

Community Food Project Grant  
January 2015 Update

Since the beginning of the second grant year in August, **UCCE's Harvest of the Month Program** has already reached over 800 students at Nipomo Elementary School, and 270 students at Shandon Elementary. Between October and December, these students tasted a variety of fresh, fall produce. UCCE is also working to coordinate school farmer assemblies at Shandon, Nipomo and Oceano Elementary schools with the help of Talley Farms and BeeWench Farms. Many of these students will be able to participate in farm tours.

With the help of a Cal Poly intern, UCCE hosted a food demonstration at the Salvation Army in early December with produce donated from the Thursday night San Luis Obispo Farmers' Market. In addition to making a winter salad, participants received a handout about oranges, nutrition information, and a recipe. These demonstrations will continue in 2015. Similar demonstrations, highlighting various food preservation techniques, will be conducted in Shandon, SLO, Oceano and Nipomo for food bank recipients. Demonstrations will start in February 2015.

Between October and the end of December, the **Food Bank and GleanSLO** harvested 46,949 pounds of produce, and are at nearly 50% of their year 2 grant goal. They have noticed that there is not as much available produce to glean as before. GleanSLO regularly speaks to farmers in our area, and believes that this decline is due to the drought, as well as more efficient farming methods, which reduces waste. Drought has driven produce prices up, which in turn is making farmers less likely to have excess donatable product. GleanSLO has been working hard not only in the fields, but also to connect more to the farming community in our county. They have recently been highlighted in several media outlets, such as the Farm Bureau of SLO County magazine and the New Times. In addition to promoting their services, they are trying to understand the barriers that farmers encounter when trying to donate their produce. To better understand the farmers' perspective, they are going to be hosting a farmer roundtable with the Farm Bureau.

**Central Coast Grown** partnered with Paso Robles Joint Unified School District to increase local procurement, and have set a goal of a 10% increase. CCG is working with One Cool Earth and Public Health to deliver a Harvest of the Month Program in Paso Robles. If the pilot program is successful, they hope to expand it to other institutions. They are continuing to work on a procurement tracking system for our county. CCG has also continued their efforts to connect local farmers to institutions. PRJUSD has started purchasing from two local farmers, and these connections will increase by the end of the year.

The Food Hub Working Group is meeting once every three weeks. The group is assessing how feasible a food hub in San Luis Obispo County is and the most needed and effective business model for the produce-processing unit. CCG recently read a report by California Alliance for Family Farmers that advises against new food hub infrastructure in California and are assessing what to do with this information and how to redirect their efforts accordingly.

**SLO Public Health** is working to plan a new series of food safety workshops that will begin in February 2015.