

Community Food Project Grant
July 2014 Update

UC Cooperative Extension has continued to work with local schools to increase their understanding of local and seasonal produce. They conducted a Harvest of the Month program in the beginning of May for 84 Shandon Elementary School students who tasted beets and radishes from BeeWench Farms. The Shandon Program will begin again in September 2015. The HOTM program will start at Nipomo Elementary School September 2014; its expected that over 900 students will participate in the program during the upcoming year.

The PhotoVoice program (where every month ten students submit a poem, story, or drawing to express their experience cooking a Harvest of the Month produce item with their families) continued through the year at Oceano Elementary School, and will start at Shandon Elementary School for the 2014-2015 school year.

UCCE coordinated field trips for 44 students from Shandon to tour BeeWench Farms (Paso Robles) in May, and 65 students from Oceano to tour Talley Farms (Arroyo Grande). UCCE will continue to work with local producers to host field trips for school students.

UCCE is developing an internship program to coordinate Cal Poly student volunteers to provide food tastings and demonstrations at the Salvation Army site, which are scheduled to start in August 2014.

Lastly, UCCE also continued to host their food preservation workshops. Since March, four workshops took place in South County, attended by a total of 133 people.

SLO Public Health hosted three additional food safety presentations since March, reaching a total of 46 people. These presentations focus on food safety and the Cottage Food law and are taught in both Spanish and English.

SLO Food Bank and Glean SLO have already reached their gleaning goal for the year, harvesting over 146,000 pounds of produce (the year's goal was 140,000 pounds), harvesting 39,785 pounds of produce from March 1st to May 31st alone. Despite exceeding their goals, the drought has affected the amount and type of produce available. Glean SLO has increased their backyard harvests, which are run by volunteers. Glean SLO staff is continuing to focus on enhancing their infrastructure to glean more from farmers' markets and large scale commercial farms.

In an effort to target local growers, Glean SLO has started to publicize their program and the tax benefits of donating produce through local agriculturally focused media and partnered with the Department of Agriculture's local farm inspectors to increase awareness about the Food Bank's produce recovery efforts.

Central Coast Grown has been working with the purchasing director of the San Luis Coastal Unified School District and a local farmer to develop solutions to barriers in implementing farm-to-school programs. CCG is also working with a manager of a large farm cooperative in the county to identify ways to partner with the local school district. CCG has had to alter their strategy to reaching the grant outcomes. Instead of convening stakeholder meetings, they have refocused their efforts towards developing a pilot local food procurement program before presenting to a larger stakeholder group. In order to measure progress of institutional purchasing over time, CCG is beginning to calculate baseline quantities of local procurement in the county. CAPSLO has recently committed to working with CCG on their efforts towards increasing local procurement.