

AGRARIAN ADVOCATE



CULTIVATING HEALTHY FARMS, FOOD, & COMMUNITIES



Where the Locals Go

By MICHELLE WYLER
Photo By E. Chris Wisner
www.ecwisner.com

Locally owned independent businesses shape a community's character and are essential to a vital local economy. They use the goods and services of other local businesses, serve as community hubs, and are a key component of a healthy neighborhood.

They're where the locals go.

They're owned by our friends and neighbors, or maybe even you. And the good news is that Humboldt County's independent businesses—including farm businesses—are getting organized!

The Humboldt County Independent Business Alliance (HumIBA), composed of business owners, local organizations, and concerned citizens, promotes and advocates for Humboldt's independent businesses. Independent Business Alliances protect a community's

unique character, ensuring continued opportunities for entrepreneurs, building local economic strength, and preventing the displacement of locally-owned businesses by chains.

Among other things, HumIBA builds support for "indy" businesses by publishing a comprehensive directory of them. The Local Options Directory, which was released in early December, is an inclusive guide to help both residents and visitors identify and support independent businesses in Humboldt.

"With the Local Options Directory, citizens will be able to conveniently and efficiently make more informed choices as to how they wish to spend their dollars," says creator Kaitlin Sopoci-Belknap.

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MISSION

CAFF is building a movement of rural and urban people to foster family-scale agriculture that cares for the land, sustains local economies and promotes social justice.

MEMBERSHIP

CAFF is a nonprofit organization that relies on membership dues and donations. Become a member or donate to CAFF online at www.caff.org or by mail.

AGRARIAN ADVOCATE

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36355 Russell Blvd., Davis, CA 95616
PO Box 363, Davis, CA 95617
Phone (530)756-8518 Fax (530)756-7857
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Oakland	(510) 832-4625
Firebaugh	(559) 259-1981
Fresno	(559) 801-7722
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VOLUME 30, WINTER 2009

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Dave Runsten, Director of Policy

Changes

November 4th ushered in national changes, and also some changes a little closer to home.

CAFF has always been a leader in California's agriculture. We realized that in order for us to continue to best support California's family farmers, we need an organizational structure ready to weather the current economic storm,

and a full-time policy person to ensure California's family farmers have a voice on critical food and farming issues. To that end, I've accepted a new position at CAFF, Director of Policy, and handed over the organization's reins to Diane Del Signore.

Diane Del Signore, a CAFF Board member for the past three years, will serve as Executive Director of CAFF for one year. Diane brings over twenty years of management and nonprofit experience to this position. Diane was a global partner manager at Hewlett-Packard, responsible for a worldwide team of personnel, and for generating \$63 million in revenue annually. Most recently, Diane founded Snap Pea Partners, a consulting firm focused on strategy and business development for organizations (both for- and nonprofit) in the healthy lifestyle market. Diane has been active on volunteer boards her entire career, including East Bay Agency for Children, Redwood Day School, Devil's Gulch Ranch Educational Services, and CAFF.

I have served as Executive Director since late 2004. In that time, CAFF has more than doubled the size of the organization. We now have almost 30 employees at seven locations around the state, and in 2007, our subsidiary, California Growers' Collaborative, sold over \$1 million of produce.

I have also been the *de facto* Policy Director for the past few years, but CAFF needs to do much more. I was trained as an agricultural economist and I have been conducting policy research for 30 years. The opportunity to focus on the many critical issues facing California agriculture will enable CAFF to exert more influence on public policy and to coordinate policy efforts with our food and farming programs.

CAFF's policy focus in the coming year will include water supply and efficiency, including solving the regulatory barriers to small-scale water storage; the promotion and dissemination of low-tech methods associated with sustainable agriculture; global warming and land use, with a focus on promoting permanent agriculture tied to local food systems; and food safety, where we will continue to advocate for the rights of family farmers.

It has been a pleasure to serve the organization as Director over the past few years. I look forward to continuing to interact with all of you as we build a sustainable agriculture and food system in California. 🌱

Dave Runsten
Director of Policy



Hedgerows: Improving the Biodiversity of Farms

BY AMY KAPLAN AND SAM EARNSHAW

Something is growing on nearly every square inch of Lone Willow Farm, owned by John Teixeira. On his 37 acres in the San Joaquin Valley, he produces tomatoes, sweet corn, peppers, eggplant, melons, wheat hay, and perennial pasture. A small herd of goats provide milk, which is made into cheese for the household. Multiple varieties of fruit trees dot the property.

