

2022 MCFARM ANNUAL MEETING

March 20, 2022 Via Zoom

10:05 AM meeting called to order and ground rules discussed.

Introduction of OC members: Angela, Julie, Alex, Gloria, Amanda, Sarah, Michael, Allegra, Lama, and Robert.

Attendees: Scott Miller, Jess Welling, Greg (interested in managing Boonville CFM), Galina Arlov, Marbry Sipila, Carissa Chiniaeff, Marc Donnagon

Motion to approve agenda by Michael second by Amanda. All in favor.

Motion to approve 2021 GM/annual minutes by Amanda, second by Marbury. All in favor.

Market manager reports

Willits (Michael Foley): See attached after minutes

Fort fort Bragg/Mendocino (Julie Apolsolu): See attached after minutes

Redwood Valley (Amanda Fairall): Rough year, lack of consistency, drought, and but ended the year strong. EBT up! Looking forward to next year, hoping water is no longer an issue.

Laytonville (Gloria Harrison): The Laytonville Market is working well. We broke our own records last year, and we are running just about even with last year's numbers this year. More vendors would be good, especially things we don't have. We have no honey, jams, bread or hot food vendors. We will remain inside the Hall for the time being. It is easy to make safe (COVID), it is comfortable, and it is convenient. EBT use is up sharply, and Senior Market Match is largely funding itself.

Boonville (Lama Nasser for Happy): OK market at the brewery, good space but off the road/out of the way/out of sight. Happy (the manager) moved out of state. Greg is interested in managing, at a possible new location. Will discuss later in the meeting about MCFARM continuing subsidizing/funding the market. Greg helped with set up last year.

General Manager Report: See attached after minutes

Ukiah Market Report (Robert Ayres): The Ukiah Farmers market has experienced many positives this year. Increased sales and more diverse vending has created a more positive atmosphere at the market. Because of the popularity I am seeing more interest in vending opportunities at the market and more personal connections between vendors and shoppers. The market supports ten ag vendors and various non-ag. vendors giving the market diversity and access to fresh local nutritious food. With climate change and water issues looming I can only cross my fingers on how the outcome of the next year and the sustainability of the market. The UFM supports local non-profit entities rounding out a positive experience for the local community. The UFM location is a plus because it allows the market to expand according to seasonal flux of vendors and the park setting invites families and friends to relax and enjoy the entertainment on a Saturday morning. I am continuing to work on expanding the customer base with several platforms of social media with weekly updates on who is performing at the market.

I am seeing increased SNAP transactions and hope to see WIC update their system with card readers for vendors. I am very satisfied with the progress and expansion of the UFM and look forward to each week's

market.

Office Manager/Treasurer Reports (Angela Harney/Gloria Harrison): See attached after minutes

Motion to approve budget (Including Boonville) by Gloria, second by Michael. All in favor.

Insurance Update (Angela/Gloria): \$12,000 policy would allow us not to have individual vendors need their own policies (no longer available/no policies like that available)

-Challenge for non-food vendors (flowers, soaps, knife sharpeners, etc.) Ask Scott for info

Officer elections:

President- role/duties read. Alex Nielson is not running for reelection. Julie nominates Michael Foley. Michael accepts.

Secretary- role/duties read. Sarah resigning (pregnancy). Sarah nominates Jess. Just declines. Julie nominates Scott. Scott accepts.

Treasurer- role/duties read Julie renominates Gloria. Gloria accepts.

Coastal Member Rep- role/duties read. Julie renominates Lama Nasser. Lama accepts.

Ballots will be distributed in the next several days.

Five minute break.

Michael speaks about the possibility of a Williamson Act (reduce property tax for farmers/ranchers) for small farmers. County ordinance needs to define who is covered. He is looking for thoughts and ideas! Parcel size, minimum income per acre, etc. Brief discussion.

Llama: access to land to begin with is a huge issue!

Sarah Marshall from NCO for market match

- Now farmstands and CSAs can apply for the program.
- Increase in 2021 for market match compared to 2020.
- New checkbox on application for \$1500 for market managers for recordkeeping, etc.

Note from Keelan about inflation on small farmers. Farmers should price their products at the real cost and to reflect the increased cost of production. Also, more challenging for a smaller scale who can't purchase inputs in bulk. Maybe a social media campaign would be helpful to educate customers? Are market managers/someone/Keelan interested in drafting a public statement? Michael is willing to do a price comparison. Llama will draft a short statement.

Can't reach Elizabeth Garcia from the Ag department. Remaining questions about cannabis: still not a certain certifiable product. A vendor submitted a formal complaint when ag department was three minutes late for the coastal CPC day. It may no longer be happening. Elizabeth was very upset about the complaint.

Announcements:

-Market Managers need to get reports in ASAP for March if they want checks signed before Julie leaves town.

Reminder: MCFARM member apps due April 30

*anyone who joins after October gets an extra half a year

Be on the lookout for officer ballots in email!

