



SLO County Food System Coalition Meeting Minutes
October 20, 2015, 4:00-6:00 PM, UCCE Auditorium

Attendees: Nicki Anderson, Karen Aydelott, Lindsey Bowles, Matt Bowling, Jaleah Brynn, Dana Byrd, Becca Carsel, Rafael Chung, Dean Craig, Erica Crawford, Joel Diringer, Julie Fallon, Ian Farmer, Hunter Francis, Elliot Gertner, Eli Grinberg, Kylie Hensley, Jeff Hiles, Stacey Hunt, Kathleen Karle, Terri Knowlton, Teresa Lees, Michelle Marshall, Linda McClure, Thomas Nguyen, Kori Nielsen, Montgomery Norton, Alexandra Ongman, Sharon Rippner, Cory Shallow, Susan Singley, Stephanie Teaford, Jeff Wade, Nell Wade, Susan Warren, Akiva Werbalowsky, and Emily Wilson

I. Farming for Ecosystem Resilience in a Changing Climate:

Introduction: Hunter Francis, CAFES Center for Sustainability

- Rob was part of the faculty steering committee that helped with the approval process to form the Center for Sustainability.
- Rob has roots in agriculture and is open to new and different ideas.
- SLO is unique in that it has relatively healthy soils, a good growing climate, and consumers with disposable income.
- SLO County's ag industry generates about \$1 billion annually, and the 3 biggest commodities are: grapes, strawberries, and beef.
- There are 115 CCOF operations in SLO County, which account for 2.3% of the county's production.
- There were 4 million pounds of squid harvested in SLO County last year.
- The Center for Sustainability produced a Central Coast Foodshed Guide that is available on their website (click [here](#)).
- Connecting agriculture with greenhouse gas emissions is important because healthy soils sequester carbon.

Presenter*: Rob Rutherford, Whole Options LLC

The importance of agriculture, and Rob's background:

- Agriculture only contributes 2% to the state GDP, but it is what sustains civilization.
- Rob taught at Cal Poly in the Animal Science department and managed the sheep unit. At the beginning of his career, he urged his department to get rid of soil science, microbiology, and botany classes. But when the Cal Poly president proposed to get rid of the sheep unit, this conflict caused him to change his mind. Similarly, when people are faced with a crisis like losing their farms, they might realize they need to do something differently. For Rob, his view about the interconnectedness of animals, plants, and people shifted.

The importance of economy:

- Economy = Home Management = making decisions to care for ourselves and what sustains us
- The word “economy” means to manage the home. Your “home” encompasses the things that you treasure. What makes life worth living? Is it meaningful communication, respect, trust? Health?...You are in charge of your home. Take care of yourself and then help others. What needs to be in place for your home to be flourishing?... healthy soils, for starters

The importance of healthy soil:

- The most important part of our home is the life in the soil. There is more weight of living creatures in the soil than there is above it. Agriculture and human civilization depends on healthy soil.
- The soil food web is complex, and there is a lot we don't understand about it.
- Depleted soils lead to depleted nutrient content in food. Complex healthy soils create healthy nutritious food.
- Tilling releases carbon from soils. Water follows carbon. The more carbon in your soil, the more water it can hold. The best place to store water is in the ground where it won't evaporate and is available consistently to plants.
- “For each % increase in soil humus water holding capacity per acre is increased by 18,000 gallons.” – Christine Jones, PhD

Ecosystem processes:

- Our culture tends to focus on events (e.g., floods, droughts, famine, weeds, insect pests, social breakdown). But these events are caused by ecosystem services (e.g., water filtration, food, fiber), which are caused by ecosystem processes. If we focus our attention on creating healthy functioning ecosystem processes, we have more leverage to affect events in a healthy way.
- The four ecosystem processes:
 1. Water cycle
 2. Mineral cycle
 3. Solar energy flow
 4. Community dynamics and succession
- A sunshine spill is a national disaster. Solar energy that falls on bare soil does not contribute to biological activity on the planet; it simply becomes waste heat.

Modern ag & mechanized thinking:

- Modern agriculture is inefficient in that it produces 1Kcal of food for each 10Kcal expended. Whereas, slash and burn agriculture produced 10Kcal of food for each Kcal expended and hunter gatherers produced 20 Kcal of food for each Kcal expended.
- Industrial agriculture treats unwanted symptoms (e.g., too many insects, too many weeds) by adding petroleum-based inputs (e.g., insecticides, herbicides)
- Industrial agriculture is based on the world view that we can understand the whole of the world by understanding its parts. This type of thinking is appropriate for hard systems, but not for soft systems. The natural world is a soft system that cannot be understood with

hard system thinking. Modern humans are generally very comfortable working with hard systems, but have trouble working with soft systems.

