

**MCFARM Fall Operating Committee Meeting
DRAFT Minutes For 11/20/11
AVFD Training Room, Boonville**

Attendees: Marbry Sipila, Pres; Diane Paget, Sec; Alison Pernell, Genl. Mgr; Angela Harney, Office Mgr; Jen Lyon, Redwood Valley Mkt Mgr; Bill & Bebe McEwen, Boonville Mkt Mgrs; Michael Foley, Willits Mkt Mgr; Tom Gervase, Member Rep; Scott Cratty, Ukiah- Sat Mkt Mgr; Andy Mackey & Winnie Pitrone, Mendocino Mkt Mgrs; John Johns, Ukiah-Tues Mkt Mgr; Julie Apostolu, Fort Bragg Market Mgr; Gloria Harrison, Laytonville Market Mgr; Donna Bishop, Gualala Market Mgr, John Richardson, Member Rep.

Time keeper: Tom Gervase

Meeting called to order: 10:02

Welcome and Introductions.

Reminder of Roberta's Rules of Order: Roberta's Rules were read by Marbry

Changes to and Approval of the Agenda: No changes were suggested. Agenda **approved by consensus** of those present.

Approval of the Fall Operating Committee minutes: No objections or corrections; **approved by consensus.**

Market Reports:

- **Willits:** I was surprised that we were only down 9%. The number of vendors was also down. I have no idea what is happening in Willits, last year was a banner year. A lot of the smaller vendors didn't come back. However the winter market grew between 2009 and 2010.
- **Fort Bragg:** I partnered with local organization Parents and Friends and had a market assistant, Tim, a developmentally disabled young man, who did lots of odd jobs pertaining to street closing, hospitality, cleaning and providing carry out service. He was paid \$ 50 a month, plus tips and made my life much easier during market day.

Our early totals were up from many previous years, averaging out as the season progressed. We enjoyed spectacular weather almost every week. We had clean county ag surveys, the health department never did show up- but I am sure that would have been fine also.

I received positive feedback, across the board from vendors and community for my managing style. Which is outgoing, positive and creative.

We welcomed some brand new small and large vendors and continued to enjoy our long term vendors. I advertised on the back of a Fort Bragg MTA bus and received lots of feedback about it. Esme and I also promoted the market verbally

everywhere we went, throughout the season. My connections in our community paid off.

Our first year with EBT was great- despite the slow start of not getting our POS machine until June. We did well with over 2000 dollars in EBT sales.

I am looking forward to next May when we reopen to continue the path I have begun.

- **Ukiah Tuesday:** We offered \$5 off fees for vendors at the beginning of market, but did not have much response. The double EBT promotion seemed to make a big difference, Hispanic families came and kept coming after it ended. Next year we will have more flyers in Spanish. It was tough keeping vendors, but we had an average of 6 to 10 each week.
- **Ukiah Saturday:** Growth was stagnate for the 3rd year. Vendors have changed from large ones with lots of stuff to smaller ones with less stuff each. The big ones seem to draw Ukiahians better. Sponsorship money is down from last year; community partnerships saved us – especially the double EBT grant; and another \$5000 from NCO partnerships. The City of Ukiah changed oversight of the market to the police dept., which resulted in a big jump in paperwork. The process will probably change again next year and may require hearings and a new city ordinance. We tried some unique forms of advertising – handouts to campers at Lake Mendocino, ads in the Life Styles section of the Ukiah Daily Journal and more, but none of them seemed to have much effect
- **Redwood Valley:** The market did really well and felt good from beginning of season; not huge, but a stable small neighborhood market fostering localized food. Strawberries were the cornerstone of the market; fund raising went really well, with a farm tour and local food meal as it's highlight. We used the chef's demo set up for it. We also had amazing live music all season.
- **Mendocino:** I was really pleased this year, with a street full of vendors and customers, even though the sales were down. Four major anchor vendors have been lost over the past year, but we managed to fill in the empty spaces they left. EBT is working and is not as hard as I thought it would be. Maybe only \$200-250, but I think it will pick up.
- **Laytonville:** Marbry Sipila is retiring from market manager of the Laytonville market and Gloria Harrison will be taking her place.

