

Appendices

- A. Acronyms & Glossary
- B. Food Forum Agenda
- C. Food Forum Participants
- D. Sonoma County Food System Alliance Overview
- E. Food System Overview
- F. Food Security and Access in Sonoma County
- G. Local Distribution and Processing in Sonoma County
- H. 2007 Census of Agriculture, Sonoma County

Appendix A

Acronyms & Glossary

Acronyms

CAFF – Community Alliance with Family Farmers

CFL – California FarmLink

OAEC – Occidental Arts and Ecology Center

SCAPOS – Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

SCFSA – Sonoma County Food System Alliance

SRJC – Santa Rosa Junior College

SSU – Sonoma State University

UCCE – University of California Cooperative Extension

USDA – United States Department of Agriculture

Glossary

350 Garden Challenge – Sonoma County’s annual challenge to grow food, save water, conserve energy and build community.

Aggregation Hub – A centrally located facility with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally/regionally produced food products.

CalFresh – The federal program, known as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as Food Stamps.

California FarmLink – Matches new farmers to available farm land.

California Land Conversation Act – A property tax benefit for agricultural land; also known as the Williamson Act.

Carbon Footprint – The total amount of greenhouse gases, such as CO₂, produced directly and indirectly to support human activities.

Council on Aging – Provides services to promote well-being and maintain independence for Sonoma County’s aging community.

County of Sonoma Department of Health Services – Works with individuals and communities to achieve and preserve health and well being.

Daily Acts – Through workshops and tours, Daily Acts’ mission is to transform communities through inspired action and education.

Economic Development Board – Provides assistance with startup, retention and expansion of Sonoma County businesses and jobs, encourages diversification of economic activity, and works to strengthen the county’s tax base.

Food Deserts – Neighborhoods lacking in retail outlets for fresh food

Health Action’s 2020 Vision - By the year 2020, we envision that Sonoma County will be the healthiest county in California.

iGROW – Seeks to improve the health of Sonoma County residents by increasing access to healthy food.

Multi-Species Processing Facility – A plant that can slaughter, process, and market multiple animal species.

Petaluma Bounty – Works to create a sustainable food system in Petaluma with healthy fresh food for everyone, since 2006.

Pulperias – A neighborhood grocery store where provisions and liquor are sold.

Redwood Empire Food Bank – The largest hunger-relief organization north of San Francisco with the mission to end hunger in our community.

Sonoma County Farm Trails – A member organization that produces a Sonoma County farms guide.

Sonoma County Healthy Food Outlet Project – Created to help food outlets (grocery stores, supermarkets, and small markets) provide customers with healthy food options while at the same time helping stores increase customer loyalty and store profits.

World Café – Small table discussion groups to create dialogue among participants.

Sonoma County Food Forum

Healthy Agriculture, Healthy Food, Healthy Economy

Thursday, February 24, 2011

8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Showcase Café

Sonoma County Fairgrounds

1350 Bennett Valley Road

Santa Rosa, California 95404

*Co-hosted by Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, University of California Cooperative Extension,
Sonoma County Department of Health Services, and Sonoma County Food System Alliance*

PROGRAM

8:00 Registration & Coffee/Tea

Morning Session

8:30 Welcome: Stephanie Larson, University of California Cooperative Extension
Shirlee Zane, Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, Third District

8:45 Keynote Address

Richard Rominger, Rominger Brothers Farm

Mr. Rominger will discuss the agricultural political landscape in California, discuss the benefits and necessary relationships to encourage regional and national markets, and provide Rominger Brothers Farm examples of how to build a regionally oriented business while serving national markets.

Paul Vossen, University of California Cooperative Extension

Mr. Vossen will provide an overview of Sonoma County agriculture and discuss future agriculture and crop possibilities in the county.

9:40 Sonoma Café I: Where do we want Sonoma County agriculture and the food system to be in ten years?

10:40 Panel Discussion: Opportunities and Needs for Local Production

Panelists will talk about new opportunities for agriculture and food production and outline needs to build successful agriculture in Sonoma County.

Moderator: Stephanie Larson, University of California Cooperative Extension

- Keith Abeles, Quetzal Farm
- Joe Pozzi, Sonoma County Lamb Producer
- Doug Beretta, Beretta Dairy
- Sheana Davis, Epicurean Connection Shop



12:00 Locally harvested and prepared lunch

Afternoon Session

1:00 Building a sustainable local food and agriculture system for a healthy community
Mary Maddux-González, MD, MPH
Public Health Officer, Sonoma County Department of Health Services

1:30 Panel Discussion: Opportunities and Needs for Healthy Local Eating
Panelists will discuss and explore connections between local markets for food production, food security, and hunger.

Moderator: Tanya Narath, Leadership Institute for Ecology and the Economy

- Jane Doroff, Council on Aging
- David Goodman, Redwood Empire Food Bank
- Tom Scott, Oliver's Market

2:15 Sonoma Café II: Participants will identify next steps and recommendations to propose to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors and the Sonoma County Food system Alliance.

3:45 Closing Remarks: Mike McGuire, Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, Fourth District
Efren Carrillo, Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, Fifth District
David Rabbitt, Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, Second District

4:00 Forum celebration!

