

**Solano Local Food System Alliance  
February 6, 2020 meeting AGENDA**

5 pm - 8 pm, Solano Economic Development Corporation office  
5050 Business Center Dr., Suite 200, Fairfield CA 94534

**I. Welcome and introductions: 5:15 - 5:30**

**II. October 2019 Listening Circles brief review & updated vision diagram: 5:30 - 5:45**

Key goals for the Local Food System:

- Community Health
- Community Wealth

Major outstanding issues:

- Farm to school
- Farmland sustainability
- Local food affordability & access
- Policy support for farming and local procurement

**III. Farming: 5:45 - 6:30**

1. Climate Change & Agriculture - Wendy Rush
2. Solano Grown brand update - Sarah Hawkins
3. Farm fees, rules & regulations – Jahniah McGill / Priscilla Yeane /Kassie Munro

**IV. Public Awareness / CDFA Grant: 6:30 - 7:15**

1. Local specialty crop public outreach campaign (88 cooking classes in the next 24 months) - Stephanie Jordan
2. Bounty of the County – Elena Karoulina

**V. Local Food infrastructure: 7:15-7:50**

1. "5 by 25" update
  - a. Farm to Institution / CDFA update - Stephanie Jordan
  - b. Restaurants outreach / CDFA - Stephanie Jordan
2. Solano food businesses introduction and updates - Alliance members

**VI. Wrap-up: 7:50 - 8:00**

Next meeting: May 2020

First Thursday of the month (February, May, August, November)

**Placeholders:**

Children & Youth  
Policy  
Equity

## Attendees:

- Elena Karoulina
- Stephanie Jordan
- Kassie Munro
- Ben Lyons
- Robin Cox
- Jahniah McGill
- Priscilla Yeane
- Sarah Hawkins
- Wendy Rash
- Bob Burris
- Paula Schnese
- John Healy
- Maggie Kolk

## Notes

### II. October Listening Session Recap

- Community health
  - Community Health is well defined in the county
  - County needs assessment (Board of sups looking at highest need in county): #1 in severity for the worst (prevailing negative trend) indicator is healthy eating / active living. Community ranked this second to last in terms of priority. Ultimate ranking became #11/17 in terms of priority for funding.
  - **Robin Cox:** Look at sample size and how the study was done. Keep in mind there is other funding outside of the \$2M the board has. Every few years the healthcare providers get together to do a county health assessment that's more comprehensive.
- Community wealth
  - Community Wealth is not as well defined in the county
  - There is a difference between economic development and community wealth
  - **Bob Burris:** wealth means economic development around food and ag – generate new resources for investment and reinvestment. Entrepreneurship. Not big corporations coming in, but local small businesses looking for ways to generate income and give back to their community. Generation of wealth, income, and reinvestment. SBDC and local economic development offices in each city need to create an easy, effective pathway for growth. Requires investment funding and sponsorship.
    - **Annual luncheon coming up February 20<sup>th</sup>** – Thistle CEO is speaking
    - Thistle is using local ingredients, could be a generator of local wealth (jobs, investment)
- Farm to Schools
  - High interest on every level from the listening sessions in October
  - Local Food Vision diagram has been updated to include Children & Youth as a pillar, and food access has changed to Equity ([see the new diagram here](#))

- There is an urgent need for countywide funding for child nutrition / healthy food access, and coordination among various stakeholders to move beyond the current sporadic efforts.
- General
  - Land and public services of farmers is undervalued = loss of farm land
  - Local food affordability is a challenge
  - Policy (lightly discussed by elected officials) – value based procurement policies did come up. The “5x25” vision was well received, now we need to move it to every level. Kaiser’s goal by 2025 is 100% sustainable – How can Kaiser achieve including 5% from Solano County into their larger goal?
    - There is a need to have all health care institutions adopt this commitment.

**Should we have another listening circle?** YES - Yearly reflection seems appropriate. More focused conversations on topics with smaller working groups. Format will review and amended as needed.

**Question for the group:** How do we move from general discussions to policy?

- Provide context for policy
- **Jahniah McGill:** Need a specific ask – focus on one specific thing, with data, why we need it, what’s the value, rational (its supports every district by xxx). Needs to be extremely tangible with steps to action.
- Fee is good example – focus on how much it costs to produce XYZ, this is the impact of it, we need the farms to thrive by ABC. Push to just recoup costs with fees, make it something they can work with.
- Break the big idea down into smaller actions, and then highlight the success of those small wins and build from there. Need to express the WHY in our asks.