The Laytonville market was down in customer attendance and overall sales for the 2011 season. The cool wet spring and early summer played a part in less early produce at market. Also, we had fewer market days than last year, due to rain in October and the July 4th holiday. Did the poor economy also play a role in fewer sales?

Using our new EBT machine we had \$245 in food stamp sales. This number will most likely increase next year as more folks realize that they can spend their EBT funds at the farmers market.

The majority of our operating funds went to pay for our market musician, who definitely adds a festive touch.

- **Boonville:** Although sales were down, morale was up – perhaps because the market layout was re-arranged so the manager had more control of how the space was filled and was able to create the feeling of a full market even when there were fewer vendors. As manager I focused this year on improving publicity – including a postcard that was sent to all the mail boxes in the valley – but didn't feel that it made any difference. The factor that seemed to make the biggest difference in overall sales was weddings at the hotel, which indicated to me how much the market is dependent on sales to tourists. Bill and Bebe McEwen will be taking over as Boonville Market Managers next year.
- **Gualala:** – I was surprised that we were up this year after losing a big vendor but we picked up organic almonds and they added a lot. We started later because of May rains and lack of produce but caught up later. Tomatoes were late and then we all got blight. Ah Nature is so fickle. My advertising all went to radio and music. We do not get any of the northern stations here and our local radio reaches down to Fort Ross. I added coffee for customers and that keeps people sitting around longer. Our space got smaller and I had to be creative to fit us all in the peak season

General Managers Report: See attached report. The Food Policy Council is supporting an ordinance that would create a 200 yd barrier between Certified Farmers Markets and other vendors during market hours. Supervisors Brown and Pinches will be bringing it to Board soon. Trying to streamline Environmental Health (EH) process for vendors has been frustrating. This is especially true for canned, pickled, fermented items. Neither the state nor the county know exactly how to handle them. The state doesn't have guidelines for the directors of environmental health departments.

Office Managers Report: Pretty smooth in the office. I want to thank Alison for her help dealing with issues. Sales numbers are on the back of the meeting agenda and will be attached to these minutes. Ag inspections were a big deal this year. Chuck did 17 inspections and found 32 violations. Most of which were CPCs not posted or non-existent – vendors at market who were not MC Farm members. Chuck has created an outline of how to get a CPC for new vendors. We are going to need to pay more attention to CPCs. This is coming from a high level than him and will include mandatory fines on every violation. There were also six violations for not collecting load lists; four violations for improper or no labeling; and one for not having a sealed scale. Chuck wants to come speak to OC in the spring.

Bank Accounts: I would like feed back on how the bank accounts worked out. Mendocino: it worked great, but the monthly fee was a lot, could MC FARM pay those fees? Response: Savings Bank will not give us a fee exemption. Most markets avoided the fees by using Mendo-Lake Credit Union. Having the bank accounts worked better for the Association.

Duration of membership: it is good until April; applications that come in Sept. and Oct. could be good until April of year after next, which could help lure vendors into winter markets. Vendors have to know that they need to do a new CPC every year. Managers need to make sure that CPCs are not expired at the beginning of each year – too hard for the Office Manager to keep track of all 200+ vendors.

Budget: Everything was within budget. The budget report will be given at Annual meeting. I will be sending each manager their accounting to check before then via email.

Comments and questions: Checking account fees for all the markets for a year would be \$865. That is too much for the Association – they need to come out of operating expenses, if you choose to bank at a institution that charges them. There are three markets that have checking account fees. Could MC FARM 50-50 with them on fees? Angela: the bookkeeping would be difficult. It is the cost of doing EBT, but may be more than EBT brings in. Load lists are how you catch brokering. Small markets with local vendors don't need load lists to know whether there is brokering. Hand them out to vendors just before end of market and you will usually get them back.