Many thanks to the following sponsors/contributors for making this event possible:



Appendix C

Food Forum Participants

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Keith	Abeles	Quetzal Farms
Gary	Abreim	
Kristine	Acquino	Sonoma Land Trust
Craig	Adams	
Sylvia	Alejandre	
Suzanne	Alexandre	Sonoma County Farm Trails
Nabeel	Al-Shamma	Nineveh Vineyard
Alyssa	Alvarez	MHS Green Academy
Claire	Anderson	Sonoma County Water Agency
Bob	Anderson	United Winegrowers for Sonoma County
Mela	Angleman	
Celosia	Arcadia	
Misti	Arias	Sonoma County Agriculture and Open Space District
Erin	Axelrod	Daily Acts
Melanie	Bagby	City of Cloverdale Planning Commission
Will	Bakx	Sonoma Compost Co.
Raymond	Baltar	Dominican University Green MBA Program
Laurie-Ann	Barbour	Green Mary
Robert	Barclay	RussianRiverTv
Barbara	Barney	Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County
Kevin	Barnum	California Farmlink, Aspiring Farmer
Tessie	Barton	
Tom	Bastianon	
Debi	Batini	Elsie Allen High School Agriculture Department
Ellen	Bauer	Sonoma County Department of Health Services
David	Beazlie	Garden Sanctuaries
Janet	Beazlie	Garden Sanctuaries
Hector	Bedolla	Consultant
Chris	Bekins	Sonoma County Department of Health Services
Lisa	Bell	UC Coopoerative Extension, Sonoma County
Doug	Beretta	Beretta Dairy
Paul	Berg	RussianRiverTv
Karen	Bianchi-Moreda	Valley Ford Cheese Co
Scott	Bice	Redwood Hill Farm

Debra	Birkinshaw	Green Sangha
Melanie	Blake	Dunbar Elementary School/ Sonoma Valley Unified School district
Shepherd	Bliss	Kokopelli Farm
Molly	Bloom	California FarmLink
Dixie	Bohlke	Dixie Bohlke Catering
Amy	Bolten	Sonoma County Water Agency
Judy	Bonzi	Rancho Tecolote, Olive oil
Josephine	Borgeson	Episcopal Diocese of Northern California
Amanda	Bornstein	Greenbelt Alliance
Lesley	Brabyn	Salmon Creek Ranch
Jenna	Brager	Conservation Corps North Bay
Jennifer	Branham	Laguna Farm
Jonathan	Bravo	LandPaths' Bayer Farm
Ramses	Bravo	Chef, True North Health
Renata	Brillinger	California Climate & Agriculture Network (CalCAN)
Marguerite	Brown	
Kelly	Bryan	
Bob	Burke	
Lisa	Bush	
Melissa	Bushway	Green Mary
Autumn	Buss	City of Santa Rosa Economic Development
Sheri	Cardo	Sonoma Land Trust
Efren	Carrillo	Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, 5th District
Ché	Casul	West County Community Services
Julie	Chasen	Green Sangha
Peter	Christiansen	
Mary	Clemens	Sonoma County Parks
Alicia	Cohen	Sutter Hospital
Jo Anne	Cohn	Field Representative for Assemblymember Michael Allen
Christine	Condon	
David	Cooper	Oak Hill Farm of Sonoma, LLC
Leslie	Corp	Western United Dairymen
Lisa	Correia	Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's Office
Bob	Corshen	CAFF
Norm	Corwin	
Angie	Corwin	Network for a Healthy California
Cathryn	Couch	Ceres Community Project, Food Systems Alliance
Beth	Dadko	
Lisa Robin	Dale	
Robin	Dale	
Andrea	Davis	Quarter Acre Farm
Pamela	Davis	Sonoma County Planning Commission

Sheana	Davis	The Epicurean Connection
Marion	Deeds	Economic Assistance Director, Sonoma County Human Services
Donna	del Rey	Relish Culinary Adventures
Mary Jo	Delos	Sonoma county Regional Parks Foundation
JoEllen	DeNicola	Ceres Community Project
Leonard	Diggs	SRJC Shone Farm
Robert	DiLillo	Santa Rosa City Schools -Piner High Culinary Arts
Michael	Dimock	Roots of Change
Lauren	Dixon	
Rod	Dole	County of Sonoma, Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector
Kathryn	Donohue	Kaiser Permanente
Jane	Doroff	Food System Alliance
Paula	Downing	Farmers' Market Manager, Santa Rosa
Suzanne	Doyle	
Eleanore	Duyndam	
Candi	Edmondson	
Kimberly	Eisert	Kaiser Permanente
Wendy	Eliot	
Veronica	Ferguson	County Administrator, County of Sonoma
Christopher	Fisher	Petaluma Bounty
Anne	Fitzgerald	
Peggy	Flynn	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation & Open Space District
Nick	Frey	Sonoma County Winegrape Commission
Wendy	Friefeld	District Director for Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey
Jesse	Froehlich	LandPaths' Bayer Farm
Matt	Gamba	Bud's Custom Meats
Jeremy	Gettle	Petaluma Seed Bank
Ginger	Ghigliano	Green Sangha
Dayna	Ghiradelli	Clover Stornetta
Ed	Gilardi	United Markets
Norman	Gilroy	CAFF
Karen	Giovaninni	UC Cooperative Extension, Sonoma County
Mike	Giovannoni	
Cindy	Gleason	Gleason Ranch
David	Goodman	Redwood Empire Food Bank
James	Gore	US Department of Agriculture
Suzanne	Grady	Petaluma Bounty
Barbara	Graves	
Dorothy	Gray	
Julia	Green	Spiral Foods Cooperative

