

## Minutes of the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Mendocino Farmers Market Association, Feb 12, 2017

The meeting was opened at 10:12 AM.

Agenda: Sakina Bush moved and John Johns seconded a motion to approve the agenda as present. The motion passed.

2016 Minutes: Gloria Harrison moved and Caprice seconded a motion to approve the 2016 Minutes. The motion passed.

### Market Reports:

Ukiah: Scott Cratty provided a written copy of his report, included here as Attachment A.

Fort Bragg: Julie Apostolu provided a written copy of her, included here as Attachment B.

Redwood Valley: Sarah Stowell reported that the market acquired a co-manager mid-season. Vendors had agreed to shorten the market year this year, with the market ending in October. EBT sales are down. Sarah will be stepping down. Scott is searching for a new manager, or co-manager, depending upon preferences.

Laytonville: Gloria Harrison noted that the dates and location of the market will be the same this year as last. The biggest need is for new vendors. The new SNAP promotion grant is expected to help draw in customers.

Willits: Michael Foley reported that market sales were slightly down for the second year in a row. Vendors, too, have fallen off, with some of the food vendors and most of the crafts vendors withdrawing by summer's end. The City is cutting down trees in the park where the market is located, with plans to cut down the trees that provide shade the length of the market during the winter or spring. The market is exploring new locations, preferring to move downtown to attract a larger and different crowd than that common at the park, but prospects are not optimistic. Michael will be taking a leave starting in April and ending at the end of September or beginning of October. His assistant Sierra Alexander has volunteered to fill his position. Michael will poll vendors before finalizing the transfer of responsibility. Sierra will be available for the Spring OC meeting.

Mendocino: Sakina Bush noted that proposed changes of day, time and location have come to nothing. Vendors could reach no consensus on a change of days (to Saturdays), and the proposed new location proved to have too many difficulties to be workable. Sales have been down 30 percent, partly due to loss of two market days, two rainy days, and the loss of bakeries. EBT has never contributed much to the market. Though some vendors have left, new farmers have replaced them.

Booneville: The Booneville market saw significant increase in sales, with no changes in time or venue. The market, which depends in large part on tourist traffic, needs more crafts vendors and lost its one food vendor. The market has seen a lot of turn-over, with new vendors entering, trying out the market, and failing to stay. Market managers have used special events, Facebook, music, and a kids area as promotions. EBT is up but limited. The market will be losing at least one ag and one non-ag vendor next year. A renegade market is open in Booneville during the winter months but provides no competition to the regular market.

President's Report: the year has been uneventful. We have three positions up for election: Inland Member Representative, Vice President, and Secretary. Angela conducted the vote on opening MCFARM to non-certified markets. The measure was defeated, with 23 voting No and 8 voting Yes.

General Manager's Report: Scott worked on a new process for keeping track of the budget; helped the Redwood Valley market negotiated free use of the Lion's Park; worked on measures to cut expenses, including a new spreadsheet for use by Market Managers. He dealt with controversy surrounding an invitation to farmers to contribute to the Willits by-pass dinner organized by the Willits Chamber of Commerce. He also negotiated with Environmental Health, which was proposing a fee increase for markets but agreed not to implement new fees. Scott helped handle the vote on admission of non-certified markets; worked with CDFa on quarterly reporting requirements; underwent training to familiarize market managers with grocery store WIC; and managed the vote for a new Redwood Valley co-manager.

Office Report: Angela reported that it was a smooth year, helped by an assistant and changes in market reporting initiated by Scott. She has acquired new office space at the Grey Whale Inn.

Angela presented the Profit & Loss Statement, noting that MCFARM had a new income of \$25.84, incurring no taxes. Stall fees were down across markets with the exception of Booneville; the decline was \$12,697. Gross sales were down by \$170,270.50, or 13.9%.

Angela presented the budget for 2017, which is largely based on last year's budget, taking into account lower earnings. The major savings will be in Angela's compensation, reduced overall because of changes in reporting systems and the new responsibilities that Market Managers are taking on.

The shortfall in the budget in support for the smaller markets will be partially made up for by voluntary contributions from Fort Bragg (\$200 to each of the three) and Ukiah (\$250 to each of the three)

Budget: John Johns moved, and Gloria Harrison seconded, a motion to approve the 2017 budget as presented. The motion passed.

Agricultural Commissioner's Presentation: Andy presented on behalf of Diane Curry, new Acting Agricultural Commissioner following Chuck Morse's retirement. Andy noted that in October CDFa dropped all of the new proposed regulations. The revised Certified Market law remains in place, but CDFa has not approved regulations to implement it. Consequently, the department will continue to present "fix-it tickets" but impose no fines. The Commissioner's office will focus on out-of-county "cheaters" and continue to inspect the markets once or twice a year.

To the question whether cannabis might be sold at market, Andy replied that cannabis cannot currently be listed on the CPC or sold at market. It is now an agricultural commodity for pesticide control purposes, and the Commissioner's office has hired 5 new people to oversee enforcement of new state and county regulations. But it remains off the table for the markets.

Andy promised to organize a Coast Day for coastal farmers to get their CPC's signed and sealed.

New Paperwork Process: to reduce paperwork for the Office Manager, vendors applications will be processed differently this year.

Manager's will get a copy of all paperwork, including the application, and make sure that all paperwork is in order. Vendors will send Angela only the application and a check for the annual dues. Eventually, they will be able to do this online, but for now vendors will continue to have to use snail mail.

