



## Food Security Forum 2010 Discussion Group Notes



### Food Access for Low Income Community

Facilitator: Danielle Stubblefield  
Panelist: Anne Holcomb

#### Child Nutrition Act:

Enough \$ at Federal level, summer health program is part of school meals program, based on urban model. But in rural areas schools aren't in session and hard to get reimbursement for travel mileage b/c have kids miles and miles away. 85% of kids in meal program aren't served in summer.

Cannery needed: 65% of year we can use fresh food at big enough volume. But in winter months we import apple sauce, all these things that we could make locally. If we could start preserving our own food for other 35% of time we'd start growing our food production by 50%. Economic development is one of best things that can happen to low-income.

See emergency preparedness sheet, only 6 of all items canned locally. We can't be self-sustaining in emergency . . . another whole market, how big of production would that be?

Anne: to have facilities for people to be able to use equipment at household production level could help b/c it's expensive to have those materials.

Entrepreneurial ideas: soup mixes

Economies of scale: if have enough to produce, makes it economic to do. Cuts waste – a problem for farmers. All farmers over produce b/c they want to capture every sale that they can.

Export opportunities: is the same as importing dollars.

Discussion of canning would be hiring entry-level workers.

Sun Valley bulb farm: helping a certain demographic, canning facilities would be those same types of workers. If health care and reasonable living wage, etc., then would have people stick with it.

Economic development – in cannery, dist that gets food to cannery, in finished product side, and in farm production side . . . would grow large part of community that involves local foods. Welfare to work program are working at Food for People, maybe couldn't continue education or had disability, and they need to just build their experience and on-job training. Entry level jobs help build that.

Why did the original canneries disappear? Located within the Grange halls?

Then food became cheaper and more readily available in stores, happened nation wide. Coast Seafood used to process locally and now do it in Washington, but think all there processing equipment is still there.

Fuel, gasoline is so cheap so transporting food seems cheap. But that will change. Most canneries use electrical and natural gas for production.

Processing has proven economically viable in this community – all high value-added items that have biggest margin are who are doing it. Carvalo's is in Crescent City, Tomasos in Blue Lake, Rita's in Eureka.

What's next step: feasibility study, business plan, community support, funding . . .

Building community support – Steve Suttell

It's pure and simple economic development.

Weekday markets: ugly EBT sign, cluttered . . . would be nice to have another table (1/2 table even) that's fully devoted to this. At Saturday market, running at \$500/day. He's only at best \$40/day, and that's in the first 2 weeks of the month.

Take EBT card from food stamps, exchange into 'wooden bucks'.

WIC has checks, can grow directly to farmer and deposited like a check.

Henderson Market may have more seniors, it draws a good cross-section, and more EBT used there.

More marketing might help – fresh air, music . . . bring out the good qualities of FM to advertise it to the general public and food bank clients.

The sign most people see is the blue sign that has big picture of EBT card on it.

What about Eureka mall? NO, haven't done well in past there.

How can we promote food stamps at FM:

- A nice table
- A banner, something visible (he has space on
- Sign on each farmers stall that they take EBT card there
- Use visuals! That each sign has picture of card.
- Market and cross-market at every opportunity.
- Ask about putting EBT card/accepted on annual FM calendar that goes
- Announce it regularly on PA system
- In all NCGA press to put in regularly 'we take EBT and WIC' (need to check with WIC that they are ready for the promotion)

EBT card is great; it's free money for the farmers

1.75 million each month comes into Hum Co from food stamps – Henderson Center market gets about \$120/month.

What's different at Arcata market that makes it better known there.

Obstacles: its still too expensive for the food stamp users, they need to stretch their food stamps further.



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What about local funding: Can you get a \$1 match to apply at farmers' markets that matches every food stamp \$1

Healthy Choice Pilot: does incentivize the use of your food stamp for fresh fruits and dollars – any room for Advocacy to get Humboldt included, or is it already a done deal? A small pot of money in Farm Bill that will select states. The time to make a push for Humboldt to be one of these Counties would come if and when CA was a chosen state.

At an obesity conference remembers there was a pilot that gives example of a local foundation (maybe white wave?) that gave incentives for buying at FM to give folks a 'bigger bang for buck'. But it wasn't sustainable b/c when the money was used up it ended.

Senior FM vouchers offered in the summertime – 2 years ago admin through state-wide Area agency on aging, they were going to drop the program b/c too expensive to run. But Ca Dept of Ag took it on b/c state would have

Amount coming into Hum Co has declined over years, maybe down to \$5,000 – less being made accessible, not due to demand.

Food Bank made their own summer farmers market vouchers – 'yellow bucks', they would need funding again to do that.

From Farmers' market perspective, this is win-win.

To further promote Food Stamp/EBT use at farmers' markets.

Combine sign with EBT, WIC!

Food Bank has a laminator.

EBT at farmers' market also helps combat the stigma of what food stamp users are buying.

EBT card can also be used for plant starts/herb starts. You could start your whole garden with EBT! How can we get that word out?

Can share that idea with Community Gardening Collaborative

A kit of starts: An informational package: how to grow, here's some seeds, use your EBT card at the nursery booths

Food Bank and NCGA to increase visibility of EBT availability – Deborah Waxman and Dave McCuish (signs pointing outward towards street)

Include

Campaign: Start your garden here at the farmers' market with EBT!

Deborah Waxman– to include garden starts

Dave McCuish and Danielle Stubblefield – will look at CAFF growing chart and try to select best information

How to take it from the FM and move it to a backyard garden.

NCGA can share/promote anything as long as it is free – can put it on his table.

People might just not know how to start – hard to invest in time to dig/create garden

We should make it seasonal, so that consumers could easily know what varieties – looking at all the seeds available in stores gets confusing of what grows when, what grows in our climate.



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Brainstorm of ideas:

- Pick 10 items to provide growing season info on so not confusing
- Pick items that produce all summer long and have continuous : straw berries, summer squash, salad greens, potatoes, onions, chard,
- Winter: purple sprouting broccoli, salad greens, kale
- Have easily available at FM manager's booth
- Need to promote it to farmers to make sure they were bringing starts (most have extra on their farms)
- (available rest of season at Co-op)

Seconds from farmers: they have them available by the lug or by the bag, but still a LOT of people buy them, it's not only available to

The problem with the canning idea is that it would take the free food away from the Food Bank. Would cannery even be profitable: can it compete with WinCo?? You'd have to coordinate with all the farmers to get their seconds, you'd have to transport it to the canning site . . .

Also in Mexico paying them such cheap wages, it outcompetes price of gas.

Two levels:

1. The idea of the advertising itself
  - a. Images: EBT card, garden, plant starts (with an arrow between each one?)
  - b.
2. The package of materials to help them do it: starting with brochure
  - a. Idea of how much money a garden can save you (i.e. 'a 10x10 plot can produce \$200 worth of vegetables') – how make into an image
  - b. Very readable: small chunks of info
  - c. As visual as possible
  - d. List of materials they would need
  - e. Plant growth chart