Many species of birds, foxes, hawks, owls, bats, insects, and other critters live in and around his property, which lies at the intersection of Lone Willow Slough and the San Joaquin River. Even with such an already diverse operation, Teixeira wanted an 1,100-foot native plant corridor to connect the two important riparian zones edging his farm (see box on pg. 4 for more information).

John is an avid birdwatcher, and as a farmer he understands the benefit of bringing birds to the farm as agents of biological control. Insect and rodent-eating birds do a great job of controlling farm pests.

The California Wildlife Conservation Board provided funding for CAFF and the Wild Farm Alliance to install native plant hedgerows on three California farms: two in the San Joaquin Valley, and one in the coastal Pajaro Valley. Each farm filled out a Biodiversity Farm Plan to review a variety of farm management practices that maintain and enhance biodiversity at the farm level, and contribute to conservation at the watershed level.

CAFF and Wild Farm Alliance staff joined Teixeira, farmworkers from Lone Willow Ranch, and volunteers to plant the 1,100-foot native plant hedgerow. Riparian trees such as alder, red willow, box elder, black walnut, and cottonwood now edge the property, along with other native shrubs, trees, and grasses.

Frank Williams and Mark Fickett of Windfall Farms, a 380-acre cotton, almond, and row crop ranch also near Firebaugh, had a serious goal in mind when they planned

a 2,600-foot native plant hedgerow for their farm: create permanent habitat for beneficial insects. Through their participation in the Sustainable Cotton Project, they plant beneficial insect habitats of corn, sunflowers, and buckwheat each year, but a permanent planting of perennial trees and shrubs supplies year-round shelter and food for helpful insect predators and pollinators. The hedgerow will bring many other benefits, including protection from strong afternoon winds. The ranch landowner also liked the idea of bringing trees to the ranch to offer some shaded relief from the blazing Firebaugh sun.

The hedgerow at Windfall Farms consists of native California trees and flowering shrubs: oaks, California lilac, incense cedar, giant sequoia, coffeeberry, coast redwood, and deergrass. The planting bed was mulched to manage weeds and to retain moisture. The planting will be irrigated, and soon a diverse row of trees and shrubs will serve as an ongoing demonstration of how agricultural lands can provide ecological benefits such as reducing soil erosion, increasing water quality, and increasing beneficial insect, pollinator, and wildlife habitat.

In fact, a plethora of wildlife has been seen in the vicinity of the ranch, including coyotes, bobcats, feral pigs, skunk, kangaroo rats, owls, doves, hawks, lizards and gopher snakes. The National Organic Program (NOP) Rule requires production practices that maintain or improve natural resources (soil and water quality, wetlands, woodlands and wildlife), and this perennial vegetation will help increase biodiversity on the farm and in the region. Representing one of the two organic cotton farms in the state, Frank and Mark are diversifying the habitat on their farm and satisfying the requirements of the NOP.

Over the next two years, CAFF staff and participating farmers will be monitoring the plantings for insects. We're looking forward to watching the plants grow! 🌱

For more information about CAFF's Farmscaping program, contact Sam Earnshaw, sam@caff.org

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

CAFF works with many farms, individuals, businesses, and organizations to highlight the role of family farms in caring for the land and providing local and sustainably-grown food and fiber. Making a Difference profiles one of our allies in this effort.

Riparian Restoration Successes: A Colusa Almond Project Update

CAFF's Colusa Almond project works with local partners to help almond growers in the county implement practices that can decrease the erosion occurring in their orchards. Additionally, the project offers information and technical support to farmers interested in utilizing reduced risk pesticides and farming with more biologically based practices.

Widespread almond orchard plantings have modified local ephemeral streams in Colusa County, resulting in levels of erosion and sedimentation that can degrade soil resources as well as wildlife habitat. CAFF's project directly addresses these issues by implementing erosion control structures and habitat plantings that reduce or eliminate the soil loss. Working with Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) Engineer, Jack Alderson, we estimate that these projects will prevent over 2,000,000 pounds of sediment from entering streams each year.

The Colusa Almond Project has completed construction work to mitigate erosion problems on six streams that cut through participating landowners' orchards. Primarily, we focused on creating permanent stream crossings so landowners can cross from one area of their orchard to the other without causing erosion. The structures were engineered to last for decades. Additionally, we reinforced two severely eroded stream banks, and installed a multilevel rock structure for headcut control.



Miles Deprato (CLBL), Jack Alderson (NRCS), and Dave McCullough look at an erosion site and discuss plans for restoration.