Justin	Greenwood	Patchworks Farm
Bill	Greenwood	
Len	Greenwood	Montgomery HS Green Academy
Sharon	Grossi	Valley End Farm
Debbie	Grove	Piner High School Culinary Arts
Ritz	Guggiana	Sonoma Direct
Eric	Haas	Wild Harvest
John	Hadley	Merchants and Millers
Arlie	Haig	iGrow, Kawana Community & South Park Community Gardens
Jennifer	Hainstock	Outreach Director for Supervisor Valerie Brown
Fasih	Hameed	Petaluma Health Center
Debora	Hammond	Sonoma State University
Tom	Hammond	
Terry	Harrison	Community Alliance with Family Farmers
Caryl	Hart	Sonoma County Regional Parks
David	Healy	
Steve	Heckeroth	SolTrac
Julia	Hemquist	
Tucker	Hemquist	Spiral Foods Cooperative
Kate	Hendricks	
Heidi	Herrmann	Santa Rosa Junior College
Kathleen	Hill	Sonoma Valley School Garden Project Director
Jana	Hill	Sonoma County Dept. of Health Services
Eleanor	Hilmer	Wild Rose Ranch
Melissa	Hippard	Greenbelt Alliance
Miriam	Hodgman	The Redwood Empire Food Bank
Janus	Holt Matthes	Community Alliancw with Family Farmers
Carol	Hoover	
Emmett	Hopkins	Foggy River Farm
Lynda	Hopkins	Healdsburg Tribune & Windsor Times
Virginia	Hubbell	Cittaslow USA
Derek	Huntington	Sonoma County GoLocal Cooperative
Nikee	Huntington	
Julie	Hutcheson	Committee for Green Foothills
Heather	Irwin	Press Democrat
Michael	Jacob	Talia Developments Inc.
Rani	Jacobs	Urban Family Farms
Lawrence	Jaffe	Climate Protection Campaign/ Sebastopol Grange
Grayson	James	Petaluma Bounty
Zoe	Jayne	Nutrition & Culinary Student
James	Johnson	Food Systems Working Group

Paul	Kaiser	Singing Frogs Farm
Roz	Katz	Founding Member Clo-Net
Bill	Keene	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
Lucy	Kenyon	North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council
Alexandra	Kicenik Devarenne	CalAthena Olive Oil Consulting, Petaluma CA
Steve	Killey	
Abigail	Killey	Wool Growers, 4-H
Scott	Knippelmeir	Strong Arm Farm
Nan	Kohler	
Rachel	Kohn Obut	Lunita Farm
John	Kolling	Solana Gold co.
Paul	Kolling	Nana Mae Organics
Perry	Kozlowski	Kozlowski Farms
Carol	Kozlowski	Kozlowski Farms
Andrea	Krout	County of Sonoma
Wendy	Krupnick	FSA, CAFF, SRJC Sustainable Ag Program, iGROW
Walt	Kruse	County of Sonoma
Arielle	Kubu-Jones	State Senator Noreen Evans, Field Representative
Genevieve	Ladha	Sonoma Ecology Center
Mark	Lancaster	Palm Drive Health Care Foundation
Les	Landek	Offerings of the Land
Stephanie	Larson	UC Cooperative Extension
Sharon	Lawhorn	
Jim	Leddy	Sonoma County Community and Government Affairs Manager
Robert	Legge	North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
Mike	Lennox	UC Cooperative Extension
Sarah	Lewers	
Nancy	Lilly	Tallgrass Ranch, Olive oil
Jeremy	Little	Carle Mackie Power Ross
Melita	Love	Farm to Pantry
Laura	Mack	Relish Culinary Adventures
Jake	Mackenzie	Vice Mayor, Rohnert Park
John	Mackie	carle, mackie, power & ross llp/ Sonoma County Food & Wine Center
Mary	Maddux-Gonzalez, MD, MPH	County of Sonoma
Alison	Malisa	Multinational Exchange for Sustainable Agriculture (MESA)
Katy	Mamen	Ag Innovations Network
Paul	Marten	Western United Dairymen
Brian	Martens	Sonoma State University
Karen	Martin	SRJC Student, Aspiring Farmer
Jack	May	Bio-R, Director

Marrienne	McBride	Council on Aging
Elizabeth	McCarthy	Senator Noreen Evans
Patrick	McCloskey	
Jim	McCray	Sonoma County Regional Parks
Helen	McGrath	Ag Innovations Network
Mike	McGuire	Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, 4th District
Christina	McGuirk	Sonoma County Regional Parks
Diane	McKay	
Laura	Mendes	SRJC Sustainable Agriculture Program
Milo	Mitchel	Zazu Restaurant
Evelina	Molina	Start-Up CSA
Frank	Mongini	Veterinarian
Pamela	Moore	Redwood Community Health Coalition
Mary	Munat	Green Mary
Ian	Munc	Green Sangha
Tanya	Narath	Leadership Institute for Ecology and the Economy
Cindy	Nelson	
Tony	Nelson	Sonoma Land Trust
Judith	Newton	Transition Cotati
Greg	Nilsen	Wine Country Cuisine
Pat	Noren	Sonoma-Marin Cattlemen's Association
Charlie	Nudi	MHS Green Academy
Tiffany	Nurrenbern	Roots of Change
Annette	O'Kelly	Elsie Allen High School
Christina	Ogden	
Mayacamas	Olds	Sunshine Organic Consulting
Merrilee	Olson	
Torrey	Olson	Gabriel Farm
Oscar	Orozco Garcia	Cielo Azul Coop Farm
Anthony	Ott	Farmer
Adam	Parks	Victorian Farmstead
Alissa	Pearce	Dunbar Elementary School
Natalie	Peck	
Ruth	Persselin	Petaluma Bounty
Linda	Peterson	California FarmLink
Yannick	Phillips	The California State Grange
Nica	Poznanovich	Santa Rosa Community Market
Alex	Pozzi	UC Cooperative Extension
Joe	Pozzi	Pozzi Livestock
Lisa	Preschel	School Garden Network
Karen	Preuss	
Laurie	Puzo	Senator Noreen Evans
David	Rabbitt	Sonoma County Board of Supervisor's, 2nd District

