

**Solano Local Food System Alliance**  
**November 5, 2020 meeting Minutes**  
Zoom meeting, 4 pm – 5:15 pm

Link to cloud recording: [https://zoom.us/rec/share/JaVJodF5Ms72OeW-sK5euD\\_HLTkS1FMNOgQ3g-BzNJ0-hyGdDtIhCFifeEJ-XZvM.XTxfpAVt46e9tKve?startTime=1604620701000](https://zoom.us/rec/share/JaVJodF5Ms72OeW-sK5euD_HLTkS1FMNOgQ3g-BzNJ0-hyGdDtIhCFifeEJ-XZvM.XTxfpAVt46e9tKve?startTime=1604620701000)

**Attending:**

Elena Karoulina, Sustainable Solano  
Stephanie Oelsigle Jordan, Sustainable Solano  
Maggie Kolk, Sustainable Solano  
Gabriela Estrada, Sustainable Solano  
Allison Nagel, Sustainable Solano  
Heather Pierini, Food is Free Solano  
Kimber Smith, Rotary Feeds Families  
Priscilla Yeane, Solano County Agriculture Department  
Ed King, Solano County Agriculture Department  
Robin Cox, Solano Public Health  
Juanita Fleming, Solano County Health and Social Services Department  
Mike Ioakimedes, Solano County Fair Association  
Tim Murrill, Small Business Development Center  
Elizabeth Monteadora, Community Local Food Advisory Board  
Paula Schnese, Cultivate Community Food Co-op  
Wendy Rash, USDA-NRCS  
Noah Dove, Mills College graduate student

**Mission:** Create an environmentally sustainable, economically viable, socially just and equitable local food system in Solano County.

**I. Welcome & Alliance update:** USDA Regional Food Systems Partnership grant application update & structuring further Alliance work - Elena Karoulina, Sustainable Solano

USDA Regional Food System Partnership Grant

- We did not receive this capacity-building grant
- The Alliance continues to be funded this year through Solano Public Health
- We will continue to look for ways to support the Alliance's work; meanwhile SuSol is committed to carry this work forward. The Alliance is not an impactful entity yet, but we have a vision and a clear understanding of various parts and major players in each area that contribute to the emerging local food system. For now, we all continue our work in our respective areas and coordinate and cooperate through the Alliance meetings, newsletter and our shared vision and commitments.

**II. County farming** update: fire impact – Elena (situation on the ground and funding for fire relief); Solano Grown brand

Relief for August LNU Lightning Complex fire recovery

- Determined about 14 farms, wineries and agritourism businesses were affected. Lisa Murray of Pleasants Valley Agriculture Association helped to determine.
- Week before Bounty of the County, which pivoted to Bounty of the County: Stronger Together and began raising funds for affected farms
- Nearly \$10,350 collected. Some farms declined donations, and 1 business is not rebuilding. Able to distribute 9 checks of \$1,500 each.
- Next stage: Solano Community Foundation grant for \$25,000 will support need- and project-based fire relief of up to \$1,500. Each farm will have the opportunity to apply for whatever their needs are to rebuild. Applications open 11/5.
- <http://sustainablesolano.org/fire>

Recovery Assistance

- There have been some no-cost, opt-in options for cleaning up household hazardous waste and now stage 2 has begun with a focus on structural debris cleanup
- Solano County Agriculture Department has been referring farmers in need of help to USDA-NCAS and the Farm Service Agency
- USDA-FSA has several disaster relief programs: <https://www.farmers.gov/>
  - There are programs to help rebuild farm infrastructure, fencing, livestock watering and feed, irrigation systems, replacing trees, orchards, vineyards, etc.
  - There are programs right now for both fire recovery and COVID-19 related losses
- CAFF offering some small grants for small family farms: <https://www.caff.org/>

Regenerative Recovery

- Opportunity for farms that are rebuilding to recover in a more sustainable way
- NRCS and Sustainable Solano will meet to discuss programs that support that / possibility of a coalition of a few farms applying for grant support

Sow Beautiful project (broadcasting native plant seed in burned areas):

<https://pleasantsvalleyagricultureassociation.com/>

Solano Grown

- Nothing new to report, but will gain more attention in the coming months
- Solano Ag Department has not heard from growers that they are interested in reviving the brand
- Plans for Sustainable Solano and the department to meet about strategizing the approach before the end of the year

**III. Community Awareness & Support**

- Bounty of the County results – Stephanie Jordan, Sustainable Solano
- Cooking classes – Stephanie
- “5 by 25” / Farm to Institution – Stephanie

#### Bounty of the County

- <http://sustainablesolano.org/bounty/>
- Ran for 6 weeks (Sept. 1-Oct. 10), profiling a farm, restaurant/food retailer, and winery each week
- Thank you to the Solano County Fair Association and Solano Small Business Development Center for support in developing the program
- 119 people attended the live presentations; more than 3,200 video views
- Working with videographer to make shortened versions of the presentation videos
- Getting feedback from participating farmers, chefs and wine makers to make adjustments for the future
- Some wineries did fundraisers with a percentage going to the fire relief fund
- Could do virtually again next year; will look at the end of the spring (avoid fire season)
- Will distribute flyers Alliance members can use to recruit restaurants as plan for next Bounty of the County

