
THE NCGA DIRT - October 2007

Your Newsletter from the North Coast Growers' Association

The Director's Note

The fall has been a whirlwind of activity for the North Coast Growers Association. With the height of harvest, numerous sunny market days, special events and Community Alliance for Family Farmers' first annual Local Food Month we have been very busy!

We started off the month with our Calendar Release Party at Avalon Restaurant for a delicious celebration of the 2008 Farm to Table calendar. A big thank you to Melanie Patrick of CAFF and to Beverley Wolfe and the staff at Avalon who helped make it happen! Calendar sales have been steady at the market and, when added with our wholesale accounts and sponsorship monies, we have covered our expenses to date. Calendars are available at the market of course, but you can also find them at the Eureka and Arcata Co-op, Eureka Naturals, Wildberries Marketplace, Miller Farms, Rookery Books, Northtown Books, HSU book store and Mad River Gardens.

The Board has been discussing and gathering member input on how to make the special event days more lucrative for our members. Suggestions have revolved around making ourselves more visible during the Oyster Festival and the North Country Fair. So far suggestions include putting up a banner at the entrance of the market, bringing kids' activities into the market, booking acoustic music for I street and purchasing the corner booth space at the North Country Fair to insure greater visibility. We will be discussing the configuration of the Oyster Festival at the Fall Membership meeting. Please come and share your ideas of how to make the most of when we are off the plaza.

As we go to print, we are preparing for our first annual Feed the Community - Farmers' Market Food Drive. A brainchild of Denise Payne, the food drive is a wonderful partnership between KHUM, Food for People (Eureka food bank) and the NCGA. KHUM will be broadcasting the lively music of Huckleberry Flint and will be conducting interviews on how our local food is donated regularly and distributed throughout the county to folks who could not otherwise afford it. Customers will be encouraged to purchase a little extra that day to make a donation. Many farms donate generously to Food for People every week and these farms will be highlighted. Thank you to Denise for having the vision, to Katie Harbaugh at the food bank for making it happen and to Denise Dodd at KHUM for helping us get the word out to our community.

We will wrap up the special events with our Harvest Festival on October 27th and our November Crafts Fair on the first three Saturdays of November. The Harvest Festival features fabulous one of a kind pumpkin carving by Angel Fargas, an apple cider press demo and tastings by Feral Family Farm, hot roasted chestnuts by McIntosh Farm and decorations courtesy of Beth Dunlap (Paradise Valley Farm) and John and Jackie Sherman (Double J & J). The Delta Nationals will bring music to our ears and rhythm to our feet. In November, the Crafts Fair will open up the market to non-agricultural products. November is traditionally a time when the Farmers' Market is smaller with less farmers attending. This is the fourth year that the board has decided to use our extra space by creating a crafts section of the market. The

Craft's Fair brings in new customers, creates a festive holiday atmosphere and allows our members to bring products that they normally would not be able to have at market bringing in extra income for the end of the season. If you would like to bring your craft to sell, please ask for an application at the manager's booth.

As the season comes to its end, we look to next year and ask our staff if they will be returning. I am happy to report that David MacCuish, Denise Payne and Erin Derden-Little will be returning next season! Their return benefits the market in so many ways. Their knowledge of the market, our site sponsors and our growers helps the market to run more smoothly and profitably for all. We also will be seeing Tofu Mike Schwartz next year as our sound engineer extraordinaire! We send many thanks and a goodbye to Amanda Barker, our Wildberries Market Manager. We wish you well on your next endeavors.

Wrapping up the year for advertising look for us in the Tri-City Weekly, the Arcata Eye and the North Coast Journal promoting the Harvest Festival and the Craft's Fair and the markets in general. We also have a new ad coming out on KIEM Chn.3 News starting this week letting folks know that we go through November 17th and that we are still here! We'll continue to benefit from press releases and public service announcements in the print media and radio, letting folks know when the markets are happening and what music is playing. KHUM is heavily promoting the market for the Food Drive.