Kelley	Rajala	ShareExchange Cooperative
Olivia	Rathbone	
Sabel Rose	Regalia	Spiral Foods Cooperative
Jim	Reichardt	Liberty Ducks
Tiffany	Renee	Councilmember, City of Petaluma
Lynn	Renn	
Marty	Renner	Farm Manager, Singing Frogs Farm
Samantha	Reslock	Kaiser Permanente Employee Wellness
Dana	Revallo	
Arnie	Riebli	Sunrise Farms
Ellie	Rilla	UC Cooperative Extension
Ellen	Roberts	Santa Rosa Original Certified Farmers Market
Richard	Robinson	Sonoma Organics
Angel	Rodriguez	Sustainable Living Institute/We Green You!/Transition Sebastopol
Gilberto	Rodriquez	Cielo Azul Coop Farm
Kevin	Rogers	Merchants and Millers
Leticia	Romero	St. Joseph Health System, Sonoma County
Richard	Rominger	Rominger Brothers Farm
Balyn	Rose	Wild Rose Ranch
Kristee	Rosendahl	Smart Gardener
Joey	Rosenheim	Patch.com
Beverly	Rudolph	Solutions Plus
Robbie	Rusert	
Alexandra	Russell	NorthBay biz magazine
Carol	Russell	City Council Member, Cloverdale
Greg	Russell	NorthBay biz magazine
Tony	Sadoti	Terra Sonoma Produce
Jill	Saudan	Department of Health Services, County of Sonoma
Cheryl	Scholar	KRCB
Grace	Schulman	
Dan	Schurman	Ag Innovations Network
Steve	Schwartz	Small farmer
Deb	Scott	Oliver's Market
Tom	Scott	Oliver's Market
Randi	Seidner	Fork & Shovel & Barndiva
Marsha	Sendar	Nutritionist, Holistic Health Educator
Paula	Shatkin	Slow Food RUssian River
Erin	Shea	Patchworks Farm
Todd	Sheffield	Community First Credit Union
Leslie	Sheridan	Planet Cents
Patty	Sherwood	Petaluma Bounty Farm
Jessica	Siegal	Ag Innovations Network

Alan	Siegle	Sonoma Compost Co.
Joyce	Sigman	Green Market Lane & Dancing Spoons Kitchens
Kaydee	Simon	Green Sangha
Chris	Sittig	
Andrew	Smith	Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's Office
Marcy	Smothers	
Christine	Sosko	Department of Health Services, Environmental Health
Lisa	Spaletta	Spaletta Ranch
Patti	Stack	Capers & Co.
Carolyne	Stayton	Transition US
Lisa	Stockwell	Smart Gardener
Susan	Stover	Terra Sonoma Produce
Dee	Swanhuyser	Bay Area Ridge Trail Council
Leandra	Swent	Southern Sonoma County Resource Conservation District
Zeno	Swijtink	Sonoma State University
Willie	Tamayo	La Tortilla Factory
Wanda	Tapia	Latino Service Providers Sonomoa County
Tim	Tesconi	Sonoma County Farm Bureau
Dagny	Thomas	Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's Office
Ann	Thrupp	Fetzer/Bonterra Vineyards
Susan	Upchurch	County of Sonoma
Johanna	Vanoni	Vanoni Ranch
Alina	Vanoni Collin	Vanoni Ranch
Marsha	Vas Dupre, Ph.D.	City of SR Councilmember
Monica	Verducci	
David	Viviani	
Miriam	Volat	Ag Innovations Network, Alliance Program
Paul	Vossen	UC Cooperative Extension
Sylvia	Wages	
Paul	Wallace	Petaluma Seed Bank
Deborah	Walton	CANVAS RANCH/SRJC SHONE FARM
Lynn	Walton	Sonoma County Department of Health Services
Carleen	Weirauch	Weirauch Farm & Creamery
Laura	Whiting	
Kerry	Williams	Williams Ranches
Amy	Wingfield	Permit and Resource Management Department
Jay	Wolcott	Coastline Distributors
Josh	Wolcott	Coastline Distributors
Clark	Wolf	Clark Wolf Company
Kate	Wolf	
Oren	Wool	Sustainable Enterprise Conference
Angela	Wooton	Wine Country Hospitality Solutions
Gary	Wysocky	Santa Rosa Councilmember

Adam	Young	
Shirlee	Zane	Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, 3rd District
Dawn	Zast	
Wei	Zhao	
Elva	Zimmerman	Green Sangha
Laura	Zimmerman	Sonoma Valley Education Foundation

Appendix D

Sonoma County Food System Alliance Overview

The Sonoma County Food System Alliance (SCFSA) is a forum for diverse stakeholders, such as food producers and distributors, food security organizations, public health advocates, and other community leaders, to work on increasing access to healthy food in Sonoma County and to envision, advocate for, and create a vibrant local food system in Sonoma County. SCFSA is part of a California network of county alliances and state roundtables that allow for consensus actions and policy recommendations from food and agriculture stakeholders. For more information, please visit the Sonoma County Food System Alliance website at <http://aginnovations.org/alliances/sonoma/>.



Current SCFSA Committees

Process
Policy
Farm-to-Institution

The Alliance is committed to incorporating recommendations from Sonoma County residents to guide their actions toward accomplishing and refining the following vision and goals:

Vision

We envision a county in which everyone has access to affordable, nutritious food. Local farms and operations play a primary role in producing that food. Each part of the food system, from seed to table and back to soil, is environmentally regenerative, economically viable, and supports a healthy life for all members of our community.