**February March is when fees are evaluated:** Somewhere April / May is when fees go to board by department.

**ASK for the group: Share good policies / examples – so we can review and use as inspiration.**

### III. Farming

- **Wendy Rash – Farming in the New Normal**

- Ultimately about sustainability. How do we keep farmers farming and agriculture productive
- Temperatures will be rising – highs and lows (reduced chill time that some crops need, pest cycles will be different). Zones where certain crops can be grown will change. Water supply – Solano County has been the target of water speculation because we have good water. People are buying land to buy water
- Precipitation – will see more swings between high (flooding) and low (drought) and the amount and location of snow pack. Normal patterns (timing and amount) will change. Takes a lot of infrastructure to be resilient to that impact (especially equitably).

- Impacts will be intensifying over time like a slow drip, so we need to think ahead. It's hard to address with farmers because they're typically thinking one year out, when we need them to think 20-30 out. Need incentives to help farmers be more proactive.
- State has targets for mitigation- carbon sequestration and reductions. Working lands are one of the few sectors/industries that can be a SINK. Ag and working lands are some of the only places that can capture carbon, beyond just reducing emissions. The incentives don't play into the farmers' bottom line. There needs to be some sort of economic return for the farmer to engage in that activity (they get paid to grow food not capture carbon).
- No real answers yet, but we are finally at a place to talk openly about it because the impacts are being felt. Farmers are starting to engage in the conversation.
- A lot of the practices needed to sequester carbon and GOOD practices in farm management for a lot of other reasons (water quality, erosion etc.) and those benefits are often more attractive than climate change as a draw for farmers
- \$80M / year spent on conservation, but the number of acres is very small. It takes a lot of money. State is behind RCD, but there will be more funding coming
- We can tell how many acres are being worked on, but we can't tell how much carbon is being captured (problem is that grants only last 3 three years, but you need 10+ to see the carbon in the soil from testing). You have to load more carbon than the microbes can use (and then put back through respiration) to get a net positive carbon impact
- Programs: EQIP, Healthy Soils, SWEEP
- There are some market-based solutions, but they are primarily sticks, not carrots
- **How does this translate to us:** Keep farmland as farmland – carbon footprint of developed land is 80 times that of farmland. Part of that is keeping farmers economically viable. Williamson Act (lower property tax on farm that is actively farmed) – a lot of farmers are rolling out if it. Agritourism doesn't count so that portion or whole parcel has to come out of it
- **Solano County Climate Action Plan**

**\*Benicia has declared climate change as an emergency**

● **Sarah Hawkins - Solano Grown**

- Proposed a licensing agreement to the Board of Supervisors (modeled after San Diego) to let local farmers (and potentially restaurants and grocery stores) to be able to use the brand. Keep it in the department of ag, rather than a nonprofit (the licensing)
- The Board does not have a vision for it
- Looking into how to manage usage / provisions on who can use it and how
- Hoping to get permission to use it general for Bounty of the County to begin building recognition

● **Jahniah McGill / Priscilla Yeaney / Kassie Munro– Fees and Regulations**

- Direct to Consumer: Exempt of regulated packing standards, as long as farmer has a Certified Producer Certificate (\$90 /year)
  - Farmer certification - farmer fills out a list (annual) for what they plan to grow, they get verified with a site visit
- Certified Farmers Market (farms and their employees selling directly to end users).

