



SMFSA Strategic Plan

Revised May 2017 | Ag Innovations

Overview

This strategic plan was developed in May 2016 and revised in May 2017 to guide the FSA towards developing a robust external affairs program and supporting SAGE in the development of a Food and Farm Bill Vision over the next twelve months. The ideas portrayed below were drawn from the evaluation, April meeting notes and the SMFSA Charter.

REVIEW NEEDED:

1. There are two alternatives for a 10 year vision listed below. Which do you feel most accurately reflects what the group is trying to create? What changes do you propose to this vision?
2. Do you agree with our big stretch goals over the next five years?
 - a. Can we make them SMART: IE Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timebound?
 - b. What challenges do we foresee? What are potential solutions?
 - c. How do SAGE's ideas about moving forward enter into these different goals?
3. What are the top 3 most important steps and activities we need to do to move these forward?

Purpose: What do we stand for?

Our purpose is to support, enhance and maintain an enduring and interdependent food system that is economically viable and environmentally sound and socially equitable that connects people to agriculture and enhances the health of all residents of San Mateo County.

Assessment: What is the current and near-term situation?

The food system in San Mateo County is being affected by these trends

- Positive Trends
 - Increased Awareness in urban areas, multiple generations
 - Role of ag and co-benefits
 - Changing generations
- Negative Trends
 - Disconnect between Production & Consumption
 - Beginning farmers; lack of support
 - Degrading farmscape: labor, housing, and infrastructure
 - Uncertainties created by climate change, global market, including imports and trade agreements, federal administration, etc.
 - Lack of equity and access for vulnerable communities. Increasing vulnerability. Wealth gap.
 - Loss of federal funding to support
 - Not all ag is cultivated equally (cannabis)

We have several assets to build from:

- Our deep network
- The cross-sector nature of our group and the strong relationships within the group
- Committee work that spurs innovation and action
- A vision for a Food and Farm Bill that led to an increase in intellectual capital and new ideas; social capital via stakeholder engagement; and the cultivation of conditions that can lead to real action.

10 Year Vision

NEEDS: One sentence that articulates a long-term direction; visions can change over time and do not have to be permanent. They are real for this plan as long as it reflects the reality that we are trying to create.

Alternative 1:

Our vision is to develop A local Food and Farm Bill that will serve as a catalyst to benefit local agriculture, the environment, and improve economic and social conditions for San Mateo County residents.

Alternative 2:

Our vision is to cultivate cross cutting initiatives that benefit local agriculture, the environment, and improve economic and social conditions for San Mateo County residents.¹

5 Year Goals

1. **Engage with our urban communities** in a deeper, more robust way around shared values of equity, health, wellness and the environment.
 - a. We will know we have been successful when...

2. Support **viability of agriculture and the environment** in our working lands
 - a. We will know we have been successful when...

3. Bring a game-changing solution to the problem of **funding a thriving food system**
 - a. We will know we have been successful when...

4. **Build capacity** in order to support radical transformation of our local food system
 - a. We will know we have been successful when...

¹ References:

- Vision From 2016-2017: we have the opportunity to cultivate conditions that will lead to the success of whatever actions are chosen as a result of the vision development. In order to do this, we need to increase our external visibility and networking, enhance relationships that will form a pathway to endorsements of the Vision, and put into place the elements necessary for capitalizing on social capital that is enhanced through the vision development process.
- Consider 2017 & On: Language from [SMFSA Food & Farm Bill?](#) Look at Constitution as well.
- SAGE Categories:
 - Land
 - Production
 - Processing
 - Aggregation and Distribution
 - Markets & Healthy Access

Brainstormed 5/23 Objectives, sorted under stretch goals

Needs to be tested, and Food & Farm Bill work added.

Goal 1: Engage with our urban communities

1. **Grow our San Mateo grown brand (+1)**

- Most popular and subscribed
- Easy economic choice
- Increasing demand
- Tied to stewardship aspirations (brand demonstrates climate smart farming, ecological goals, etc.).
- Certification/labels. Label for those who are already selling local products?
- FSA needs to address recognition of regional ag- can't get all of food from county.
 - How does this support local middle/low income families? (FLAG for future discussion)
- Next step: Discuss with SMFSA

2. **A Farm for every school;**

- place for school to get food and students to learn/experience
- Low income schools
- Robust support system

3. **Support a more connected urban community**

- Food system alliance better connected to community; Food systems trainings through city office of sustainability
- Education, follow-through
- Cadre of leaders

4. **Develop robust connection with urban areas enhancing the work of the FSA**

- FSA has been invite-only group. Not so much outward facing, public education, consciousness raising entity. If food and farm bill gets traction and there's a mechanism to bring it forward it will take a major public education/advocacy campaign to get something passed and then create entity to manage it. This could automatically make FSA more outward facing.
- Needs dedicated staff person. Only so much time volunteers can commit.
- Example of FSA in San Diego. Raised fun and hired a full time staff person and has been growing in awareness.
- Also Yolo County as a different kind of example. Allow elected officials as part of FSA.

5. **Enhance Locally funded nutrition/food benefits**

- NEEDS MORE CONVERSATION

6. **Every neighborhood has a community garden with some funding to support.** Anchor in neighborhood.

- Connected to food security. More education around personal food production.
- Social cohesion
 - Lacking in county. Very little civic participation (group agreement).
 - Existing resources/connections?

Goal 2: Support viability of ag and the environment in our working lands

7. **1000 units of farm labor housing built**

- Built sustainable, resilient, and able to rebound
- Able to build farm worker housing with building permit only.