Our thanks go to Jack Alderson who created the site designs, and to contractor Dave McCullough whose earth moving skills enabled us to finish each of these sites on time.

Currently we are working with two local high schools through the Center for Land Based Learning's (CLBL) Student and Landowner Education and Watershed Stewardship (SLEWS) program to re-vegetate these worksites utilizing native plant and tree species. In 2009, we will continue focusing on vegetative plantings, developing a best management practices manual for Colusa almond growers, monitoring water quality from our project orchards, and offering educational field days. 🌱

What is a riparian zone?

A riparian zone is the land bordering a body of water which is home to special species of plants and animals. Maintaining a diversity of plants in this zone is critical to water quality. Trees and shrubs prevent erosion, and grasses provide water-filtration services.



Stream crossings allow landowners to cross from one area of their orchard to another without causing erosion. Here work begins on creating a permanent stream crossing on a Colusa County Almond orchard.



BIOLOGICAL FARMING

CAFF promotes a whole systems approach to farming that is flexible, maintains long-term profitability and protects water, soil and air resources. Our programs include the Sustainable Cotton Project, Environmentally Responsible Tree Crops, Farmscaping/Hedgerows, and Almonds: Best Management Practices.

Highlights of the 2008 Cotton Tour

Invariably, the highlight of the Sustainable Cotton Project's annual tour is when participants release beneficial insects into a cotton field. Perhaps it's because the release occurs at the first stop—a field of organic cotton—and is the first hands-on experience of the day. Perhaps it's because the field boasts the only naturally colored cotton growing in California, and participants enjoy the novelty.

Or perhaps it's simply because no matter your age, there's a certain appeal to scattering thousands of ladybugs throughout a field.

Led by Project Director Marcia Gibbs, and Field Scout Luis Gallegos, with help from local farmers and Lynda Grose, a fashion designer and lecturer at California College of the Arts, this year's tour ushered about 80 fashion and design professionals through the heart of California's cotton country, connecting those who grow Cleaner Cotton® with those who can use it. For many who work in the clothing business, the tour was their first chance to set foot on a farm and their first glimpse of how cotton moves from dirt to shirt.

Furthermore, the tour provides participants an opportunity to talk to farmers as they witness the work and care that goes into growing cotton. Some farmers spoke of how participation in the Sustainable Cotton Project broadened their vision of their role as farmers, saying that they now have a greater sense of responsibility as stewards of the California's farmland and the wildlife living around and within it.

At the second stop of the day, participants watched in awe as they which they witnessed cotton pickers driving throughout the field, harvesting cotton that was then compressed into massive, 25,000-pound massive modules (huge cotton bricks).

Later, while enjoying a locally catered lunch, participants listened to several speakers. The first, Dr. Marcia Sablan, reflected on how she first came to the city of Firebaugh to volunteer, but took up permanent residence after falling in love with the local community. She focused her talk on the importance of the Sustainable Cotton Project's work, particularly as it relates to the reduction of pesticide use and its relationship to community health. Both the American Medical Association and Health in the Heartland, report Fresno County consistently has the highest asthma rates in the Central Valley, which is in part attributable to pesticides.

Tour participants gave glowing reviews of the day, and even more importantly, the tour helped us gain trac-

tion with some apparel manufactures who want to embrace the Cleaner Cotton® story and weave Cleaner Cotton® into their clothing. We are actively negotiating with several companies, and look forward to the day we can help our farmers pre-sell the cotton they produce and use the tour to take companies to visit "their" field of cotton. 🌱



Cotton Tour participants scatter thousands of ladybugs in the only naturally colored organic cotton field in California.

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Businesses Continue to Make the Local Switch

When James Faber started two Delessio Markets with his business partner Patrick Delessio, seven years ago, they made a commitment to serve fresh, healthy foods that were naturally grown or produced. Without asking many questions, they employed reputable purveyors to supply ingredients for their two restaurants and take-out locations. Everything was going well until Faber reflected on his sourcing decisions and how he wanted his children to eat.

“I have two small sons,” says James, “and at one point one of my sons was in the restaurant and reached up to grab a strawberry [that I knew wasn’t organic] and I stopped him and said, ‘No, you can’t have that.’ That moment made me aware of a disconnect between our values and the reality of what we were serving our customers. If a non-organic strawberry wasn’t good enough for my son, why was I serving it to our customers?”

