

**Mendocino County Farmers Market Association  
Spring Operating Committee Meeting  
Sunday, March 18, 2012  
Little Lake Grange, Willits**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Andy Mackey, Winnie Pitrone, Diane Paget, Michael Foley, Alison Pernell, Angela Harney, Angela Liebenberg, Gloria Harrison, John Richardson, Jen Lyon, Scott Cratty

**Welcome** (Alison/Andy)

- Meeting called to order by Andy at 10:03
- Reminder of Roberta's Rules of Order read by Andy
- Purpose Statement read by Andy
- Scott welcomed as the new General Manager

**Approve Agenda: Motion to approve the agenda**

- **M/S/A: Winnie/Gloria/A**

**Approval of Fall OC Meeting Minutes: Motion to approve the Fall OC Minutes**

- **M/S/A: Michael/Winnie/A**

**Winter Market Reports**

- **Willits** / Michael: Doing OK. Don't have the sales numbers yet, but looks like it is the same or a little better than last year. Despite only having one and a half veggie vendors. Goal for the coming year is to try to draw people into winter production. Lost two of last year's vendors and some new ones at Christmas. Have faithful craft vendors, seeds, and starts. Herbalist with a plant talk table – new person every week talking about what they grow and how to use it (so far mostly herbs) – all volunteer, no sales; tremendously popular. Took a two-week Winter Break – worked OK.
- **Ukiah** / Scott: Would be a nice market if we had farms; only one larger produce vendor. A little better than last season. First year was really good, second year better; since has petered off because there isn't enough produce. People who vend are doing quite well.

**President's Report:** New to the job and nothing to report yet

**General Manager Report: Alison**

We are in a two-week overlap period. It's been a pleasure to work with you and to support and represent our Farmers Markets. Ag Tourism people now have MC FARM on their radar. Need to figure out how to coordinate FMs (Farmers' Markets) with Ag Tourism – the tourism folks need to be educated about farm issues. Andy: thank you for moving MC FARM into the center of the local food movement. I have an extra copy of the CA Retail Foods Code if anyone would like one.

**Office Manager Report:** Angela H

- Introduced MC FARM's new Treasurer, Angela Liebenberg.

- Written report is on the back of the agenda.
- Angela handed out: Membership cards and Friedman's discount coupons, which are only for buying items that are used at the market. Info about WIC application. Discussion of whether the WIC application needs to be done once a year or every three years. Reminder about doing Environmental Health permits and Ag permits. Monthly Market report form – the reimbursement section has changes. Angela prefers that reimbursement requests are on this form, not a separate one. Five vendor applications in hard copy. Will email sign out sheets to managers if they want to use them, rather than the individual sign out sheet system (Scott described it.) And Farmer WIC applications.
- Can take bundles of 5 hats and produce bags. Question of whether Marbry bought another 500 produce bags or not – Gloria will check and let Angela know.
- Plastic bags – Ukiah is implementing a ban on certain types of bags in certain establishments. Scott thinks FMs are exempt. Ft Bragg has 18 months from January for implementation. Angela – there are three vendors who use most of our bags. Discussion: Have more signs at market that ask "Did you remember your re-usable bags?" Share success stories with re-useable bags. Should MC FARM make signs for the markets? Laminated? Metal? Maybe MC GROW grant could pay for them.
- Vendor application: Not much change – some corrected agency phone numbers.
- Discussion of small animal processing exemption. Scott has heard that a farmer could have an exempt farm, but still be required to store the processed poultry in an approved, commercial storage area. There are two sets of rules. The State rules, which have an exemption. Local rules, which do not have an exemption. Two inconsistent rules are being enforced. These inconsistencies have not been reconciled in this county. Currently we have five new applications from farmers who are going to want to do rabbits or poultry. We have not heard anything from EH. We do have an old ruling that says we can do this. We have the letter of exemption from the State that we got through EH. Not sure whether certified storage facility rule comes from State or County. The County sees itself as an enforcer of State rules but interprets them locally. Should we provide the vendors with a safety checklist that they read and sign? Do we want to consider a safety sign off for all vendors including produce vendors? The *Food Safety Begins on the Farm* booklet from Strawberry Producers Association covers. Can we get a pdf of it for our website or many enough hard copies to put into vendor packets? Do we want to form a Food Safety Committee? Michael will look at his info on poultry to see if he has enough info to put something together.
- **Motion to seek volunteers for a sub committee to come up with something to add to the vendor application package about food safety. Scott/John/A.**  
Volunteers: Angela H, John, Michael, Diane, Scott
- Make sure all the vendors have yellow membership cards. Membership now expires on April 30<sup>th</sup> of each year (Membership for winter vendors, applying for membership between October and January, expires in April of the following year. E.g. October 2011 – April 2013).
- Check EH permits.
- Each market gets \$200 extra in operating funds for advertising – add to amount on handout.
- No markets wanted upfront funding.

