

## Community Food Project Grant April 2015 Update

**Food Bank and GleanSLO** have harvested nearly 90,000 lbs of produce from local farms since October, and are well on their way to meet their goals for year two (200,000 lbs). As reported earlier, they continue to experience the effects of the drought; farmers are using more efficient production methods, which equates to less waste and less produce to donate. The drop in supply has also driven produce prices up, making farmers less likely to have excess produce. GleanSLO has continued to reach out to growers by attending events, and are planning a grower roundtable in late spring to understand farmers' challenges and barriers to donating to GleanSLO. Even though poundage harvested is smaller, community engagement among volunteers and groups continues to grow at a steady pace. They have the community support to expand their harvests when grower relationships become more solid. GleanSLO has trained several Neighborhood Harvest Leader volunteers, so staff efforts can be more focused on enhancing infrastructure to boost high yield farmers' market gleans and build capacity for large scale commercial farm gleans.

In the last quarter, **SLO Public Health** offered two classes that covered food safety, which were attended by 32 SLO County residents.

**Central Coast Grown** continues to work with Paso Robles Joint Unified School District to increase local procurement. They have partnered with Public Health and One Cool Earth to start a Harvest of the Month Program, featuring one local produce item each month. In this effort, CCG continues to create a local procurement tracking system tool and list of local farmers so local procurement can be scaled up in the future. PRJUSD has initiated sales with two local farmers, and will continue to forge new relationships with farmers through the rest of the school year. They have been surprised by how challenging it has been to find producers who are willing to sell wholesale to institutions.

The Food Hub Working Group meets every three weeks, and continuing to work to assess the feasibility for a food hub in SLO County. The group has been discussing what the most effective business model for a processing unit would be, and have started an outline of a business plan.

In the last quarter, **UC Cooperate Extension** has already reached over 1,100 students through their Harvest of the Month Program at Nipomo and Shandon Elementary Schools. Some of the produce students got to taste were carrots, grapefruits, Brussels sprouts, and tangerines. Students at Nipomo, Shandon, and Oceano Elementary Schools will be taking farm tours this May at BeeWench Farms or Talley Farms.

UCCE worked with several Cal Poly students to conduct food demonstrations (simple and seasonal salads, which included pomegranates, mandarins, kale, grapefruit, oranges, apples and mixed greens) at the SLO Salvation Army on January 30<sup>th</sup>, February 20<sup>th</sup>, March 6<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, using gleaned produce from the SLO Thursday night Farmers' Market. The next food demonstration will be conducted in April 2015. UCCE also provided food preservation demonstrations, in which 91 low-income residents attended in February and March. UCCE has reached their goal of teaching over 200 (reached 238) low-income residents how to preserve foods that they receive through food distributions.

For the 2014-2015 school year, second graders at Oceano Elementary School are participating in the HOTM PhotoVoice Project. The students draw pictures, write a story or a poem to express their culinary experience when preparing the HOTM produce item at home. Students received oranges in February and peas (still in their pods) in March.