Faber took a much-deserved, short vacation on which he happened to pick up a copy of CAFF’s Local Food Guide for the Bay Area. When he returned to work the following Monday, he announced the transition they were going to make: begin sourcing as much locally grown and organic foods as possible. Today, they procure products through local farmers markets, Marin Agricultural Institute (who consolidate and deliver products from Marin farmers markets), and through a local distributor.

“We got into this business for our love of food and entertaining,” Faber said during their Fall 2008 press release dinner, “but somewhere we lost our direction and formed some unhealthy purchasing practices that were disconnected from our values and true passion.”

Faber and Delessio converted their two locations’ menus to nearly 90% locally grown foods, including dairy, meat, fruits and vegetables. At Delessio the food is served buffet-style, and they charge a per-pound price depending on whether it is hot food or salad bar. The transition upped their prices from \$8.50–\$8.75 to \$12.50 per pound.

Not everyone is happy about their new offerings and higher prices. A quick search on Yelp.com (a popular web-based review site) found some unhappy reviews due to the changes. Despite these squeaky wheels, James is pleased

to report an overall increase in revenue, stating that, “dedicated customers are still coming in.”

The real cost of food—of local food, direct from farms to our marketplaces—provides a fair price to the farmer, and factors in the high cost of land, utilization of sustainable farming practices, and a number of other variables. We’re heartened to see that even in these tough economic times businesses continue to shift to locally produced food for this very reason, and customers continue to support their determination to do what’s best for our communities, farmers, and land. 🌱



A Farm to School Field Guide

First you plant it, then you tend it, then you reap the rewards. That basic farming formula turns seeds into fruits and, appropriately, it’s also a fitting recipe for growing and maintaining healthy Farm to School Programs.

However, any farmer will tell you that this formula, while accurate, is also drastically oversimplified. And until this fall, whenever passionate community members contacted us wanting to change their school districts’ lunch or food education programs, CAFF’s advice was usually just as simplistic. Busy running programs ourselves, staff rarely had time to share the details that make Farm to School programs truly successful—until now.

With the publication of the “Farm to School Field Guide for Parents and Community Members,” people have a comprehensive guidebook for changing lunch menus and food education at school. The advice in the new publication can still be boiled down to the do-able “plant it, tend it, reap it,”—but it provides useful, tactical detail as well.

During the six years since the launch of our Farm to School program, we have learned and developed strategies for everything from integrating food and farming into the curriculum, to coordinating school nutrition advocacy teams, to communicating with food service directors about



COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS

CAFF connects consumers to food producers by providing information, access and education through its Buy Fresh Buy Local, Farm to School, Farm to Institution programs, and the Growers’ Collaborative.

locally grown produce. This fall we took another step toward sharing that knowledge with whoever might want to become a champion for Farm to School: we began hosting a quarterly series of trainings to supplement the guide for interested residents in the Central Coast region. In January, we will host a conversation about on-farm education, and it will be followed by other Farm to School Champion trainings on topics like school food service and school garden basics.

Given the current challenges facing the California educational system—deep funding cuts, extremely restricted class time due to the No Child Left Behind Act, and crumbling infrastructure, to name a few—it is vitally important that we harness the energy and enthusiasm of the whole community for Farm to School programs. As parents become increasingly worried about their children’s health and disconnection from food sources, they are increasingly interested in what they can do to make changes. We believe the Farm to School Field Guide is a good place to start. 🌱

Check out the new guide for yourself on the Farm to School page at www.caff.org. You can also be in touch with us at farmtoschool@caff.org.

Bay Area Local Food Forum Showcases Positive Policy Change

While consumers across the nation enthusiastically embrace the campaign to Buy Fresh, Buy Local, helping institutional kitchens do the same presents real challenges. Though it is often easy to buy locally the relatively small quantities of produce a family needs, securing institutional quantities of locally grown products requires time, coordination, and support. CAFF’s Farm to Institution program recently coordinated the Bay Area Local Food Forum to help institutions understand these hurdles, share success stories, and develop ideas for collaboration. The November 18th event drew 120 participants to Mills College to share innovative examples of local sourcing efforts in the public and private sectors. Participants included family farmers, institutional buyers, local food advocates, and municipal representatives.

The chefs’ and food buyers’ enthusiasm for increasing their local sourcing was palpable. At a roundtable discussion titled, “Chef to Chef on the Nuts and Berries of Local Sourcing,” chefs Preeti Misty of the deYoung Museum and Alfredo Hoyos of Mills College remarked on the challenge of finding sufficient volume of certain local products, including grains. Serendipitously, Michael Bosworth of Rue & Forsman Ranch chimed in, noting that his rice supply

surpasses his local customers’ demand and explaining that he sells his product via the Growers’ Collaborative. The chefs were delighted to hear this, and exchanged contact information with him. Another market success!