Greg is interested in managing the Boonville market but is on the lookout for an opening as a chef which wouldn't be very compatible with a Friday night market.

Move to approve alternate budget if Boonville market does not materialize by Alex second by Lama. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 12:43 PM

Market Manager's Report Willits Farmers Market

I took over at the beginning of July and for some reason don't have the June report. The market has been growing fairly steadily over the last year and into this one. And that is reflected in gross sales. We went from 26 vendor days and \$7,600 gross sales in May to 51 vendor days and \$14,000 gross sales in July as the summer season really picked up. August saw fewer vendor days but over \$16,500 in sales; almost \$21,000 in September; down to \$13,500 in October. But January and February this year were almost double the sales of the same time last year, when the winter COVID epidemic and a cold, outdoor market undoubtedly took their toll. But we also had twice as many vendors this winter as last.

We decided to stay outdoors up to Thanksgiving (traditional we moved indoors at the beginning of November), but returned to our Winter quarters at the Grange on December 2nd. Our new craft vendors to filled a lot of that space, but New Agrarian Collective has been able to attend all but one of our markets since then and contributed to Willits having an abundance of produce. Mulligan Gardens also contributed to our increased volume. Of course, Inland Ranch has remained a faithful anchor of the market throughout. Another new vendor, Reza's Breadery, started in June and has become an anchor of the market.

We moved outdoors again the second week of March, in part because the Grange has been shut down for asbestos remediation, but also because everyone was anxious to get outside again. The first of these markets brought enough vendors to fill every space but one in the old Rexall parking lot in downtown Willits. As more new vendors sign up, and we await the return of Mulligan Gardens, Irene's Garden, and another possible produce vendor, I have reconfigured the space to accommodate three rows of canopies. The move outdoors also brought an influx of new and old customers who had not been to the Grange during the winter.

Overall, then, things are looking up for the Willits market. The one headache was a directive from NCO, transmitting one from the Ecology Center, that had me applying for a new FNS number (license to take EBT at market) as a new "owner" of the market. I protested and resisted as long as I could, then started the process, which was not a quick turnaround, only to find that the requirement was bogus and that the Ecology Center has unnecessarily imposed this on new market managers in the past. A colossal waste of time! In the process I found that there are five layers of bureaucracy, each taking their cut, between Congress' appropriation for food stamps and our being able to distribute them to customers!

Fort Bragg and Mendocino Farmers Market Manager Reports

Although both markets are still down from 2-4 years ago, the Mendocino Market showed a rebound- with the return of some tourism. I estimate that 75% of Mendocino's customer base is visitors, with the remainder local community and regulars. Although there were weeks where we had much more non-ag than ag available- we were happy to welcome Sunkist Farms and Green Rainbow Farms to the market. There is also the promise of some new ag/flower/plant vendors starting this year so I am looking forward to a great Mendocino Season.

Around mid-summer the Fort Bragg market started to regain its nice community vibe. Music and community groups came back. When the outdoor mask mandate was lifted, I left it up to vendors and customers about whether they wanted to mask. People's individual choice was respected; distancing and extra sanitation was encouraged, and free masks were always available at the manager's table.

I am fortunate to have a terrific team of three people who help out with the schlepping, set up and break down of the market each week. I have a left hand woman, Lisa, who supervises the two men who set up etc, and also facilitates the placement of vendors using an emailed layout plan I send her the night before. She also runs the EBT machine when I wander away from my table, and is available to help vendors who get overwhelmed and need breaks.

I have received many inquiries from prospective vendors, about 2/3 are not a good fit for Fort Bragg, but I always refer them to the other managers if their products seem appropriate for MCFARM.

I have had some issues with people wanting to table controversial subjects/political candidates/for profit local businesses at the markets, I am sticking to my consistent policy of keeping things community friendly and all inclusive.

The Fort Bragg market remained outdoors, now two years in a row, and we might just keep it this way- it is easier on the vendors without the hauling, and the street presence is working well. We did have one torrential rain day- shout out to Inland Ranch, Pelican Bread and Fortunate Farm and the 20 or so customers who showed up and shopped!

Fort Bragg's totals are up for the first part of 2022- higher than any other first quarter since we went year round so I am optimistic about this year.

Julie Apostolu

General Manager Report

It has been a busy year for the General Manager. I have been receiving multiple calls and emails each week from individuals, businesses, and organizations with interest in MCFARM's farmers markets. The vast number of these are from out of area, political, or cause related which need a careful and gentle refusal.

I have worked with our individual managers with various issues that have come up. And of course working with Angela on organizational stuff.

I did get to many of the markets this year, and I am always checking with vendors about how things are going at the other markets. A reminder to all, I am aware when your market is happening and I am "on duty" if anything comes up.