Purpose

The Sonoma County Food System Alliance engages diverse stakeholders to address food system needs through collective action and strengthen the partnerships and programs needed to create and maintain the healthy food system that we envision for Sonoma County.

Goals

The Sonoma County Food System Alliance has identified 8 initial goals for achieving the vision of a local food system that supports the health of our people, environment, and economy. These goals are:

Goal #1: Food Security and Access

Assure that residents are food secure and have access to sufficient affordable, healthy, fresh food.

Goal #2: Food and Agriculture Literacy

Assure that residents of all ages are food literate. They have 1) awareness of local and global implications of their food choices, and 2) skills and knowledge to acquire or grow, prepare, cook, and preserve healthy food.

Goal #3: Demand for Locally Produced Food

Increase the demand for healthy, locally produced food.

Goal #4: Local Production

Expand local markets and food production in order to provide consumers with nutritious foods produced and processed as close to home as possible, and create a resilient food system for all Sonoma County citizens.

Goal #5: Local Distribution and Processing

Assure Sonoma County has a local distribution and processing system that effectively connects local producers, manufacturers, processors, vendors and consumers.

Goal #6: Economic Viability

Assure that farming and food system work are economically viable and respected occupations.

Goal #7: Opportunities for Food System and Farm Workers

Assure meaningful livelihoods and opportunities for food system and farm workers.

Goal #8: Environmental Regeneration

Assure that local agriculture, food production, distribution, consumption and food waste management are part of a food system that regenerates nature.

Appendix E

Food System Overview

A food system comprises a broad range of activities involved in producing, distributing, consuming, and recycling or disposing of food.

Production refers to cultivation of plants and animals, and agricultural techniques such as irrigation, crop rotation, propagation, and integrated pest management.

Distribution and processing involves systems that store, process (i.e. value-added products), and transport food to stores and consumers. These activities typically take place on farms, at factories, or in warehouses.

Consumption includes activities and processes related to acquiring food material that has been produced and distributed.

Recycling/Disposal refers to activities such as composting, where discarded food or other materials are collected, sorted, processed and converted into other materials and used in the production of new products or dumped into landfills.

These components of the food system are all impacted by competing external economic, political, technological, cultural, and natural forces that have resulted in significant changes to the food system over time. In the early 1900's, for example, much of the food bought and consumed in the United States was grown locally. After World War II, spurred by lower transportation costs and improvements in refrigeration, the US food system shifted from local to national and global food sources. US imports of food products have grown over the past three decades due to changes in consumer demand, improvements in shipping and quarantine methods, and implementation of free-trade agreements. US farmers have also come to depend upon the global market and agricultural exports (either out-of-country or out-of-area) to stay economically viable. Advances in technology, concentration of production and distribution chains, mass marketing of processed food, and changes in

global and local ecosystems are all additional examples of forces that have great potential to impact all facets of the food system.

Working to build a vibrant and resilient food system requires a comprehensive approach that includes all components of the food system (production, distribution, consumption and disposal) and considers the various influences and external forces that impact the system. The Sonoma County Food System Alliance will consider all of these factors as it examines opportunities to build a local food system that supports the health of Sonoma County's people, environment, and economy.

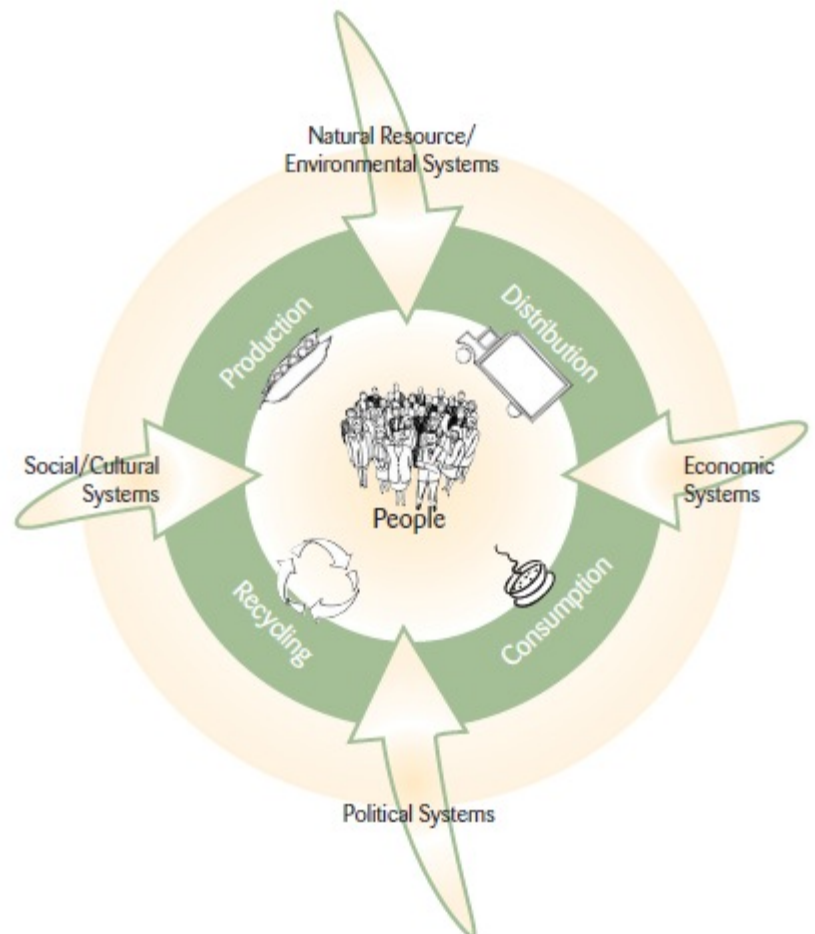


Figure 1. The Food System Model

Source: 2005 San Francisco Collaborative Food System Assessment

Appendix F

Food Security and Access in Sonoma County

What is food security?