Hard Systems:	Soft Systems:
• Made of parts	• Made of relationships
• Emergent properties predictable	• Emergent properties sometimes unexpected
• Unforeseen consequences not unusual	• Continue to function with parts missing – although differently
• Non self-replicating	• Self-replicating
• Non self-organizing	• Self-organizing
• Problems solved by convergent thinking	• Problems solved by divergent thinking
• Can be complicated	• Are complex

Closing words:

- What does this mean for farmers facing climate change (and the rest of us too)? We need to value how agriculture and human civilizations depend on economy and ecosystem processes.

*See Rob’s presentation slides on the Resources page of the Food System Coalition website for more detail. Slofoodsystem.org.

II. Announcements:

GleanSLO (Susan):

- GleanSLO welcomes their new AmeriCorps member, Emily Wilson! Yay!
- GleanSLO is planning a 50 person glean at Talley Farms on Oct 24 as part of an event called *Glean 805*, which celebrates Food Day by engaging people in gleaning across SLO, SB, and Ventura counties.

Community Food Project (CFP) Grant Update (Joel):

- Joel is an evaluator for a 3 year CFP grant. The groups involved are far exceeding their goals.
- He and others are looking into the next grant cycle that would start Oct 2016.
- See the grant update handout for details.

Master Food Preservers (Julie):

- There is a pumpkin preservation workshop on Saturday.

Chumash Farms (Jeff):

- New member to the FSC (this is his first meeting). He’s excited to get involved.

SLO Permaculture Guild (Tree):

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- There is a harvest party on Saturday.

SLO Grange (Jaleah):

- Their improved facility is available for community use.

The Wellness Kitchen (Terri):

- Still working on the Children's Food Program.

Slow Money SLO (Jeff):

- The group helps to organize peer-to-peer lending.
- Their loans to the SLO Natural Foods Co-Op from 3 years ago are almost paid off. In the last three years, the co-op has gone from 20 to 80 local food suppliers. Eric Michaelson is the new president of the co-op's board.
- Their next meeting is Nov 3rd at 6pm at the SLO Grange and will feature speakers from Mama Ganache, Vert Foods, and Reef Points Hard Cider.

Center for Sustainability (Hunter):

- Mark Shepard will speak at the SLO Grange on Nov 2. Details on their website.

III. Work Group Updates:

Farm-to-School (Nicki):

- Feels reinvigorated after the Farm-to-School conference. The timing for this work is good. After 10-15 years of pushing, the maps, frameworks, list serves, and other support exist. The movement has 4 focus areas:
 1. School gardens;
 2. Ag education;
 3. Procurement; and
 4. Marketing.
- Email Nicki (nicki.anderson@centralcoastgrown.org) to join the work group mailing list.
- They're planning to have a big meeting in January with a "haves" and "needs" board.

EBT at Farmers' Markets (Stephanie):

- EBT is available at the market at the SLO Grange (2880 Broad St, SLO) on Tuesdays from 3-6pm.
- The work group reconvened on Monday. Their goal is to increase participation in using CalFresh to buy fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets.
- The markets need machines to swipe the EBT cards and admin to organize logistics to reimburse farmers for accepting tokens instead of cash. (The North County Farmers Market Association hires market managers to run their EBT operation.)
- Barriers:
 - Having a consistent person to be responsible for the EBT machine.
 - Staff for booth.
 - Cash flow and coordinating accounting. The USDA reimburses the market after, and the market still needs to pay farmers for their tokens.

- The Downtown Association needs to talk with the market manager about EBT.

Community Cafes (Stacey):

- Phone call with One World Everybody Eats about Project 31 – Find 31 churches, restaurants, etc to take responsibility to prepare and provide one meal per month and put a sticker on display in their location. Their group will come and present to our local group and want to help create a replicable model here.
- Applying for \$1,000 from the Pollination Project to cover brochure printing costs.
- Has put together a group of volunteers to hand out brochures to local restaurants and other organizations.

IV. Policy Updates:

Presenter: Kylie

One out of three of the bills we supported this legislative cycle passed: AB 1321 Nutrition Incentive Matching Grant Program. AB 515 Tax Credit for CA Ag Donations to Food Banks and HR 1061/S 569 Farm to School Act didn't pass.

The Living Schoolyard Network wants to meet with local reps to discuss upcoming legislation. The FSC will send a rep and write a letter of support. (Karen!)

V. CA Food Policy Council Update:

Presenter: Kylie

The CA FPC is on hiatus until January because their backbone organization, Roots of Change, hit a funding gap. They will still release their legislative report card in January.

VI. Closing:

Presenters: Becca and Kylie

At the January meeting we will review our work and accomplishments from 2015 and set goals for 2016. Hope you can make it!

Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 12 from 4-5:45pm at the UCCE Auditorium, 2156 Sierra Way