The EBT Machine mess took a lot of extra time this winter, and if you have not followed the steps in the email from NCO to update your machine's software, please do so. It reduced the log offs and transaction failures by about 75%. Still not perfect, but much better.

I wrote a letter on behalf of MCFARM regarding SB 907 which would enhance the EBT and Market Match programs for Farmers Markets etc, including compensating the managers for the extra work that administering the program requires. (where does THAT sound familiar!)

I want to thank everyone for sticking with MCFARM- all of our vendors and the operating committee. What we do is very important, and inspiring- to our communities.

I want to remind everyone that my position is not one of authority or power- it is one of leadership and support. Sort of like a guidance counselor. I am here for all of you. Have a great 2022.

2022 Office Manager Report- Angela Novak-Harney

I want to express my appreciation for a wonderful Operating Committee, Market Managers past and present. Thank you to outgoing Happy Bernards of Boonville Market and Diane Curry of the Willits Market who volunteered her time. I appreciate Sarah Nielson's minutes....accurate and timely MCFARM is very lucky to have Julie at the helm. She does a great job of interfacing with the communities, the departments who oversee us, the Vendors and she rises to the occasion with the many tasks she does. She has gone above and beyond to fill in at the markets that need assistance plus used creative thinking to deal with Covid 19 restrictions. Thank you to she and all OC who together create the well-oiled machine that MCFARM has become.

2021 Book Keeping Summary

Our income includes \$4065 in Membership dues; \$76,104 in Stall Fees, for a total income of \$79,380 (which includes negative # of \$802 for hat and Chico Bag purchases). Expenses to note are Covid 19 Porta-potty rentals \$3895 for Fort Bragg and Willits; General Mgr Pay and expenses \$6265; Insurances \$3004; Market Manager Commissions for all the markets \$40,626; Office Expense \$1706; Office Manager Labor \$6468; and Operating funds for all the markets totaling \$18,258. I have the report organized by each markets so you may see the individual market's #'s. I will provide the book keeping upon request. BOTTOM LINE (net income or loss), income vs expense; Boonville net loss of \$1818; Fort Bragg income of \$5710; Laytonville loss of \$622; Mendocino income of \$547; Redwood Valley loss of \$1158; Ukiah income of \$10,677 and Willits income of \$1047. All in all MCFARM had a Net Loss of \$3669. It is the largest loss since I have worked for MCFARM in 22 years. Thankfully we can offset the loss with better income in future years on our taxes.

Stall Fees Comparisons 2020/2021

This chart is also broken down by market: Boonville down by \$613 or 30.2%; Fort Bragg down by \$1657 or 6.8%; Laytonville down by \$528 or 7.4%; Mendocino up by \$767 or 18.4%; Redwood Valley down by \$882 or 40%; Ukiah up by \$4546 or 17.8% and Willits down by \$5811 or 45.2%. Overall the markets were down by 5.3% in Stall fees. Total Stall fee income for all the markets was \$76,106.

Vendor Gross Sales

These are the sales the Vendors report each market day when they sign out and pay stall fees based on their sales. Chart is broken down by market and how much percent of sales are AG vs Non-AG products and by 2020 vs 2021 difference. Boonville was down by \$9356 or 38% in sales; AG % is 81%. Fort Bragg was down by \$22,980 or 5.2% and was 62%AG. Laytonville was down \$5530 or 6.5% and is 73%AG. Mendocino was up by \$13,709 or 22.8% and 58%AG. Redwood Valley was down \$8633 or 33.3% and 63% AG. Ukiah was up \$89,764 or 20.1% and 64% AG. Willits was down \$127,228 or 68.8% and 70%AG. Overall the total was down by \$70254 or 5.6%.

2022 Proposed Budget

The budget was a challenge simply because our potential income, which I based on last year fell short of what we need for expenses. I broke the budget down into "Fixed MCFARM" Expenses and "Market Specific Expenses". In the past MCFARM has paid for rents, licenses and permits, etc....but since Covid, Willits and Fort Bragg Markets have had to rent Porta-potties, proving to be substantial. This year I put those expenses directly into the Market's Operating Funds. So the lump sum that is allocated for each market's operating expense now includes those items. New this year is that Willits will pay some rent to the Little Lake Grange (\$100/month or \$500). We will pay officer stipends of \$100/year for Pres, Treasurer and VP positions, down from \$200 from previous years. Operating Funds for each market were calculated based on 26% of 2021 stall fees. It has ranged 22-25% in previous years. Some markets will have lower operating budgets to spend this year. The larger markets have typically donated funds to the smaller. This year, Ukiah market is donating \$1100 to the smaller markets.

When all was calculated I came up with a budget shortfall of \$2421. That can come out of our Contingency fund which will go from \$4926 to \$2505. It will be the 3rd year we have dipped into contingency fund. The three small markets continue to operate at a loss. For the future, MCFARM needs to think of ways to increase the income (or decrease expenses), replenish the contingency fund and create better financial sustainability for this organization.