The World Food Summit of 1996 defined food security as existing “...when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.” Commonly, the concept of food security is defined as including both physical and economic access to food that meets people’s dietary needs as well as their food preferences.

How is Sonoma County doing?

The number of residents who experience poverty, hunger, and food insecurity in Sonoma County is a growing concern. The FPL (Federal Poverty Level) for a family of four is \$22,050. A study by the California Budget Project found that the estimated minimum income needed to “make ends meet” for a family living in Sonoma County in 2007 was 3.5 times higher (\$77,069 for two working parents and two children in 2007) than the FPL. This demonstrates that even many

families receiving incomes above the FPL face difficult choices when deciding whether to purchase healthy food or pay for basic necessities such as rent, transportation, utilities, medicine, and medical care.

Total Sonoma County population	472,102
Federal Poverty Level for a family of four	\$22,050
Percent of population in poverty	10.4%
Median annual income	\$62,238
Number of people served by food banks, per month	78,000
Medium monthly income of food recipients at Redwood Empire Food Bank	\$930
Median monthly rent in Sonoma County	\$1,073

Local, State, and Federal programs

In addition to the Redwood Empire Food Bank and its network of food pantries, a

number of food assistance and charitable feeding programs exist to protect Sonoma County residents from hunger and food insecurity. These programs include the federal food stamp program (now called CalFresh! in California), the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program, special supplemental program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and various nutrition and meal programs for low-income seniors.

In 2008, it was estimated that of the over 54,000 Sonoma County residents who were eligible for Food Stamps, the majority (71%) were not enrolled. For the National School Lunch Program, local data indicate higher participation rates, but still show that of the 21,362 students eligible, another 12% never enroll. For the WIC program, of the 2,347 pregnant women eligible for services in 2009, 344 (15%) did not enroll.

In addition to being an important source of nutritional support for low-income residents, the Food Stamp benefits issued are a significant contribution to the local economy. The amount of Food Stamp benefits issued in Sonoma County between August 2009 and July 2010 totaled \$43,000,000, serving a monthly average of 26,374 clients. Increasing participation in the program to include all who are eligible, has the potential to more than double the amount of benefits generated and can bring millions of additional dollars into the local economy.

Nutrition

In 2005, only 55.6% of Sonoma County residents reported eating 5 or more fruits and vegetables per day. The percentage was much lower for 12-17 year-old teens, at only 31.3%. Among low-income residents (<100% of FPL), 47% report eating 5 or more fruits and vegetables per day, compared with 59% of higher income (300+% of FPL) residents.

Overweight and obesity are common indicators of a lack of healthy eating and physical activity, and are increasing in Sonoma County. The number of Sonoma County adults (18 and older) who are obese, went up from 14.1% in 2001

to 24.2% in 2005, a 72% increase. The number of Sonoma County adults who are overweight or obese increased from 48.4% in 2001 to 56.5% in 2005.

Poor nutrition can lead to a number of serious health conditions, including iron deficiency anemia, which is a particular problem in Sonoma County. The impact of iron deficiency anemia is of special concern during infancy and early childhood due to children's accelerated brain growth and development. Low iron intake during this critical period can potentially impact a child's behavior and have an irreversible detrimental effect on neurodevelopment. From 2007-2009, low-income children in Sonoma County had significantly higher rates of anemia than comparable California children. Rates of iron deficiency anemia among low-income children in Sonoma County were 17.2% for 1-2 year-olds and 14.7% for 3-4 year-olds compared with 14.8% and 13.0% for California, respectively.

Access

The Sonoma County Healthy Food Outlet Project and the Sonoma County Smart Meal Program are two new programs that are working with local markets and restaurants to improve healthy food options in areas with limited access to healthy food. Currently these programs are working to improve healthy food options in South Santa Rosa, Fetters Hot Springs, Monte Rio, and Guerneville.

Communities have increasingly turned to farmers' markets, community supported agriculture (CSA), and community gardens to increase access to fresh produce which may be unavailable or unaffordable through traditional retail channels. In Sonoma County, there are farmers' markets in nearly all regions, including Cloverdale, Cotati, Geyserville, Healdsburg, Oakmont, Occidental, Petaluma, Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, Sonoma, and Windsor.

In 2009, there were 14 farmers' market locations certified by the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, with five additional uncertified locations in the county. In 2009, there were 205 Certified Producers in Sonoma County. Certified commodities include eggs, honey, nuts, fruits, vegetables, nursery stock and cut flowers.

Key Findings

- Hunger and food insecurity are significant and growing concerns in Sonoma County and have long-term health implications. Due to the high cost of living in Sonoma County, many families struggle to make ends meet, even when employed.
- Federal and local food assistance programs play a vital role in meeting the food needs for many Sonoma County residents and are significantly under-utilized. Education and outreach about these programs and how to access benefits can help increase access to healthy food.
- Fresh, healthy foods are not consistently available in all communities. Many neighborhoods lack access to grocery stores and must rely on smaller markets or fast food restaurants that often have a poor selection of fresh, healthy food. Initiatives like the Healthy Food Outlet Project and the Smart Meal Program can play an important role in expanding healthy food access to areas that currently lack healthy options.
- Farmers' markets, community supported agriculture, and gardens have grown in popularity. Consumers in Sonoma County have increasingly turned to these outlets to increase access to fresh produce that may be unavailable or unaffordable through traditional retail channels.