8. **More Ponds; increase water conservation and storage to benefit agriculture and the environment**

9. **Support streamlined processes for selling to local institutions, support system; aka food hub**

- IS THIS A SUBCOMPONENT FOR FOODBUDSMAN?

10. Next generation of farmers and connecting them to resources.

- Workforce development program
- Who is going to do the non respected job? Working on farms is not respected.

Goal 3: Bring a game-changing solution to the problem of funding a thriving food system

11. Funding available for good farming practices (support transition; aka EQIP)

- What are these practices, and who should we talk to about it?
- More local funding for conservation projects; easements; in addition to POST and Mid-Pen.

12. Celebrate passing of Food and Farm Bill (or completion or funding)

- Funding tool
- By passage provides mechanism for FSA to morph into board whose job it is to allocate funds to complete initiatives. Needs to be tight & transparent.
- AKA Mid-Pen FSA

Goal 4: Build capacity in order to support radical transformation of our foodscape

13. Develop a full time expanded role for ag ombudsman; a “Foodbudsman” that combines ag, value-added, and retail.

- DOESN'T HAVE TO WAIT FOR FOOD AND FARM BILL
- Processes/policies that are inherently antagonistic
- Lack of willingness to provide proactive, supportive feedback on projects
- “Small Business Advisor” in SF and Santa Cruz.
- Yolo Farmbudsman is an example of this expanded role.

14. FSA has more permanent presence, admin capacity, and participation, public-private partnership, and funding.

Work Plan from 2017 - 2018 (Still under construction)

Identifying Concrete steps for action

1. **Discuss Structure- and where to go from here?**
 - Research the idea of developing a special district or equivalent to the mission of the SMFSA to further our food and farming goals.
 - Perhaps Change our structure to be a more independent org something like the San Diego FSA or the MidPen Open Space District
 - Create Funding for a paid FSA director.
 - Finding funding for transition.
 - Discuss ways of building capacity
 - Learn about how Yolo's FSA works with policy and county employees
2. **Assess who's already doing some of these things and start with better coordination of existing resources, look for gaps, and fill in.**
 - Started this through food and farm bill process. Poppy will be helpful on this in our next conversation.
 - Review goals in context of stakeholder forums.
 - Learn
3. **Will need to connect with board of supervisors or county managers.** A Farm for every school program, and other ideas.

Work Plan from 2016-2017

1. Goal 1: We want to coordinate with SAGE in the stakeholder engagement process to help them reach their deliverables and to build our social capital, preparing the way for partner support once the vision is developed.
2. Goal 2: Support committee work and scanning for untouched areas in the Food System by learning from members and committees, and looking for ways to support that work.
3. Goal 3: The FSA will explore how to have a more external presence over the next 6 months, including the idea of staffing the FSA, engaging in public talks, hosting a newsletter, etc.
 - a. Ideas from FSA Meeting
4. Goal 4: The FSA will identify specific next steps to undertake after the completion of the Vision for a Food and Farm Bill project and if needed, will undertake activities to develop public awareness of the Vision for the Food & Farm Bill no later than summer, 2017.

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION, PIE RANCH

Big picture trends of San Mateo Food System, learnings from the vision process

- **Disconnect between production and consumption.** Production system could be more geared towards local consumption. +1
 - Many people don't care where their food comes from.
 - Labeling laws as an example?
- Difficult to access land, mentors.
 - Reduce cost of land to ag value.
- Unknown/uncertainty, especially with climate changes.
- Cost of living; **high cost making affordable, healthy food difficult for consumers.** +3
 - Infrastructure to provide viable outlets for locally produced food.
 - **Equity**
 - Families in the region are going hungry
- **Increased awareness of ag +1**
- **On farm infrastructure needs support** so operations can continue to be viable and making land affordable to beginning farmers.
- **Farm labor housing** is a big one- county is addressing this one. +1
 - Cost of food and housing link.
 - We're displacing a lot of low income residents.
 - We focus on lack of housing, but cities continue to create new jobs without housing to support it. Cities should require new housing units for new jobs.
- **Changing generation-** young farmers doing things in a different way. Connecting producers and urban consumers needs support. People need to understand the place where their food comes from.
- RCD has been working with Bay Side to help them understand Coastside ag. Community and school garden **projects and programs that connect people with an understanding of growing food.**
- **Farm labor shortage-** current farmers may have housing but can't hire because of lack of housing and no one wants to make the commute. +1
 - San Mateo projected to be adding 400 ag jobs for the next 50 years. Pipeline issue here?
- Huge strides in **farm to school** in San Mateo county. Now five participating schools/organizations. +1
 - More requests need support
- Continuing **effort to streamline policies and regulations** that farmers work with. **Disconnect in county understanding** what's required for an agricultural operation.
- **Threat to federally funded nutrition programs-** will likely get worse. Low income families relying on this without another option. +1
 - SNAP funding for the farm bill. Child Nutrition Reauthorization Bill.
- Water and labor. Water looks like it's moving positively.
- Access to land- heartened by what POST is doing.
- Negative trend: **Keeping ag land in production** with amount of money from the other side coming over and wanting country estates.
- Negative trend: we talk about ag as a good thing. There is **some not good ag in cannabis production.** Need to address balance between inappropriate ag and appropriate ag- cannabis specifically. For kids up to age 25 there is good evidence that it impacts brain development and adversely impact success in life. When legalized, adult and kid use will go up. Needs constraint.
 - Underutilized greenhouse space?
 - Most ag is inappropriate by Slow Food standards for example: almonds, pistachios.
- Awareness ag and conservation can play in **climate mitigation.** This trend has some opportunity.
 - Soil Health, carbon management/sequestration.