NCO/MCGROW Grant Update: Michael and Alison. We have had a few workshops since the Finances one for Market Managers. Season Extension – in Willits and on Coast. The coast one was poorly advertised and only had a few people. Willits had one person. The Farm and Garden Show would be a good place to advertise them. Value Added was better attended., with 12 or 15 people in Willits. There was an excellent presentation by a woman who has set up a canning co-op in Marin County. There is going to be a change in the staffing at NCO, which might offer an opportunity for a MC FARM person to be more involved if someone is interested. NCO is working on a local food label as part of its work on a regional food hub and Alison working on creating a way that local farmers can participate in the process for this. Alison putting together a training on Conflict Resolution and Mediation for the MC FARM OC. It would be a full day training in January or Feb; please talk to Alison if you have input. **Discussion:** could extend the invitation to others to attend for a small fee to bring in more money. Could you frame it as about Clear Communication rather than Conflict Resolution. We need to have more input into the implementation of this grant – it was supposed to include farm tours and bringing new vendors into the Farmers Markets. Could this grant pay a stipend for attending a Spring Market Manager Training. NCO seems to have made the grant Willits centric. We have not really been included in its development and marketing. We need to push back toward making it more countywide and including MC FARM in planning. Should we write a letter as the OC? Are we really willing to do the work? Michael and Alison have pushed. Michael and Alison are willing to do the work – but need to make realistic suggestions about what they can do. **Decision: OC consensus on having Michael and Alison write a letter for OC.**

Proposed By Laws change to allow email voting: Alison. Proposed By Law change read and passed out in hard copy. See attachment. Background – there have been decisions that we wanted to be able to make by email between OC meetings. Draft change sent out over the yahoo group. Comments to that draft were incorporated in this draft. **Discussion:** Would the decision take effect after email vote or after approval of minutes? After the vote. By Law or Rules and Regs changes need to be approved by the membership. No opposition was expressed the to concept of email voting. When should the phone call be made? At the beginning of the process. Two changes to the language were suggested and agreed upon: see strike out and italics on the attachment. **M/S/A** (Motion/Second/Action): **Julie/Michael/all in favor.** Now needs to go to Annual meeting for approval as a By Law change.

Vote to suspend Willits winter market during slow months: Really slow in Jan. and Feb. We are losing some of the winter vendors this year. Most of the vendors thought it might be a good idea. Is this decision up to OC or Market? Michael is not sure yet whether he wants to implement closure this year or not; would decide later. Not sure if stopping is good for market or not. Should be up to market. Scott feels that Ukiah should continue through winter, but Willits is different. Ft Bragg – in the future may hold winter market on First Fridays. Marbry thinks it is up to vendors and manager, not OC. No one disagreed.

GM Resignation: Alison. I am committed to being General Manger through March 1st, when my contract ends. Will not be renewing contract – personal decision. We have four and a half months to implement this decision. Two options. Hiring a new GM or re-organizing the Association to eliminate GM and empowering and paying the managers and officers to do more. If we choose the second option, Alison would still be available as a contractor to help facilitate meetings. 24% of the GM's time has been spent on marketing – which may not help markets that much. We could free up that money to give officers stipends for taking on extra work and for bigger stipends for market managers. Would like to form a committee to work on this so we have something to present at membership meeting. Committee volunteers: Marbry, Angela, Winnie and Andy, Alison, John Richardson, Scott, JJ, Michael. Does the OC want Alison on Committee? yes. **Discussion:** We created the GM position to deal with conflict resolution issues; there haven't been as many in the past two years, but there may be more again in the future. Lots of work falls on President and OM. Presence of GM lends a professional air to organization. Has been a lot smoother with GM. Need for someone who knows the whole picture.

LUNCH

Honor the departing Market Managers: Diane and Marbry.