- To organize a Certified Farmers Market you must be a Certified Producer, a nonprofit, or Government Agency (could be a school, community garden, etc.).
- Fees covers the inspection time, certification
- Can you have eggs, honey, etc. on the same table? (some debate, may depend on market)
- Added value products – if it’s just preserve you can sell it in the certified area, but you can’t include the added value products at your booth (you would need a second booth outside of the certified farmers market)
  - Makes it difficult for economic viability (value added) and climate change (diversification of farms)
- Produce Stand / Farm Stand – stand that is on the farmers property or at the closest county road. No fee if it’s on farmers’ property.
  - “Produce stand” – no fee
  - “Farm Stand” - Value added products at your stand - up to 50 sqft of prepackaged value added product (cant require refrigeration which makes it potentially hazardous)- \$136
    - On top of the cottage food license - fees for direct to consumer / wholesale
    - Needs to be permitted and able to be closed
- Agriculture standards – not all produce has it. Put in place by industry. Industry wanted to protect their purchase quality and for ease of receiving, pricing, etc. - So they have specific standards for sizes / packaging. Ag standards are expensive for farmers (regulated labeling, packaging, bill of landing (proof of ownership), etc.)
- Board approved the “home cooking” regulations - talk about it next time (with cottage food laws)
  - Could be public health benefits to home cooking rules – if healthy food is promoted, help in food access in food desserts.
  - **Robin Cox** –initiative SuSol could work with community on- education and training
- Multiple questions on agritourism and farm events and no expertise in the room

**ASK: Invite a planner to the next meeting to talk about farm events and agritourism [Jahniah McGill offered to invite one]**

- **Robin Cox: What is the biggest barrier / opportunity as far as fees that we could target?:**  
Jahniah -flat fee for just produce, one time for the whole year (if they’re not processing, preparing, slicing etc. since it is easy to inspect)
- **Ben Lyons:** In an ideal world - one certificate to sell everything from their farm (eggs, honey, produce, etc.) Is there a minimum threshold that would allow smaller farmers to have just one certificate?
- **Sustainable Solano** – work on what we want to do with policy asks – work with farmers on planning / the fees (Kassie)

#### IV. Public Awareness

- **Stephanie Jordan:** CDFA grant announcement and overview
- Cooking Classes (starting in March)
  - Will be a small minimal fee
  - Education and engagement on specialty crops
  - Promote CSA signups
- **ASKS to the group:**
  - Do you know any cooking Instructors for Fairfield Suisun area?
  - Would you like to have a class at your facility?
  - Do you have any connections to good community spaces to host the classes? (need to hold 20-30 people)
    - **Ben Lyons:** on the farm possibly?
  - We're looking for CSA sites (for multiple farms to drop) - need some volunteer support, but runs itself when its up and going. Site has no legal responsibility, mostly just a small amount of logistics
- **Elena Karoulina - Bounty of County**
  - August 29<sup>th</sup> – Saturday
  - Celebration of farms and food
  - Part farmers market – vendors and food. Spirit is more upscale then fair. Showcase Solano agriculture, farmers, winemakers and brewers
  - Family friendly (something for children, something for adults – won't exclude families)
  - Working to get wide representation from the producers
  - Include urban ag
  - Include music and art
  - Need Major donors for sponsorship – need \$30K
  - Chef challenge – pairing local chefs with local farmers/wineries for a tasting competition
  - **ASK to group:** Need chefs / restaurants for bounty of the county participation, as well as farmers

**Jahniah McGill:** Bounty of the County questions- for profit or not will determine permitting. If its nonprofit we might not need permitting – **question for Mike Ioakimedes.** Single organizer fee is a possibility (rather than by vendor). Jahniah McGill will see what we can do.

- Suggestion from Maggie Kolk and her experience in Atlanta: Similar event was **CHEF driven** – head chef got together with their chef friends. It was a fundraiser for farmers, farmers and chefs donated time and supplies.

## V. Local Food Infrastructure

- **Stephanie Jordan:** Farm to Institution update
- Kaiser Vallejo / Eatwell
  - 4 deliveries so far = 360 lbs. produce (all veggies); \$356 paid to farm
  - Subsidy applied = \$109.
  - Have promo materials in café (*Showed flyer samples + sticker*). Planning posters, table tents also.

- Early Learning Center @ SCC / Lockwood Acres
  - Waiting for a Letter of Agreement to get finalized from County officials (per Robin Cox), then good to go.
- NorthBay - met with them last month; in process of following up for sourcing.
- Sutter – **ASK does anyone have a connection there?**
  - **Bob Burris – can help with an introduction**
- Vacaville Unified School District – will be working with Juan Cordon to be doing more local sourcing

#### **VI. Wrap up**

- May will be the next one
- Set timing for first Thursday of the Month (hold quarterly: February, May, August, November)
- Upcoming 2020 meeting schedule:
  - **May 7, 2020**
  - **August 6, 2020**
  - **November 5, 2020**