Appendix G

Local Distribution and Processing in Sonoma County

What is food distribution and processing?

Food distribution and processing consist of all the networks and processes that allow food to get from its place of production to the consumer via points of access, such as:

- retailers (grocery stores)
- restaurants
- institutions (hospitals, schools, correctional facilities)
- food banks
- direct markets (community supported agriculture, farmers' markets)

Distribution and processing are key elements of the food system because they enable producers to more readily sell their products to a wider base of consumers and allow customers access to a larger variety of food products.

Customers are becoming more interested in purchasing locally-produced food in order to reduce their environmental footprint (i.e. food miles), to know where their food comes from (food safety concerns), and to support the local economy. Although the food distribution and processing system in the United States has become increasingly centralized, some researchers suggest that developing local distribution and processing systems can create efficiencies resulting in lower prices for consumers, more income for farmers, and a stronger local economy. As a result, local distribution systems are becoming more popular nationally.

How is Sonoma County doing?

The centralization of food distribution is a major challenge in closing the gap between local farmers and local consumers. Larger, global companies such as Sysco and Sodexo distribute food throughout the North Coast region. Sonoma County is home to a number of local small-scale distribution operations that typically aggregate commodities produced locally or elsewhere and transport them to food outlets.

Andy's Produce Market, Coastline Distributors Incorporated, Green Leaf, Oliver's Market, Sonoma Organics, Sonoma County Growers Exchange, Terra Sonoma, and Veritable Vegetable are some of the distributors operating locally. The amount of aggregated "local" produce varies seasonally and is not currently being tracked in a quantifiable way.

More recently, online distribution services specializing in regional foods have emerged. Locally, Fork & Shovel was launched to connect restaurants and farmers and streamline the distribution process. FarmsReach.com represents another example of an online distribution service. Emerging online services primarily focus on increasing farms' visibility, enhancing access to new markets, and facilitating larger volume buyers to get access to regional foods. However, in studying the needs of regional farms, FarmsReach.com found that farms need more than just an efficient marketplace. They identified an urgent need to help farms prepare for market with tools to assist with:

- pricing
- packing
- food safety compliance
- planning
- group purchasing

Online distribution models could potentially be integrated into regional food hubs, but are still identifying methods to effectively finance their operations. Early experimentation with assessing farmers a fee has proven to not be a viable model.

In addition to production and distribution of raw food products, there are 107 food-related manufacturers that employ a total of 4,248 employees and 83 food wholesalers in Sonoma County. This is likely an underestimate, as county level data were not available for farm product raw material merchant wholesalers. Wholesale refers to the large-quantity sale of products to distributors, retailers, or any

other non-consumer party. In a recent survey of the 142 food processors in the county, 77% of respondents said they utilize wholesale as a method for distribution. Almost 50% of respondents said they utilize local and regional retail sales for distribution. Numerous gaps in data currently exist, and estimates are not available for the number of post-harvest storage facilities, shippers, and brokers in the county.

Despite growing interest in purchasing local foods, consumers and buyers do not often have enough information easily available to identify and access available local products. According to research conducted by Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF), many small- and mid-sized farmers and ranchers have difficulty selling their products to processors, retailers and food service operators due to high distribution costs, limited product availability to meet the demand of large buyers, and storage and transportation issues.

To address some of these distribution issues, CAFF was awarded a grant from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to assess the feasibility of building relationships with major distributors and local retail markets, with the goal of building sales and increasing the volume of fresh local products from small and medium-sized family farmers and ranchers. As a part of this project, CAFF is exploring the possibility of creating a regional “hub” system to open access to large buyers in Sonoma County, three neighboring counties, and surrounding areas. The findings of the CAFF USDA feasibility study will help identify options and opportunities for improving the distribution and processing infrastructure in Sonoma County and the North Coast Region.

Key Findings

- There is a lack of local processing and distribution infrastructure, including facilities, storage, and packing-houses, especially an aggregated system.
- There are a growing number of cheese producers in Sonoma County and surrounding areas thanks to excellent pasture and climate. Ellie Rilla, Community Development Advisor, Marin UCCE, has produced a new report on the status and needs of North Coast artisan and farmstead

cheese and cheese makers (<http://www.cacheeseguild.org/>)

- There is a big need and demand for local slaughtering and meat processing that is not being met.
- There is a need to educate farmers on new and emerging markets.
- There is a need to develop and train more farmers in order to develop sufficient supply to meet the demands of large buyers.

Appendix H

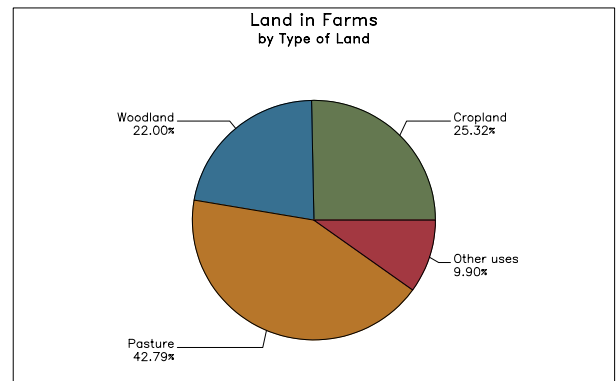
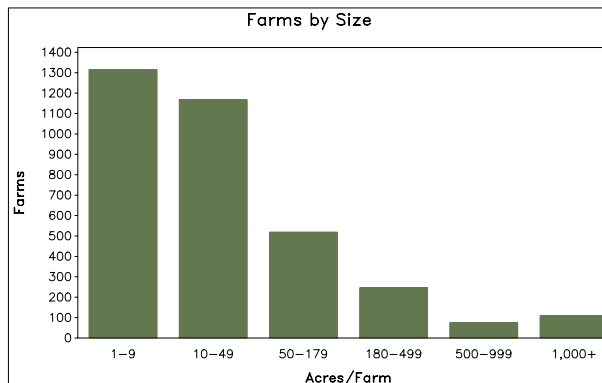
2007 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