Discuss Pay Increase for Market Managers: John Johns – Our pay for managers is a lot lower than markets in other parts of the state. Would like to see more

reimbursement for our time. Passed out a proposal for a change (10% flat fee up to \$500) in stall fees to support MM raises. **Discussion:** Are there other ways to raise the money for MMs? Not having a GM and using some of that money for MMs. Straw poll with voting for both options allowed. How many MMs want an increase in the stipend? 10. Who is opposed to raising stall fees? 6 in support, 4 opposed. Difference between stall fees schemes that raise fee for lower end as opposed to upper end? How that question is framed is important. Structuring how MMs get paid differently – flat rate for all MMs with a % on top. This addresses big vs. small market managing. Jen: you work a lot harder to managing a small than a large market. Current stall fees charge 11% to small vendors – 9% to large ones. J-J's proposal is a 10% fee for everyone. Makes sense. Raising the cap has been very contentious; raising the cap will bring more money in; it's the \$400-500 vendors that would be hit by this; in their way the bigger vendors carry the Association; people come to the market because of the big vendors – they are important; stall fees keep people out of vending. All our work as managers doesn't seem to make much difference anyway. Where do we want to take this today? Big vendors would not like this. See the money come from somewhere other than stall fees. Raise money thru product sales and fund raising. Simple 10% without raising the cap. What next? OC needs to talk about it more before going to membership. Is there anyone willing to spend a lot of time working on it? Or should we just let it drift for now. **M/S/A: Create a committee to further this discussion J-J/ died for lack of a second. Table until after GM decision is made.** Straw poll of proposal to support a flat rate plus % commission. In favor, 5; opposed – too many objections to even answering this question. Tabled until next OC meeting.

Discuss sponsorship of markets: Andy. Started happening without any discussion. I have a problem with sponsorships, but if it is good for organization wouldn't stand in the way. Association needs to decide since it reflects on all of us. Who can sponsor us? How is the money accounted for? Lots of potential for trouble with it. How much does it help your market and vendors when you do it? Definition of sponsorship: in exchange for funding, get to be associated with Farmers Markets. Scott: Ukiah Saturday Market has expanded something that was happening before I became manager, have never heard any opposition from Ukiah vendors; used for marketing; some of the money goes for FM bucks which are given out and go to vendors; ties community into market and gets the business community aware of market; some sponsors publicize the market to employees and they get a discount day. The accounting is not done through MC FARM. Let each market do its own thing. Could it cause a problem for the Association? What is the implication of all being connected through the Association's insurance? What restrictions are imposed by the Farmers' Market law. As a 501© (4) are we in a gray area about this? Response: money needs to be to the market's, not MC FARM's. Best solution would be to have a Friends of Market organization that receives and disperses sponsorship money. Willits has a separate EIN and account for the market. IRS issues – should we be paying tax on that money? Where should we go with this today?

Decision: To create written guidelines for sponsorships. Committee to write a draft proposal: Alison, Winnie, John R; Scott will review.

Strategic Planning Session:

- Review and discuss results of team inventory. See attachment. Two groups to discuss results of survey.

Group 1: Q1 - perplexed that we didn't share an understanding of where we were going; Q2 - good leadership, we wanted the group to work well together; Q3 – goal: discussion of where we are going and how we want to get there, strategic planning that furthers purpose statement

Group 2: Q1 – challenge is good, learn to voice differences, respectfully, Q2 – have come thru contentious issues and found way to work together, pursue common purpose, varying markets have different needs; Q3 -- support umbrella that covers markets, do what we can to protect ourselves from current and new regulation.

Other thoughts and feelings: survey answers are not internally consistent; read MC FARM purpose statement at the beginning of meetings to remind us of why we are here; Alison – MC FARM has a purpose statement; it might find having an action statement and goals with timeline useful; please review the write in answers on your handout.

- Discuss Evaluations for Market Managers, Office Manager, General Manager: Individual market surveys – help to see what is working and what vendors need; do them in the middle of the summer. Fort Bragg manager sends a monthly newsletter to vendors; they were sometimes returned to her with helpful comments that gave her good feed back as the manager. Please complete the OC officer evaluations.
- Review roles and responsibilities of MMs: Marbry read from rules and regs.
- Review roles and responsibilities of OC: we are the Board of Directors; umbrella for all the individual markets; read from rules and regs. Alison: OC is the leadership for our county's Certified FMs, would like to see us step more into that role; Marbry: be more efficient; be respectful; there is dismissal and suspension that can be done by OC when it is needed.