Next year will be our 30th anniversary. We will be gearing up for a big celebration of 30 years of direct marketing for Humboldt County farmers! If you have ideas of how we can celebrate let us know – the winter is a great time for dreaming up and gathering the seeds of what we want our organization to become. With the expertise of our growers, the foundation of our board, staff and volunteers and the pursuit of non-profit status (see board report) our organization is maturing. Where do you want the NCGA to be in another 30 years? A year-round farmers' market? Let's work to make it happen!! -T
Local Food Month: A Local Success

The Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) just wrapped up a month long string of events that provided opportunities to enjoy and learn about local foods and the people who produce them. Events included: potlucks, farm tours, workshops and even a fancy farm meal.

Local Food Month was a county-wide celebration of local food, local farmers, and local abundance, intended to raise awareness of agriculture and healthy food systems in Humboldt County. County officials signed proclamations declaring the produce-abundant month of September as Local Food Month, “urging all members of the community to join in a month long celebration of local agriculture and recognizing the farmers who provide our food.” CAFF was excited to offer so many chances for people to see, taste, touch, and smell how agriculture is thriving in our community.

We'd like to send out a big thank you to all the farmers who generously donated in support of our work.

CAFF works to promote Humboldt County agriculture, provide nutrition education, and support market development for local farmers. CAFF can be reached at <http://www.caff.org/regions/humboldt.shtml> or at 444-3255.

Please support us when shopping at the Co-op by using # 80043

CAFF Receives Headwaters Grant

Congratulations to our local chapter of CAFF for being awarded about \$25,000 from the Headwaters Fund. CAFF intends to use this money to help continue promoting institutional sales for Humboldt County farmers and to promote the Buy Fresh Buy Local campaign in Humboldt County. Congratulations CAFF!!!!

Food for People is Looking for Some Hungry Hogs!

Every week, Food for People receives donation of produce and bread from area businesses. These donations are used to supplement food boxes for low income families, seniors and people with disabilities.

Unfortunately, many of the foods donated have a limited shelf life and spoil quickly.

That's why we need some hungry hogs... If you are raising pigs or hogs and would like to access our pre-consumer food waste, please give us a call! We provide the barrels. You'll be helping us save money on garbage fees—funds that could be better spent on feeding hungry children in our community. Contact Chris Wisner, Operations Manager at 445-3166 ext: 304.

NOTES FROM YOUR BOARD

Leaves are turning... Pumpkins are ready... It's raining... Must be Fall!

The season's winding down. Time to reflect on what worked and what didn't. The Board wants very much to hear your thoughts. Please come to the Nov. 7 Membership Meeting and let us have your input. Lots of important stuff happens there; stuff that affects all of us. We've made some changes in the way the meetings are run to try to speed things up and improve the flow. When you get your packet, please take a little time to review the financial stuff and the survey results so they won't have to be gone over line by line at the meeting. You might want to bring your copies to the meeting so your questions can be discussed and answered. I hope very much to see some faces there who haven't been there for a while (or maybe even ever).

On a musical note!... To date, last year the Association collected \$2,845 in music sponsorships. This year it is \$7,445 — collected from a lot of very generous sponsors. This was due to the efforts of Denise Payne (who manages the McKinleyville market). She got out and contacted a lot of potential sponsors and signed 'em up. THANK YOU DENISE!

There will now be a bell at 2pm on Saturday to mark the end of the market (just like the 9AM bell to open it). Please, respect the merchants and the City of Arcata and stop selling and pack up when you hear the bell. A lot of bad feelings are created for the Market when we're not off the Plaza by 3pm.

Farmers are in the media! In August, the Times-Standard printed a very nice article on the Wolfsen Farm with a sweet photo of Elaine and Herb and a big photo of a toothy 4-year-old named River holding a bowl of blueberries he had just picked. Bob Doran wrote a good piece on local farming and the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) in a September North Coast Journal, which was topped with a photo of the Redwood Roots farm stall at the Saturday market. We had an article on

Sept. 23rd in the Eureka Reporter about Warren Creek Farm's corn maze with a sweet picture of Carla on antique farm equipment. And last but for sure not least, the Oct 4th Journal featured a piece on Feral Family Farm and permaculture also penned by Bob Doran. This was capped by a really cute picture of Dave laughing so hard his eyes were squeezed shut. We may have more media stars besides the one I saw in the papers. It was cool to see them get their 15 minutes of fame.