Co-sponsored by Bay Localize, Bon Appetit Management Company, and Mills College, the event covered topics including food access in urban neighborhoods, cost management, and linking local agriculture with climate change policies. Groundbreaking examples of institutional commitment to localizing food procurement included: UC Berkeley’s modified produce distributor contract, requiring produce distributors to disclose which items are local; Contra Costa County’s Buy Fresh, Buy Local resolution calling on city agencies to source locally; and the City of Oakland’s Meals on Wheels foray into local sourcing with a mere 1% increase in cost. Like many of the efforts showcased throughout the day, each of these developments were instigated or supported by partnerships with CAFF.

Engaged discussions continued over a delicious lunch, with produce sourced by the Growers Collaborative and prepared by Bon Appétit Management Company chefs. The meal was capped off by a delectable dessert made from Gizdich Ranch Gala apples, EGB Farm almonds, and BZ Bee honey. In the farmers market demonstration area, tasty samples were distributed by Claudia Sersland of Dave Lewis Farm, Michael Bosworth of Rue & Forsman Ranch, Mary Vincent of the Growers’ Collaborative, and Valerie Love from Alhambra Valley Olive Oil Company. Bosworth felt the event was a great opportunity to meet potential buyers, explaining, “I saw that buyers are just sitting and waiting for local producers to connect with so they can get local products on to their menus.”

In addition to the educational and networking opportunities provided throughout the day, CAFF also disseminated Ten Policy Recommendations for Municipal Governments to government representatives. The document suggests pragmatic revenue-neutral policies for cities to consider during these hard economic times, and they also released Building Local Food on College Campuses a manual that provides guidance for institutions and farmers on how to manage local sourcing, including cost management, contract expectations, and how to gauge the level of student interest. The guide is based on CAFF’s experiences as well as research findings from a National Research Initiative-funded investigation of the Farm to Institution Market recently released by UC Davis and UC Santa Cruz. 🌱

If you would like the full set of notes from the event and/or the Building Local Food on Campus Guide, please contact Farm to Institution Associate Josh Edge at josh@caff.org.



Capitol Report

DECEMBER 2008

BY PETE PRICE,
CAFF LEGISLATIVE
REPRESENTATIVE

Family farmers and sustainable agriculture had two big wins in the 2008 legislative session: the passage and enactment of **AB 541 (Huffman)** and **AB 2168 (Jones)**. Meanwhile the state's budget deficit grew dramatically worse during the fall, posing an unprecedented threat to the state's fiscal solvency. The state's premier farmland protection program, the Williamson Act, is now at serious risk of being defunded in 2009. And yes, there was an election.

Legislative Victories

AB 541 (Huffman) took the entire two years of the 2007–08 session to wind its way to the Governor's desk, but it was a successful trip. After two years of negotiations, temporary defeats, and amendments, AB 541 emerged with protections for farmers whose crop has been contaminated by genetically engineered material. The bill shields farmers from liability for GMO (genetically modified organism) patent infringement when their crop is found to contain GE material, provided the farmer did not knowingly acquire the material or know it was in his crop and the material is present at only a *de minimis* level. AB 541 also establishes farmer notification procedures that protect farmers against unauthorized entry onto their land by agents of a GMO manufacturer who believes a crop illegally contains its patented GE material.

AB 2168 (Jones) also was signed into law by the Governor, making it easier for farm stands run by farm families to sell an expanded range of products, including value-added products like jams and oils as well as bottled water and juices. These changes not only respond to consumer demand for cool drinks at a farm stand but also allow farmers to extend their market season by selling value-added products made from produce grown on the farm or nearby. AB 541 also extends the exemption from standard pack requirements currently enjoyed by certified farmers markets to farm stands, thereby making it easier for farm stands to sell to local restaurants and other institutional buyers. The idea for AB 541 was brought to the Legislature

by the Contra Costa Farm Bureau and CAFF worked closely with the state Farm Bureau representatives to find the right balance of changes in the bill.

Williamson Act and the State Budget

In recent years as California has faced chronic budget shortfalls, the Governor has routinely proposed a list of budget cuts in January that may be necessary if the Legislature does not adopt a balanced budget. That list often includes cuts to Williamson Act funding, which precipitates a legislative Kabuki dance: CAFF and other agricultural organizations, along with environmental groups and local governments, all circulate letters and lobby legislators to oppose the cuts, and the Williamson Act is deleted from the final cut list.