Each manager must get a complete packet, including the application for membership.

Sakina asked the MCFARM provide vendors with a simple, one-page checklist for completing paperwork. Angela agreed to do this. She will also edit the application to reflect the new procedure. Managers with winter markets will inform vendors at market about the changes and as they get phone calls.

As usual, Angela will provide Market Managers with a list of those who are eligible to vend because they have paid their annual dues.

Bee Bold: Sakina described the program launched initially with the sponsorship of Thanksgiving Coffee to make Mendocino a more bee friendly town through education, promoting plantings of forage for bees and other pollinators, and a look at pesticide use in the county. Fort Bragg has since been declared a "Bee City" (one of 28 in the country), and the city has created a committee to come up with ideas about promoting a more bee-friendly environment.

The program has since lost its paid coordinator, but Fort Bragg is planting a bee garden and lobbying nurseries to stop carrying the worst pesticides.

Sakina is happy to work with Inland groups that might want to extend the initiative. She has available the film "Queen of the Sun" for showing to help raise interest and awareness.

WIC: Scott urged that Market Managers and vendors make sure they are signed up for WIC. It would be good to have all vendors signed up this year. Julie gave a brief training, underlining that WIC is good for fresh fruits and vegetables only, plus honey (only for seniors). She also underlined that vendors should be clear about dates, especially ending dates: no WIC checks taken after November; all WIC checks must be cashed by the end of December.

Grocery WIC: Farmers markets may now take the green produce WIC checks. Vendors will have to check the dates, which may be quite limited, written on the checks; sales may be no more than the amount specified, though it could be less. Shoppers sign the checks (in contrast to the Farmers Market WIC checks). Vendors give it to the Market Manager to check over and cash out. The Market Manager will then have to log in each check and get authorization. Scott will train managers at the Spring OC meeting, and managers will train vendors.

Elections:

Vice President: sole candidate, Caroline Radice. Caroline was elected by a show of hands.

Secretary: sole candidate, Sarah Stowell. Sarah was elected by a show of hands.

Inland Representative: candidates were Julia Dakin and Ben Wolff. Julia was elected by a majority of votes cast.

40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration: MCFARM is 40 years old this year. A number of options were agreed upon, include printing t-shirts; adding the anniversary announcement to the poster; soliciting or writing newspaper articles; add to PSA's for the markets; printing bookmarks and produce bags. The

Operating Committee accepted suggestions and will decide on a week to mark the anniversary at the Spring meeting, with the likely choice August 7 to 13<sup>th</sup>, National Farmers Market Week.

Improved Marketing: Julie led a discussion on improved marketing. Suggestions included:

- target families with school-age children, including mentions of market in school announcements;
- target big employers, talking to HR people, esp. B Corps;
- list in Chamber of Commerce newsletters
- target clinics and hospitals;
- target specific groups with discounts
- work with the competition, arrange to set up in supermarket parking lots
- ask customers to promote on Facebook
- let Arianna at NCO know about market activities to put up on the Grown Local page

In this context, Scott reported on the Markets for All Grant that NCO had to boost farmers market sales. During the course of the grant, NCO spent \$30K on marketing. The marketing materials are available for any of us to use, including photos of markets, individual farmer profiles, EBT promotion, etc. This could be used for presentations to local service clubs. The Ecology Center also has materials we can use centered on the Market Match program.

Poster: we will use an earlier year's artwork, add 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary announcements

Market Match: Arianna Chiechi from NCO reported on the state of the Market Match grant. We have been given an extension to take us to the next grant. That will include continued office support from Arianna. For the coming grant, the State of California has contributed to the federal program in California, so markets do not have to provide as much matching funds. We will be hearing about the next grant soon. In the meantime and for the new grant, we may match at any level, and we do not have to use up our funds; we may carry them over into the next period.

Arianna will be doing more outreach, including going to Headstart and PTO meetings to encourage parents to participate in the markets. She will also talk to Veteran's Clinic personnel, thanks to John Johns' suggestion.

Gloria pointed out that her understanding was that, in cases where a customer is low on benefits or out of benefits for the month, we could exchange Market Match tokens for cash plus a Match. Arianna said she will check into it.

Food Hub: Arianna also reported on the Food Hub. John Bailey, who has directed the Hub, is leaving, and NCO is seeking a new manager. The Steering Committee met with John before he left and discussed options, assessing various models for going forward, including forming a farmers co-op. Mai Nguyen, from the California Center for Cooperative Development, will assist in assessing the co-op option. In the meantime, NCO has a new grant to continue the Food Hub for the next 2 years, 9 months.

Last year the Hub had a 60% increase in sales. The Hub has also been working with schools and farmers to set up forward contracts that give both some security; the program includes Lake County school districts, as well as several in Mendocino County. Arianna will be encouraging the growth of buying clubs on individual consumers to take advantage of the Hub's wholesale prices. The Hub will

now be able to take on distribution of non-speciality crops (produce), but permitting for sales of meat and dairy products are still in the works.

Ukiah Co-op. Julia Daikon discussed the controversy over the co-op's decision to bar her and another farmer from running for the Board of Directors, because, unbeknownst to them and most member, only one member of a household is counted as a full "member" of the co-op, eligible to vote and run for office. In the farmers' case their husbands were listed as "members." There will be a Board meeting on Feb 20<sup>th</sup>. Anyone concerned with this ruling is encouraged to come to the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Michael Foley