The Farm Picnic in September was fun as usual. We invited the music sponsors this year and some of them came. New faces are always nice. The food was great (most food is but this was especially nice)! The Farm Picnic is a great way to get to know each other and our farm supporters better – we hope to see more folks there next year for our 30th anniversary!

Health Department regulations regarding fees for value-added stuff like jams and jellies are still in a state of flux, but for the present farmers bringing these items will have to pay a fee of \$23 per market attended to the County. T is checking with other markets and health departments in other counties to see what they are doing. We're hoping to get this converted to an annual fee that's capped at a much lower amount than \$23 per market.

We discussed ways to make the Saturday market more visible during the North County Fair and decided to send a letter to "The Same Old People" with copies to Arcata Main Street, requesting a meeting to work out some bugs. It was also suggested that the NCGA should spring for a banner for the 3 markets where we're off the Plaza, to be placed up high on 8th or 9th Street at the market entrance.

NOTE: Don't forget the Farmers' Market calendar available at the Managers' table. These benefit the NCGA and CAFF and would make fine Christmas pressies at \$15, especially to out of town relatives.

- Midge

Half Moon Bay Fisheries

Alaskan Wild Salmon will soon be added to several Farmers' Markets. Lacey Berns and her family fish for wild salmon for several summer months in the Kodiak Archipelago, located in the Gulf of Alaska. They feature the highest quality, wild, fresh frozen coho and sockeye salmon. Due to customer requests, the family will also feature their own label of smoked salmon as well. They sell their "Kodiak Catch" in amounts ranging from serving one person, to filets which serve up to five. The family also sells their wild salmon wholesale, in fifty pound boxes. Look for their bright purple and gold tent at some of the afternoon markets and the Arcata Plaza Saturday Market starting in mid-October. Between September and late May they live in McKinleyville. For more information and market schedules, please call 839-8009, or email laceyberns@gmail.com. Watch for their new website www.kodiakcatch.com!!
Web Sales Tool Project

The new web sales site is under development. The programmers are working on setting it up to have a self entering database for buyers and sellers. Your products will be able to be listed by categories. Buyers can get emails letting them know when new products are

available. Delivery or shipping will be negotiated between buyer and seller. We will be taking the first version out to those who want to help us with the initial feedback. Please let me know if you are interesting in having myself and the programmer come and show you the program. We are planning to visit in November or as soon as it is less busy for you. This is a grant funded project from UC Sustainable Ag and Education Funds. CAFF, NCGA and UC Cooperative Extension are working together to help increase marketing directly to consumers and schools, and other institutions. I hope you all had a great season !

- Deborah Giraud, UC Farm Advisor 445-7351

Gleaning Program Thanks Farmers

Food for People would like to thank all local farms, farmers and community members for your generosity & support by donating produce through the Gleaning Program to the Food Bank in 2007:

Green Fire Farm, G Farm, Pierce Family Farm, Claudia's Organic Herbs, Coates Farm, Little River Farm, Earthly Edibles, Feral Family Farm, Susan Bicknell, Gratefully Grown, I & I Farm, Wild Rose Farm, Double J & J Produce, Neukom Family Farm, Willow Creek Farm, Arcata Educational Farm, Warren Creek Farm, Earth 'n' Hands Farm, Potowot Farm, UPS, the NCGA, Snag Rock Farm, Lost Coast Blueberry Farm, Paul Lohse, Small Fruits, Redwood Roots, Trinity River Farms, Mt. Home Farm, Saechao Strawberries, Ocean Air Farm, Ridgetop Gardens, Mycality Mushrooms, Fieldbrook Valley Apple Farm and to all of the community members who have Planted an Extra Row for the Hungry!
Getting Instant Feedback from Customers - Dot Survey