**NCO/MCGROW Grant Update:** Michael and Alison

Michael: At the workshop we met the new MC GROW staff people (Catherine and Jen). They want to do signs for us. Want to do yard signs for the market – we questioned how well it will work in this area – too rural, plus yard signs not legal in Ukiah. Still have money for chef's demos and cooking classes. Putting on a workshop on Marketing for Market Managers in Willits on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, and a business planning workshop on April 2<sup>nd</sup> in Caspar for vendors.

Alison: More money is gone than they thought. Down to the last little bit of money. Ask for what you need now and be clear. Help them understand what really will help your market. Can we request an accounting of how the grant was spent? Scott will do it.

### **Proposed By Laws change to clarify member voting**

- At the Annual meeting the question came up whether a member who had sold within the last two years, but did not have a current membership could vote. Nothing in the By Laws said the membership had to be current.
- Suggested wording change to By Laws section III B: "Ag Members must be current with their membership-and must have sold products as a vendor in MCFARM for at least one of the two preceding years or are be members of the Operating Committee to receive voting privileges."
- Angela – add that the membership needs to be in good standing. Do we have a provision for probation? Should we craft that wording before the next OC meeting? Scott checked and it is covered in the current By Laws
- **Motion: To approve recommending the By Laws change as modified (see below) to the membership at the Annual Meeting.**
- Discussion: Add a second sentence that states "To be in good standing members may not be probationary or suspended members per Section XI of the By Laws."
- **M/S/A: Michael/Gloria/A: "Ag Members must be current members in good standing and must have sold products as a vendor in MCFARM for at least one of the two preceding years or be members of the Operating Committee to receive voting privileges. To be in good standing members may not be probationary or suspended members per Section XI of the By Laws"**
- Discussion of Craft vendors/members getting vote – requested by a craft vendor at the annual meeting. This is a farmers' market association. Several people expressed concern about large numbers of craft vendors coming to meetings and changing the rules. Other markets have this rule in order to keep Farmers' Markets as markets of farmers. Isn't this not allowing crafters too overwhelm the market really a management issue. Situation varies from market to market. People don't spend their food money on crafts. Hard to control proportion of vendors at the market – depends on who shows up that week. No motion was offered to extend voting to crafters.

### **LUNCH (Potluck)**

### **Guest Speakers: Chuck Morse and Diane Curry, Mendocino County Department of Agriculture**

- Coast Day CPC event: Botanical Gardens meeting room in FB – April 3<sup>rd</sup> – see emailed information – call office and **make an appt.** Will only do a second day, if we fill the first one and have the demand. May not be able to do new CPCs that day if they are long.

- What kind of specificity do you want on the CPC? It's a State form and they ask for varieties. If you use an Excel spreadsheet that looks like ours, we can accept that as your list.
- Good to make an appt even if coming to the Ukiah Office.
- 2011 Violations (Diane – who will be doing the inspections this year)
  - Violations and consequences have now been codified. Handout.
  - Last year, most were for not posting the CPC. There was one vendor with no CPC
  - Selling for other producers without the product being on both CPCs, not having both CPCs at the market, and not keeping the products separate on the table
  - Closed containers not correctly labeled with name, address, contents and amount