This year could be different. The state's budget deficit is so severe—\$11 billion in the remaining 6 months of the 08–09 fiscal year and a projected \$16 billion in 09–10—that no programs are safe. And the Williamson Act spends \$34 million annually from the state's General Fund by paying local governments the incremental difference they lose in tax revenues when farmland under Williamson Act contract is taxed at its agricultural rate instead of the more lucrative "highest and best use" rate. It is sadly ironic that while the state has adopted world-leading policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including the enactment only weeks ago of far-reaching legislation to reduce urban sprawl and the farmland it gobbles up, it also is faced with the Hobson's choice of balancing the budget by eliminating funding for the Williamson Act. CAFF members and friends, beware: elimination of Williamson Act funding is a very real possibility. If you believe it should be saved, your legislators and the Governor need to hear from you.

Election Update

In addition to the dramatic results of the national election, all 80 state Assembly seats and half of the 40 state Senate seats were up for election in November. In the state Assembly, Democrats picked up three seats. None of the 20 Senate seats changed parties, although the Democrats will be down one vote until a special election can be held in several months, due to the election of Senator Mark Ridley–Thomas to a seat on the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

The only ballot proposition directly related to agriculture, Proposition 2, won handily. The measure placed restrictions on the caging and penning of pigs, calves and



PUBLIC POLICY

CAFF works with state and federal legislators and government agencies to create policies and practices that promote local food systems, reduce air and water pollution, foster family farming, and preserve farm land. See CAFF's policy positions at www.caff.org.

chickens, although the provisions dealing with poultry are the only ones that will have a significant impact in California. CAFF debated the merits of Proposition 2 at some length, and despite considerable sympathy for the measure, decided to remain neutral. A University of California study showed that the net effect would be to increase the cost of egg production enough to drive much of the California production to neighboring states that do not impose the same restrictions, thus negating the effect of the measure while harming California farm operators. We can expect follow-up legislation by the California egg industry to clarify vague terms and conditions in the ballot measure. 🌱

Strengthening Urban Water Management Plans

Editor's note: Mark Twain famously said, "Whiskey is for drinking, water is for fighting." This is an omnipresent reality in California. Occasionally, CAFF participates in policy matters and lawsuits when we believe the best interests of California's family farmers are at stake. Below we feature once such instance, a lawsuit in which we were a plaintiff, where the coalition we were a part of—and California's family farmers—were victorious.

CAFF, along with a broad coalition of community organizations representing conservationists, farmers, ranchers, fishermen, and recreationists, won their lawsuit over the Sonoma County Water Agency's Urban Water Management Plan. Judge Nadler agreed with the Water Coalition (of which CAFF is a member) that the proposed Plan was deficient in five fundamental respects.

California's Urban Water Management Planning Act requires major urban water purveyors such as Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) to prepare an Urban Water Management Plan every five years to assess available ground and surface water supplies, and determine whether they are sufficient to meet projected water demands. The Act declares that "[a] long term, reliable supply of water is essential to protect the productivity of California's business and economic climate" as well as its environmental quality.

SCWA's most recent Plan claims that Sonoma County has adequate ground and surface water supplies for substantial urban growth.

Judge Nadler rejected SCWA's claim, pointing out that the Agency's proposal to increase diversions from the Russian River potentially conflicts with protection of this river for fish and wildlife, recreation, and existing agricultural and domestic uses. The superior court therefore set aside Sonoma County Water Agency's Plan, and directed

them to acknowledge and address the potential water shortages facing Sonoma County before unsustainable urban growth deprives existing and future agricultural, urban, and recreational uses of essential water supplies.

Judge Nadler ruled that the proposed Plan ignores or understates many severe constraints on future water supply, and that Agency violated the Urban Water Management Planning Act in the following respects:

- (1) The SCWA failed to coordinate with relevant agencies as required by the Act;
- (2) The Plan fails to include the degree of specificity required by the Act;
- (3) The Plan fails to adequately consider environmental factors, specifically, the effect of changed water flows during period of water shortfalls on the salmonids, and other potential implications of the Endangered Species Act;
- (4) The Plan fails to adequately address the effect of recycled groundwater on the availability of water supply in the future; and
- (5) The Plan fails to quantify with reasonable specificity the scope of water demand management measures which are relied upon to address the anticipated water shortfalls.