A quick survey tool used at public gatherings is the dot survey. Market researchers often stand at farmers markets and other venues with clip boards and ask questions, but the dot survey lets shoppers participate and see instant results. I recently went to a marketing workshop in Portland and we conducted a survey for their market. We will be conducting a trial run of the dot survey at the Arcata Plaza Farmers Market on Saturday, November 3rd. See the photo below of a sample of what it will look like. If you have any questions that you think would be pertinent or if you know of anyone who would be willing to help with the survey that day, let us know. We are looking for volunteers! This will not be our only chance to conduct the survey. If successful, we will be doing a more in depth dot survey in the spring.

Deborah Giraud, UC Farm Advisor 445-7351

Calendar of Events

Farmers Market Food Drive - Oct. 20

Last Market for Henderson Center and McKinleyville – Oct. 25

Harvest Festival – Oct. 27

Last Market for Old Town and Wildberries – Oct. 30

November Craft's Fair at the Plaza Market – Nov. 3,10 and 17

NCGA Fall Member Meeting – Weds., Nov. 7, 6pm, Bayside Grange

Last Market for Arcata Plaza – Nov. 17
November Crafts Fair at the Farmers’ Market

For the last 3 markets of the season (Nov. 3, 10, and 17), the Arcata Plaza Farmers’ Market opens some stall spaces on the north side of the Plaza to artisans. We accept vendors who live in Humboldt County and make their crafts themselves. Farmers, you can sell your homemade crafts at your stall spaces. If you are interested, you can call (441-9999) or email the Market Manager for an application.
Fall Member Meeting agenda - November 7, 6pm, Bayside Grange

Please join us for the NCGA Fall Member Meeting on Wednesday, November 7, at 6pm at the Bayside Grange. This is an opportunity for all NCGA members to come together and review the season and make decisions that are beyond the scope of the Board. This meeting will include an update on NCGA’s non-profit status and survey results. New business includes proposed amendments on Grower/Owner participation at markets and the addition of a summer membership meeting. The configuration of the market for the Oyster Festival will also be discussed. Expect a full agenda in the mail, or contact T for more information.

If you’d like to participate in further decision-making for NCGA, please sign up for one of our committees. All committees generally meet once for a few hours in late January or early February. Sign-up sheets will be at the Member meeting, if you cannot make the meeting contact T.

Advertising – This committee determines where the upcoming years’ advertising should be directed. They compare different media and advertising outlets and set dollar amounts for each. This committee precedes the budget meeting.

Budget – This committee creates the budget for the upcoming season. They review last years numbers, review set costs for the upcoming season, and make decisions on the remaining categories. The budget is then submitted to the Board for approval.

Music – This committee reviews last season’s music lineup and the new submissions from artists. They create a list for the upcoming season’s music at the market.

Non-Ag. – This committee oversees the Non-Agricultural section of the market, generally called the Food Court. They review applications from vendors based on criteria such as seniority, percent local produce used in product, etc. They meet two or three times in January and February.

NOTES and ANNOUNCEMENTS

THANK YOU: A big thank you to NCGA members who have donated items throughout the season. These contributions have helped offset costs for the 2008 Farm to Table calendar, the farmer picnic, and the use of the Bayside Grange for meetings and storage.

WANTED: Cafe Brio is always interested in local sources for superior

fruits. Currently seeking apples and pears, persimmons, pomegranates.
Call Amanda at 707-822-5904.

FOR SALE: 1995 Dodge diesel 2WD with 7' flatbed. 20-23 mpg \$8,000. Call John at 530-436-2532.

FOR SALE: 1997 Dodge diesel 2WD with camper shell. 20-23 mpg \$8,000. Call John at 530-436-2532.

OFFER: Muddy's Hot Cup has 1 to 5 33-gallon trash cans full of coffee grounds available each week. Contact Muddy's at 707-825-6833 if you are interested in any amount.

CONGRATS: Johnny Gary and Heather married on October 13, 2007. Best wishes to the new bride and groom!