

**Summary of discussions at the Santa Barbara County  
Agrifood Workshop<sup>1</sup>:**

***Localizing Santa Barbara County agrifood systems—  
research, action and policy***

2011 May 20-21, UCSB

Presented by the Santa Barbara County Agrifood Systems  
Research Group<sup>2</sup>, Environmental Studies Program, UCSB

by David A. Cleveland and Corie N. Radka,

2011 July 17

The workshop was intended to bring together SBC agrifood system participants (farmers, eaters, distributors, and researchers, activists and policy makers) to vision a future that is more locally oriented, and more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. We shared a vision for a future food system that reduces control by large agribusiness, minimizes the use of toxic substances, empowers local farmers, eaters and those in between, provides living wages and healthy working conditions to farm workers, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, conserves water, and makes nutritious, healthy local food available to all residents.

Goals of the workshop were to share our research and our successes and frustrations in changing the system, and to discuss and agree on strategies for moving forward in terms of education, research, action and policy.

This document is our summary of the most frequently mentioned ideas from the workshop, which we organized in terms of goals, background research, actions & policies, and evaluation research.



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<sup>1</sup> The Workshop was sponsored by the Academic Senate Sustainability Champion Program. The Interdisciplinary Humanities Center, and the Environmental Studies Program, all at UCSB.

<sup>2</sup> Director: David A. Cleveland, Professor, Environmental Studies. Research Assistants 2010 -2011: Sean Andersen, Mikaela L. Burns, Christina Cook, Stephanie M. Gaffney, Nathaniel S. Gamsky, Allison Gracer, Aisa Hampton, Kai Hinson, Emily A. Mastren, Niki Mazaroli, Katrina Pesl, Corie Radka, Alex Tranovich

**Introduction to Workshop:** David Cleveland, Corie Radka, Katrina Pesl, Asia Hampton

## **SESSION 1. PRODUCTION**

Food production processes include farmland acquisition/conservation, crop selection, fertility management, water management, cultivation, harvesting, labor, marketing and sales. This session is aimed to explore the county's current practices, identify goals, and take steps forward in production methods that would optimize community and nutritional benefits while minimizing negative environmental effects. Whether it is through policy, market niches, incentives or other

**Introduction:** Stephanie Gaffney and Niki Mazaroli

**Panelists:** Cathleen Fisher (Agriculture Commissioner, County of Santa Barbara), Anne Coates (Executive Director, Cachuma Resource Conservation District), Teresa Figueroa (MILPAS, Chicana/o Studies, UCSB), Noey Turk (Yes Yes Nursery, Los Olivos), Jay Ruske Goodland (Organics); **Moderator:** David Cleveland

### 1.1. Urban food production

- Goal: Encourage urban food production in SBC.
- Background research:
  - Conduct vacant land study for urban agriculture to identify strategic parcels land for food production.
  - Survey existing urban food production, including home and community gardens.
  - Survey individuals and organizations potentially interested in growing food on these parcels.
  - Document existing policies affecting use of this land in SBC
  - Document similar efforts in other areas.
- Actions & policies:
  - Lobby county and municipal governments, water and other agencies to adjust policies to encourage food production for local consumption.
- Evaluation research (defining and measuring indicators)
  - Document change in access to urban farmland, problems encountered, and successful and unsuccessful efforts to overcome them.
  - Measure increase in amount of food produced on urban farmland as result of actions and policies.
  - Survey participants.

### 1.2. Small-scale farmers

- Goal: Increase longevity and sustainability of small urban farms by encouraging fair and environmentally friendly resource use.
- Background research:
  - Research water usage by small farms in SBC with surveys and government documents.
  - Calculate lost potential production from high cost of installing new ag water meters.
  - Conduct feasibility study for legislation shortened water contracts to bring in more money to the water districts and ease the worries of developers.

- Actions & policies:
  - Lobby county and municipal governments, water and other agencies to adjust policies to encourage access to water for small urban farmers
- Evaluation research (defining and measuring indicators)
  - Document change in access to water for urban farmland, problems encountered, and successful and unsuccessful efforts to overcome them.
  - Measure increase in amount of food produced on urban farmland as result of actions and policies.
  - Survey participants.

### 1.3. New small-scale farmers (urban and rural)

- Goal: Support small farmers to obtain capital and training
- Background research:
  - Research what farmers can do to gain entry into markets.
  - Research the supply vs. demand for each crop during different times to evaluate potential for increased diversity of crops and varieties.
- Actions & Policies:
  - Facilitate a farmer collective to get benefits of knowledge and equipment sharing.
  - Help farmers plug into business advice and training for access to land, capital, and education.
  - Find land owner willing to divide land into parcels to provide space for farmer teaching, learning, equipment sharing, and other cooperative practices.
  - Help create a business plan to diversify markets – consumer, retail, restaurant, institution, distributor.
  - Brand SBC small farmers.
  - Green Horn – good movie to organize community screening to start interest
- Evaluation research (defining and measuring indicators)
  - Monitor entry and success of new farmers and their contribution to increase in production and local sales.

### 1.4. Farm Workers

- Goal: Help move our county toward greater social responsibility regarding farm workers, and toward better working conditions and fair wages for farm workers.
- Background research:
  - Research successful farm worker housing efforts.
  - Document barriers such as building regulations and facilitate waiver for small farms.
- Actions & policies:
  - Lobby county and municipal governments to incentivize worker housing on small farms and fair benefits for workers
- Evaluation research (defining and measuring indicators)
  - Monitor legislative and regulatory progress.
  - Survey farmers and workers for increase in quality of life and stability of work.