#### Cooking Classes

- April 9-August 7: 17 virtual classes with 480 attending live and 1,447 video views
- Working to expand and get additional guest chefs on board
  - First Spanish language class on Oct. 29 with Chef Lisa Nunez-Hancock (10 people attended the class live, and since then there have been 80 video views)
  - In touch with Chantoll Williams of Rasta Mama’s Kitchen in Vacaville for a class in January
  - Seeking other instructors from various communities and cultures
- Doing a youth class for kids through Vacaville PAL, which plans to provide local food kits to the kids from Solano farms so they can follow along during the class

#### Farm to Institution

- Hospitals still have little to no capacity, wellness programs have been cut
- Success with Early Learning Center at Solano Community College. ELC now connected with Lockwood Acres for deliveries. Hope is this program could become a pilot for other agencies and smaller institutions to see how it can be successful.
- Exploring the possibility of a farmer/chef round table to bring together farms with restaurants that might source from them (similar to what [Sierra Harvest is doing](#))
- Possibility of other colleges buying local food for their cafeterias (eg. Mills College, possibility of SCC)

#### IV. Equity / Food Access

- Gleaning countywide efforts – Kimber Smith, Rotary/ Elena
- Food is Free update – Heather
- USDA Urban Agriculture grant application status – Elena

- Solano Gardens – Gabriela Estrada

### Gleaning

- There is a lack of capacity and coordination
- Fairfield-Suisun Rotary Club (Rotary Feeds Families) started gleaning efforts about 6 months ago to address farmers struggling from losing business during COVID and agencies not getting enough fresh produce
  - Through gleaning, donated a little more than 700 lbs to Meals on Wheels, food bank
  - Challenge with finding enough volunteers to cover the gleaning needs
  - Rotary Feed Families also received a grant it is using to pay for produce from farms at roughly wholesale prices that goes to Meals on Wheels and the food bank. To date, Lockwood Acres and Terra Firma Farm have participated. The program has roughly \$6,000-\$7,000 remaining to spend on behalf of the agencies.
- Solano Gleaning Initiative also started about 6 months ago
  - Main challenges are finding places to glean, people knowing about the program and finding volunteers
- Grant from CalRecycle could help to address these challenges:
  - <https://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/climate/grantsloans/foodwaste/fy201920>
  - Trying to develop a countywide robust gleaning program that connects available food to volunteers who are able to gather it and get it to the end users (pantries, Food is Free Solano stands, etc.)
  - Would create a network of super-local distribution centers and gleaning sites, both rural and urban
  - Ultimately, focus is on reducing greenhouse gases by routing food waste first to people, then animals, then compost
- We did not receive the USDA Urban Ag grant application, which also would have addressed gleaning as one element of the grant

### Solano Gardens

- <http://sustainablesolano.org/sustainable-landscaping/solano-gardens/>
- This program was funded by Solano Public Health through the Community Health Improvement Plan in 2018. The vision is to work with community members and organizations interested in creating edible gardens with sustainable elements.
- Nine gardens under the program including 3 at Title 1 schools, 1 at a juvenile detention facility, 2 at religious institutions that have food giveaway programs and 3 at multiunit housing.
- County funding is on hold. Solano Community Foundation has approved \$25,000 that will help carry forward the program through supporting the existing gardens with follow-up visits, seeds, plants, and professional advice to the garden champions; and install one more garden in the county

- If you know of a site that would benefit and has a strong champion, contact [gabriela@sustainablesolano.org](mailto:gabriela@sustainablesolano.org)

## **V. Policy Updates**

Introducing Noah Dove, Master of Public Policy student, Mills College – analysis of Solano County local food system-related policies. Action items for the Alliance members.

### Policy Analysis

- Alliance hasn't had capacity to address policy
- Noah will be working with the Alliance for the next 6 months as part of his master's thesis work
  - Will review policies that could advance or hinder the local food system
  - Audit to determine which policies have the highest impact
  - Look at best practices elsewhere
    - Eg. San Francisco just passed a procurement ordinance to locally source 15% of the food purchased for hospitals and prisons
- Alliance members asked to share which policies you find help your local food system work and which don't
  - [ndove@mills.edu](mailto:ndove@mills.edu)
  - He will also have the email list for the Alliance members to reach out
- Noah will connect with Solano Public Health about the work already done around the county's procurement policies

## **VI. Children and Use**

Vacaville Unified School District plans and F2S grant – Allison

### Farm-to-School

- Discussions with the Committee for Land & People organized by Solano Land Trust and meetings for the teacher advisory committee give a sense of big adjustments being made by schools this year
- Vacaville Unified School District reviving plans for a youth agriculture school program piloted at Markham Elementary and used as an example for other programs. So far, they are talking about field trips to local farms and a school garden component.
- Sustainable Solano hopes to support through applying for a USDA farm-to-school grant

### **Around the table & wrap up**

Next meeting: February 4, 2021, 3:30 – Policy Updates

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

*A **local food system** is a collaborative network that integrates sustainable food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management in order to enhance the environmental, economic, and social health of a particular area.*

***Vision:** To diversify, expand and safeguard a local healthy food economy that will preserve farmland, its integrity and biodiversity in Solano County, and ensure food access for local communities.*

***"5 by 25" GOAL:** To substitute 5% of food spending on all levels with locally-sourced food (Solano and neighboring counties)*

# Solano County Local Food System