County Profile



Sonoma County California

	2007	2002	% change
Number of Farms	3,429	3,447	- 1
Land in Farms	530,895 acres	627,227 acres	- 15
Average Size of Farm	155 acres	182 acres	- 15
Market Value of Products Sold	\$647,579,000	\$571,710,000	+ 13
Crop Sales \$422,538,000 (65 percent)			
Livestock Sales \$225,041,000 (35 percent)			
Average Per Farm	\$188,854	\$165,857	+ 14
Government Payments	\$711,000	\$1,897,000	- 63
Average Per Farm Receiving Payments	\$7,992	\$11,564	- 31



2007 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

County Profile

Sonoma County – California

Ranked items among the 58 state counties and 3,079 U.S. counties, 2007

Item	Quantity	State Rank	Universe ¹	U.S. Rank	Universe ¹
MARKET VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS SOLD (\$1,000)					
Total value of agricultural products sold	647,579	16	58	40	3,076
Value of crops including nursery and greenhouse	422,538	17	58	27	3,072
Value of livestock, poultry, and their products	225,041	12	57	103	3,069
VALUE OF SALES BY COMMODITY GROUP (\$1,000)					
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas	874	30	48	2,020	2,933
Tobacco	-	-	-	-	437
Cotton and cottonseed	-	-	13	-	626
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes	6,436	32	55	281	2,796
Fruits, tree nuts, and berries	359,858	11	56	13	2,659
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod	52,194	21	56	62	2,703
Cut Christmas trees and short rotation woody crops	569	3	40	83	1,710
Other crops and hay	2,606	27	56	662	3,054
Poultry and eggs	84,591	6	56	125	3,020
Cattle and calves	21,167	17	57	635	3,054
Milk and other dairy products from cows	108,293	11	47	48	2,493
Hogs and pigs	81	18	54	1,440	2,922
Sheep, goats, and their products	2,694	8	56	36	2,998
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, and donkeys	7,327	3	55	17	3,024
Aquaculture	(D)	23	46	(D)	1,498
Other animals and other animal products	(D)	29	55	(D)	2,875
TOP CROP ITEMS (acres)					
Grapes	63,949	5	52	5	2,040
Forage - land used for all hay and haylage, grass silage, and greenhouse	18,430	18	57	1,115	3,060
Apples	3,769	1	54	19	2,144
Oats for grain	1,968	4	33	189	1,957
Vegetables harvested for sale	919	32	55	553	2,794
TOP LIVESTOCK INVENTORY ITEMS (number)					
Broilers and other meat-type chickens	(D)	4	46	(D)	2,476
Layers	1,254,759	8	55	78	3,024
Pullets for laying flock replacement	(D)	8	51	(D)	2,627
Ducks	(D)	(D)	54	(D)	2,733
Cattle and calves	75,464	12	57	262	3,060

Other County Highlights

Economic Characteristics	Quantity	Operator Characteristics	Quantity
Farms by value of sales:		Principal operators by primary occupation:	
Less than \$1,000	630	Farming	1,621
\$1,000 to \$2,499	215	Other	1,808
\$2,500 to \$4,999	298	Principal operators by sex:	
\$5,000 to \$9,999	336	Male	2,738
\$10,000 to \$19,999	404	Female	691
\$20,000 to \$24,999	154	Average age of principal operator (years)	59.4
\$25,000 to \$39,999	227	All operators by race ² :	
\$40,000 to \$49,999	125	American Indian or Alaska Native	38
\$50,000 to \$99,999	334	Asian	51
\$100,000 to \$249,999	318	Black or African American	21
\$250,000 to \$499,999	155	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	9
\$500,000 or more	233	White	5,077
Total farm production expenses (\$1,000)	587,568	More than one race	42
Average per farm (\$)	171,353	All operators of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino Origin ²	332
Net cash farm income of operation (\$1,000)	81,169		
Average per farm (\$)	23,671		

See "Census of Agriculture, Volume 1, Geographic Area Series" for complete footnotes, explanations, definitions, and methodology.
 (D) Cannot be disclosed. (Z) Less than half of the unit shown.

¹ Universe is number of counties in state or U.S. with item. ² Data were collected for a maximum of three operators per farm.



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<http://aginnovations.org/alliances/sonoma/>



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The Sonoma County Food System Alliance (SCFSA) is a forum for diverse stakeholders, such as food producers and distributors, food security organizations, public health advocates, and other community leaders, to work on increasing access to healthy food in Sonoma County and to envision, advocate for, and create a vibrant local food system in Sonoma County. SCFSA is part of a California network of county alliances and statewide roundtables that allow for consensus actions and policy recommendations from food and agriculture stakeholders. Ag Innovations Network is the convener/facilitator of SCFSA, and its mission is to promote the long-term health of the food system and in particular, of agricultural production, by facilitating critical dialogues within the food system, and between food system stakeholders and the wider public.

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