The lawsuit was brought by fourteen community organizations including the Sonoma County Water Coalition, the Russian River Watershed Protection Committee, the Community Alliance with Family Farmers, the Westside Association to Save Agriculture, the Coast Action Group, the O.W.L. Foundation, the Sebastopol Water Information Group, and the North Coast Rivers Alliance, among others.

Stephan Volker, attorney for the plaintiffs, praised our collective perseverance, through two years of challenging litigation, and lauded Judge Nadler for his extraordinary effort in reviewing hundreds of pages of briefs and a 71,000-page court record, preparatory to issuing his detailed and scholarly 46-page ruling. "We are pleased that the Court has vindicated our concerns by ruling in our favor on virtually every issue," stated Mr. Volker. "We look forward to working with Sonoma County Water Agency to develop a sensible and lawful water management plan that assures that water supplies are adequate to protect not only our cities and farmers, but also our fish and wildlife, for now and for future generations," added Mr. Volker. 🌱

The Sonoma County Water Coalition, founded in 2004, is a forum for more than thirty local groups to share information and concerns about water, and to take action to improve management of this vital resource in Sonoma County. The combined membership of its member groups is more than 25,000 concerned citizens.



Thank you for your annual gift

Despite the barrage of bad economic news that we all faced this past holiday season, our members responded with characteristic generosity to our 2008 year-end appeal.

As of January 15, we have raised \$9,492.00—and the checks are still trickling in.

We appreciate your donations and will work hard to make the most of your money in the coming year. Speaking of which, all of us at CAFF extend our best wishes to you for a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2009!

We are working quickly to send out thank you letters and acknowledgments in time for tax season. If you have any questions about a gift acknowledgment, please contact Kristen Schroer at kristen@caff.org.

Saving Trees (And Postage)

We are excited to announce that CAFF members may now receive the quarterly Agrarian Advocate via e-mail.

To subscribe, send an email to Stella at stella@caff.org and we'll send the Spring 2009 issue—and all subsequent editions—straight to your inbox, saving us the postage and you the effort of putting it in the recycle bin (after you've read it, of course!).

However, if you're more comfortable turning a page than clicking on it, don't worry: if we don't hear from you, we will continue to send your subscription of the Agrarian Advocate via US mail.



North Coast Chapter

This past year was a great one for the North Coast Chapter. Thanks to the efforts of two chapter members and the local Resource Conservation Districts, our hedgerow program is moving forward. This program kicked off with a well-attended tour of the extensive hedgerows at Preston Vineyard, despite the pouring rain. We had three other successful farm tours including one in Napa County. Even us older farmers found that we didn't know everything after all when we get out to see other farms.

A tour of Tresch dairy in Western Sonoma County is planned for the spring. Check the CAFF website for information on future chapter events.

Members in Mendocino, Sonoma, Napa, Lake, and Marin Counties: please send your email address to Shelley, arrowsmithfarms@vom.com so you receive notices of events and meetings.

As a member of the Sonoma County Water Coalition, we were victorious in a legal action against the Sonoma County Water Agency (see accompanying article). We also

worked with a coalition of environmental organizations to get the Sonoma Board of Supervisors to improve zoning for farmers and to improve the Grape and Orchard Development Ordinance. We didn't get everything we wanted, but definitely made progress.

Recently we established a Carbon Sequestration Committee to help farmers adopt practices resultant from recent research on tying up carbon in pastures and vineyards. This is really exciting—looks like farming and ranching practices may provide the quickest and cheapest way to sequester lots of carbon.

We are in the early stages of collaborating with other organizations to create a cold storage/processing facility for local farmers.

Our Chapter Leadership Circle has several new and energetic members in addition to the older, slower, long-time ones. We welcome your participation at our monthly meetings and helping with these projects. Email Terry Harrison, fresh@hughes.net.

A portion of membership dues goes to the local chapter account—**please renew your membership!** 🌱



MEMBERSHIP & CHAPTERS

Membership dues and donations are key to CAFF's ability to promote family farms and local food. CAFF chapters are run by volunteers in the Central Coast, Humboldt County, the North Coast and the Northern San Joaquin Valley.

CAFF's Humboldt membership chapter worked with HumIBA to include a Local Food Guide in the Local Options Directory. The Local Food Guide is a 15-page, colorful insert in the center of the directory. It highlights over 150 local farmers, their products, and how to access them. It includes information on community supported agriculture farms, U-pick and farm stand sites, farmers market schedules, local vintners, and much more.