## **SESSION 2. DISTRIBUTION**

The Distribution processes include transport from farm to stores, institutions and homes, storage, packaging and processing. This session discussed the current export-import system for county produce, and the different options of distribution our county encompasses today. Goals and barriers of distribution and purchasing produce were covered to identify possible solutions.

**Introduction:** Alex Tranovich, Kai Hinson

**Panelists.** Wesley Sleight (Farmer Direct Produce, Santa Barbara), Terry Thomas (Systems Coordinator, UCSB Residential Dining), Kathleen de Chadenedes (Director, s'Chool Food Initiative), Melissa Cohen (General Manager, Isla Vista Food Co-op); **Moderator:** David Cleveland

### 2.1. Local transportation and Distribution

- Goal: Increase Distribution of local food in SBC
- Background research
  - Research distribution barriers in policy or infrastructure.
  - Document purchasing policies by SBC institutions and government bodies that do or could encourage local food systems.
  - Research what other counties have done in terms of policy incentives for local distribution.
- Actions & Policies:
  - Create and provide easy access to data base of farmers' location and practices.
  - Create a website for institutional purchasers for Farmer Direct Produce and other local hubs.
  - Increase efficiency by supporting collaboration among local distribution hubs.
- Evaluation research (defining and measuring indicators)
  - Monitor increase in amount of local produce distributed to local buyers.

### 2.2. Institutional support of the local food economy

- Goal: Encourage Institutional support of the local food economy.
- Background research:
  - Assess the potential gain in locally sourced food by accreditation or other accountability labeling.
  - Research current and future regulations on federal, state, local levels and individual institution for regulations on environmental affects like greenhouse gas emissions, fair labor, food miles and other criteria.
  - Research ways for farmers to quantify and prove practices that will satisfy institutional quality controls or food safety standards.
- Actions & policies:
  - Develop means of verifying criteria set by institutions.
  - Organize workshops where farmers can learn about optimizing cost/benefit and aid in permits and bookkeeping.
- Evaluation research (defining and measuring indicators)
  - Measure increase in amount of food sourced locally by institutions
  - Survey participants.

### 2.3. Processing

- Goal: Increase value of agricultural production via value-added processing.
- Background research:
  - Research potential economic benefits for the county if more value added locally grown food was available.
  - Conduct surveys of possible distribution sites for value added products.
  - Research feasible options for processing facilities such as Goodland Kitchen.
- Actions & policies:
  - Organize value added information hub.
  - Lobby local regulatory and government bodies for policies encourage local processing and distribution.
- Evaluation research (defining and measuring indicators)
  - Measure increase in production of value added food.
  - Monitor regulatory changes.

## **SESSION 3. FOOD ACCESS AND NUTRITION**

Consumption, Food Access, and Nutrition include dietary choice, nutrition/cooking education, food storage, processing and preparation in institutions and homes. Session 3 covered the latest statistics on health and eating habits in Santa Barbara County and how we compare to other counties. Different aspects of how and why people choose their food and the impact of current county programs were summarized. The goal of this session was to better understand the county's situation and get a diversity of opinions on how to both increase people's nutrition while sustaining the county's resources and economy.

***Introduction:*** Allison Gracer, Mikaela Burns

***The Residential Dining food choice experiment:*** Emily Mastren, Nate Gamsky

***Panelists.*** Gerri French (Nutritional Educator, Sansum Clinic, Santa Barbara), Scott McCann (Director of Health, SB County Public Health Department), Laurel Lyle (Executive Chef, Peabody School, Santa Barbara), Anthony Carroccio (Organic Soup Kitchen), Jen Koch (Foodbank of Santa Barbara County); ***Moderator:*** Krista Harris (*Edible Santa Barbara*)

### 3.1 - Increase access to and consumption of local produce.

- Goal: Improve nutrition of SBC residents.
- Background research:
  - Survey potential for home garden and container production.
  - Survey of public space and open space near churches and schools that could potentially be used for community gardens.
  - Create GIS data base for SNAP recipients' proximity to farmers markets or mobile market locations.
  - Survey of low income families in food deserts about access to local, healthy food.

- Actions & Policies:
  - Do workshops for home owners and renters to stimulate home food production.
  - Work with owners of potential sites to gain access for community gardens.
  - Eliminate social stigmas – get SNAP into media, increase signage at farmers markets.
  - Incorporate more local produce into corner stores.
  - Educate people on growing, cooking and preparing locally grown food, incorporating ethnic traditions.
  - Market farmers markets more broadly (like supermarkets) to get new demographic. E.g., have special themed weeks, discounts or free tokens for first timers, make it more appealing to the average person, increase variety.
  - Have farmer’s market days outside of low-income neighborhood grocery stores and other locations.
- Evaluation research (defining and measuring indicators).
  - Monitor increase in home and community food production.
  - Work with Public Health Department to measure difference in access.
  - Measure differences in farmers market sales.
  - Survey participating families.

## **SYSTEM WIDE**

### 4.1–US Farm Bill reauthorization

- Goal: Facilitate SBC community input to the next Farm Bill cycle to improve local agrifood systems.
- Background research
  - Research Farm Bill issues affecting SBC.
  - Document similar efforts in other communities.
- Actions & Policies:
  - Interview farmers and organize government access (community letter, public comment, meetings).
  - Organize Community to make our needs and principles for the Farm Bill.
- Evaluation research (defining and measuring indicators)
  - Monitor Farm Bill legislative progress and outcome.

### 4.2. –Community organizing and information flow.

- Goal: Increase community organizing and information flow to localize the SBC agrifood system.
- Actions & Policies:
  - Dinners, conferences and meetings in SBC to bring together farmers, farm workers and eaters to prepare and serve food and discuss goals and methods of localization.