Discuss Ukiah Tuesday Market: during the 2011 Membership Meeting we gave \$300 extra to Redwood Valley and Ukiah Tuesday because they were small. At that time there were questions about how badly Ukiah Tues has struggled and whether we wanted to support it in this way; it was decided that we wanted to give it more time. John Johns has worked hard to make it work; created the Bazaar that is next to market with crafters, kids activities and food vendors, all of whom are not MC FARM members and pay separate stall fees. J-J has said it has its own insurance and business name, but has not shown any evidence of it to MC FARM. Marbry visited the market several times and surveyed the vendors, who said that they were satisfied with market, although their sales were not that good. The market works for the largest vendor and all others who want to come back; they rated the MM well; and the market made \$350

for MC FARM this year. Marbry recommends keeping Ukiah Tues open (due to vendor choice); and having the Bazaar provide MC FARM with documentation of a named sponsor and proof of insurance for 2012 season, in order to ensure that MC Farm is not liable for it.

Discussion:

- **Decision:** The OC agreed by consensus to keep the Ukiah Tuesday market open.
- Bazaar and named sponsor and proof of insurance: Why is it MCFarm's business? It is so close to the Market and run by same manager – maybe not appropriate neighbor for market. On the other hand, the Ukiah Tuesday vendors think it is OK; could or would we say anything if someone else had set it up; commend J-J for thinking out side the box to grow his market; does it create a conflict of interest that the same person is managing both; there is no competition to vendor's in the FM; food processors have their permits and bazaar has an event permit thru EH; J-J has provided proof of insurance to the City of Ukiah; it barely broke even; re-evaluate how it works next year; support Ukiah Tuesday in being out of the box; J-J has a committee that runs Bazaar, he can not make decisions for it; we are being challenged to see how we feel about adjacent events.
Decision: OC agreed not to oppose the Bazaar being located adjacent to the Tuesday market and re-evaluate how well this arrangement works next year.

Election of Officers Reminder (Pres, Treas, Sec): All these terms and Tom's member Rep term, are up for re-election this year. Marbry and Alexandria do not want to continue. Diane is not sure, but will decide before Annual Meeting. Alison would like to send out bios of people who are interested in running for those positions before the Annual Meeting.

Decide on General Meeting Date: Sunday, January 29th.

Place: Fort Bragg Grange? Caspar Community Center? Saturday Afternoon Club? Willits Grange? (\$100 or less) Priority on coast.

Review of Proposed By Law Changes:

- Change *nearby* to *adjacent* counties and add Trinity, Tehama and Glenn to be more inclusive and accurate – currently only Lake, Sonoma and Humboldt are listed in the By Laws. **M/S/A Change the wording of the By Laws as suggested. Donna/ Gloria/Unanimous.**
- Grandfathering vendors that may not comply with the current rules and regs. Does 3B1 – already address this? Yes.

Old Business: None

New Business

- Brush Dancer is happy to do poster again. **Decision: Is that OK? Yes.** Winnie offered to take over working with him.
- United Way is working with NCO to offer EBT match – for Willits, Ukiah, Lake County and Laytonville. Why not Gualala, Boonville and Redwood Valley? Michael agreed to ask NCO about this.
- Community Foundation Grant – would MC Farm be interested in writing one for an EBT match.
- Rack Cards and Posters: Need to get changes in names and phone numbers. Could MC GROW grant pay for some of our printed materials? Decision: Print rack cards again and decide the quantity based amount based on promotional money available. Could use lighter paper. Would be good to include a map. Winnie will work with John-Johns. Then sent to OC for final approval.

Announcements: None

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07.

Respectfully Submitted,

dpaget

Attachments:

General Managers Report
2011 Market Sales numbers
Draft OC Email Voting By Law Change
Strategic Planning Report
Draft Adjacent Counties By Laws Change