As a manager, you should make a round to check just before the market opens. The regs are getting stricter because there is so much cheating going on in other areas.
- CDFA is trying to work with the small producers
- New administrative penalties
  - Minor, moderate and serious categories – with different levels of fine
  - Both producer and market can be fined
- New regulations can be found on the CDFA web site and will be added to ours. Among those new regulations is that if a vendor knows that they are selling to someone who is going to use that food to make something they are going to sell, the vendor has to give them a receipt to create a paper trail. Previously, a vendor was not allowed to sell at the FM to someone who was going to resell the food. Diane Curry will send the new regs to Angela to put up on the MCFARM website.
- Separation of non certified products
  - Can sell own processed foods if you grow the majority of the ingredients
  - Managers must put vendors who sell both certified and non-certified on the edge between the two sections
  - Wild-crafted foods are not certified foods, and are not subject to ag inspection in the non-certified area of the market.
  - Ag Dept. people have jurisdiction to cite vendors selling certifiable foods in the non-certified section for not meeting the standards. If you want to do this, talk to the Ag Commissioners office about the standards, which are different from those for selling in the certified section of the market.
  - Vendors can sell re-usable bags
- There may well be fines this year
- Must have their organic documentation posted

**Strategic Planning Session:** Follow up on self-regulating at fall OC meeting. Biggest issue was not all being on the same page about where we are headed. Alison is willing to do some goal setting if the OC is interested. We are thirty minutes behind schedule and are reeling from implications of what Ag was saying about increased enforcement. Tabled for now.

**Present and Discuss Guidelines for sponsorship:** Winnie, John R., Scott  
 “Proposed Guidelines for Sponsorship and Use of Other Outside Funds by MCFARM Markets” were passed out – see attachment. Discussion. Does this cover sales? Yes. What about reporting requirements? What does the creation of a Friends of the Farmers Market bank account with its own TIN do? Do we need an opinion from a CPA about the IRS implications? Yes. There was consensus that the submitted policy is a good start. Motion to incorporate the

Proposed Guidelines for Sponsorship and Use of Other Outside Funds by MCFARM Markets into the market guidelines. Discussion. As this policy is written vendors or managers at one market can't object to what is being done at another market. Once we bring MCFARM into this – some of the autonomy of the market and the separation and balance of responsibility between the Association and the markets is gone. Winnie offered an amendment to add "provisionally" before "incorporate." Scott and Michael accepted the amendment.

- **M/S/A: Scott/Michael/A: Provisionally incorporate the Proposed Guidelines for Sponsorship and Use of Other Outside Funds by MCFARM Markets into the market guidelines.**

Managers should add these guidelines to their manuals.

### **Discuss the formation of a new By Laws Section on "Markets"**

Brainstorm what it would look like. Angela knows what we have done in the past. Have guidelines already for suspending market managers if necessary. Phone and Email Committee: Michael, Diane, Angela H. The only current input from the OC is to have a checklist of what a potential market should have in place before asking to join, including a feasibility study.

### **Old Business: None**

### **New Business**

- Plastic bags. Only have 10 more cases. Check with large vendors to see how much they might want. Minimum order is 64 cases. For the newsletter: MCFARM needs at least 50 pre-orders to re-order. Put in an order before [date]. Include alternatives to plastic bags into newsletter article. Including that it's OK for vendors to sell re-useable bags. Minimum order for Chico bags is 250. We still have revolving funds available. Important to offer an alternative. Good to have the bags be local if possible. Could we get a combination of bags from Emily and Chico bags?
- **Motion: Buy \$400 of the smaller Chico bags. M/S/A: Michael/Winnie/A**
- Distribution of rack cards: They will be available to Scott's store on W. Clay Street, in Ukiah.

### **Announcements**

- Action items will be at the top of the minutes
- Alison: We are offering two workshops this spring.
  - Holistic, Re-generative Bee Keeping Workshop – May 19<sup>th</sup>
  - One Day Intensive Heritage Poultry Raising Workshop – June 9<sup>th</sup>
- Take posters
- John R – Noyo Hill Farms – Winter Growing Workshop in late May or June; would do one inland if there is an interest
- Not So Simple Living Fair – last wkend in July – email Diane if you would like to give a workshop

**ADJOURNED at 4:00 pm**