Many Humboldt County residents care about their food system, and CAFF's Buy Fresh Buy Local message can be seen in action at farmers markets throughout the county. The guide promotes that message and condenses local agricultural and local business information into one place for easy access, and thirty thousand copies of the guide were released just in time for informed holiday shopping.

The family farms featured in the guide produce fresh, healthy food in ways that benefit the community and the environment. The guide provides a way residents can seek out and enjoy the delicious and diverse abundance from our community farms. With the simple act of buying a carrot, or supporting the other businesses listed in the directory, shoppers help protect the unique Humboldt County character, ensuring continued opportunities for entrepreneurs and building local economic strength. 🌱

BUY FRESH BUY LOCAL *FOOD* *GUIDE*

*Where to find & enjoy
the local foods of Humboldt County*



Known for its rural beauty, pristine beaches and magnificent redwoods, Humboldt County is also rich in local agriculture. Its broad and varied microclimates range from mild coastal regions to hot inland pockets, allowing for diverse, year-round agricultural production. Seasonal rains make for some of the best rangelands in the state, making cattle the foundation of niche markets in fine goat cheese, organic ice cream and sustainable grass-fed beef. Humboldt County retains a genuine farm culture due to the numerous small family-owned farms, many of them reaching back generations. Forward thinking residents and business owners proudly support local food and the many farmers' markets.

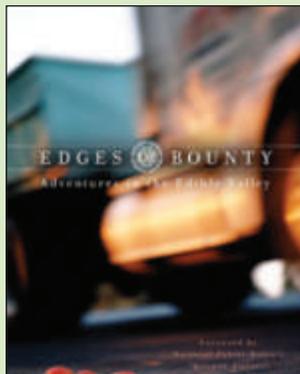


This guide is designed to be your companion in discovering Humboldt County agriculture and to encourage you to buy fresh and buy local. The guide lists Humboldt County producers, farmers' markets, CSAs, farm stands, U-picks, and food and farming organizations. Produced by the Community Alliance with Family Farmers, (CAFF) it is a brief introduction to food and farming on the North Coast; an overview of CAFF's innovative programs; and an introduction to our Buy Fresh Buy Local campaign. All the information in this guide, and more, is available on CAFF's Buy Fresh Buy Local website: www.buylocal.org or visit www.caff.org and click on the Buy Fresh Buy Local logo.

BOOK REVIEW

Edges of Bounty : Adventures in the Edible Valley

William Emery &
Scott Squire
Heyday Books, 2008



In "Edges of Bounty" writer William Emery and photographer Scott Squire coin a term, one that I now realize has been glaringly missing from the language of the real food movement: Edibilist. According to Emery, the family of edibilists includes farmers, gardeners, butchers, canners, brewers and wine makers, fishers, gatherers and hunters, all of them spurred by the "common human desire to personally participate in the production of some or all of one's food or drink."

The writer and photographer team up for a tour of edibilism in California's Central Valley, famous more

for its large-scale industrial agriculture than for its culture of edibilism. Emery and Squire explore with relish the pockets of edibilism that they do find, and admire the scattered edibilists incrementally gaining ground in the land of Big Ag.

Scott Squire portrays these edibilists at their craft, often capturing them at a moment of simultaneous concentration, joy, and ease in their work. His images, while sympathetic, are journalistic in tone: unvarnished, human, modest, and not at all like the stylized and romanticized food and farmer photography currently in vogue. William Emery's prose, on the other hand, is voluptuous. His breathless accounts of tasting the fruit of the field from the hand of the farmer himself; encountering farm animals in the act of birthing; and then receiving and savoring the returns of the synergistic labor of microorganisms, insects, animals and edibilists, are exuberant and enthusiastic. Together, the photographs and text play off one another, presenting a rich, thoughtful, and celebratory study of California's edible bounty. 🌱



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Agrarian Advocate W09

This may be your last issue of the Agrarian Advocate!

Like many of you, CAFF is tightening our belt and looking for ways to cut costs in response to this turbulent economic climate. One of these ways is to dust off our membership rolls and clean up the Agrarian Advocate mailing list. The next edition, Spring 2009, will be mailed to current CAFF members only.

If you've let your membership lapse, let this be your excuse to renew today. Take advantage of the benefits that CAFF membership has to offer:

- One year subscription to the Agrarian Advocate
- Email alerts and policy updates
- Invitations to special events and activities
- ...and more

Now more than ever, you—our members—are vital to CAFF's ability to sustain its programs and infrastructure. Thank you for your commitment to the work of building sustainable food and agriculture systems in California!