

OC Meeting Minutes for 3/25/2018 [DRAFT]

Present: Isa, Scott, Julie, Sakina, Angela, Gloria, Kyle, Steven (Trout), Michael, plus guest Yvette Magallon (NCO Market Match)

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as amended.

Angela's report:

Market managers should submit applications for permits ASAP

Our main contact at the Ag Commissioner's Office is now Elizabeth Garcia

The Coast CPC day is tentatively scheduled for April 24th

Managers should get monthly reports in by the 7th of each month

Managers should also be keeping a correct count of vendors for the quarterly reported

Requests for reimbursements with the monthly report should be on the report or added in a list if no room

Managers must check vendors paperwork. Specifically, remember that hot and processed food vendors need seller's permits; this applies as well to jams, even though they are not taxable; the same for flowers and potted plants, with the exception of edible and medicinal flowers.

Managers should be sure to update their stall fee charts

Market Manager Agreements have been sent out: please return the last page signed.

Market reports:

Boonville – trout reported have vendors for the market but “not enough public support,” and no one has stepped forward to take on the manager's position, though some vendors are willing to help. Sakina will talk to any prospects who turn up to encourage them to apply and orient them to the job.

Willits – will be moving probably to the first block of South Main in a City Parking lot, decision contingent on City Council approval.

Redwood Valley – Isa mentioned that Caroline had submitted two grant applications for the market to possibly cover stall fees as an incentive to vendors to participate, particularly for vendors who had losses due to the fire. She is also looking into buying market surplus for the Caring Kitchen project. Isa will ask Caroline to write up the grant applications she has applied for, since there is some unclarity as to just they might cover.

RV will open the 1st Sunday in June, 9:30 to 12:30 (old hours restored).

Fort Bragg – another very good year.

Ukiah – after a slow-down, the market is picking up.

Discussion of our support for small markets:

Should there be a minimum vendor count for the market to continue to receive a subsidy? Gloria reported that vendor count varies a lot week-to-week during the winter, from just one to six. If the subsidy were withdrawn, she would continue, but it would certainly hurt. Angela pointed out that we have approved a budget that includes the winter stipend, so it is continuing. Gloria reported that her

Market Match program includes SSDI, SSI, and Foster Care recipients. This is something she was able to do with the first, pilot program, and she has continued it. Recipients have only to show a bank statement recording deposits from one of these programs. She then doubles their cash with scrip.

Market Match update from Yvette:

Our volunteer “match” for the program will carry over to the next period if we do not have enough hours for this period. Volunteers could be employed in flyering, making Facebook posts, other promotion. Yvette also works with the Volunteer Network and could help find volunteers for markets in need. AmeriCorps/Vista volunteers are also a possibility when they are in the area. There is a possibility that we will see a computerized system for entering MM data at market. The total budget for Mendocino and Lake counties during the current round was \$32,650. NCO expects to see more for the next round.

Market Managers should send tracking sheets, volunteer report, their invoice, and copies of the weekly EBT print-out at the end of each month. Even photos will be fine.

Market Managers urged Yvette to produce an information sheet on how to sign up for EBT.

Yvette will ask us to start next season with a \$15 match to ensure that there are sufficient funds; as the season progresses, she will consult about increases.

MCFARM historic records:

Angela has two bins of records going back to past presidents and newsletters; Trout has a scrap book with 25 years of old managers’ photos and other material – mostly undated and lacking names!

Our electronic documents are now on the website. Perhaps they should also be in Google Docs so we can all have access to them. Or in the Yahoo Group folder.

Michael will go through Angela’s boxes (when he gets them) and see what is of historical value, what can be used for the write-up of MCFARM’s history that he has committed to doing for the anniversary.

Scott also has MCFARM revenue history by market for the last 20 years.

Summer concert in the park event – Scott:

The City of Ukiah is very receptive to the idea of setting up a Farmers Market for one of the Concert in the Park series. Scott is looking for a suitable location. This would be either July 29th or August 12th. Market Managers will be asked to recruit a good number of vendors. We might use promotional money to provide concert goers with coupons to use at a subsequent market, for example.

Lover’s Lane ag land conversion issue – Scott:

A large developer (owner of Crush Restaurant) is proposing a major residential development on ag land owned by Paul Dolan. This would require suspending the General Plan’s zoning of this land as for agriculture only. Currently, no agricultural interest is speaking up. Should MCFARM?

Besides waiving the zoning restriction, the Board of Supervisors is also talking about suspending the county's affordable housing requirement for any new development, because the developers do not want to comply.

Resolved: Scott will draw up a "neutral" description of the issue for the newsletter, asking readers to weigh in on the decision if so inclined; but MCFARM itself will not take a position.

How to get customers to market:

Julie presented her formula:

- take care of your vendors;
- let vendors know if there is going to be a lack of a certain product if other vendors are not going to be at market-driven;
- happy vendors make for happy customers;
- thank people for coming to market; use a "loyalty card" scheme to bring them in and keep them coming back; tell them what is new at market;
- managers should shop the market themselves, compliment vendors on their presentation or offerings;
- take pictures at every market and upload them to your Facebook page;
- be available, let people know where to find you;
- thank vendors as they leave.

Facebook is the main way that Julie now advertises. Sakina recommended using the Mendo announcement list or something similar. Flags can be effective to draw people in. Amanda shares the RV and Willits Facebook pages to "for sale or trade" pages in the area. Some people also upload live video of the market. The Yelp page could also be helpful for a tourist-oriented market. The local Chamber of Commerce calendar should be used.

Discussion on why vendor participation has declined:

Some vendors have left smaller for bigger market. The timing of markets also affects vendor decision to attend. Hot and processed food vendors are often absent for festivals, some choose to focus on that avenue over the market. We also have an aging vendor (and customer) base.

Angela and Scott reported on recent personnel changes in the Ag Commissioner's office.

Stall fee revision – should we work on leveling the field more for smaller vendors, who pay as much as 13% of gross in stall fees. Michael promised to play with the spread sheets that Scott and Julie prepared and see what might work to deliver the same revenue or something close. Scott will look into how other markets handle stall fees.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Foley