



"The best thing about the future is that it only comes one day at a time."
- Abraham Lincoln

So what's in the future for the Marin agricultural community in 2005? Asking this question of just about everyone we know has yielded some thoughtful, some predictable, and some really surprising responses. First off, this project was like herding cats - running down farmers and ranchers to squeeze out little paragraphs about what they would like to see happen to sustain our agricultural community. The main content of this issue of *Grown in Marin* is a collection of responses to the question, ***"What would you like to see emerge here in Marin County for 2005 that would facilitate the healthy growth of our overall agricultural community and sustainability?"***

These responses yielded a sense of optimism along with a real feeling of ownership of our own agricultural future. I like what Henry Grossi said in a Farm News interview recently; *"My goal as president was to bring unity to MCFB and our county leadership and bring a sense of pride in being a MCFB member."* That same cooperative spirit of leadership that is so characteristic of Henry is showing up in most of our agricultural and farm support organizations. This is not to say that every-

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What's Up for 2005? ***Agricultural wish lists for the new year***

We asked the following question to a varied group of Marin County farmers, ranchers and agricultural experts from both government and not-for-profit agencies. Listed in the following columns are responses and comments on what folks would like to see.

QUESTION: "What would you like to see emerge here in Marin County for 2005 that would facilitate the healthy growth of our overall agricultural community and sustainability?"



Jolynn Mendoza, dairy farmer - "What I would like to see in Marin County, and all around the country for that matter, is for more of our fellow citizens to gain a deeper appreciation for the high quality food that every US farmer puts on their table. I hope they all join the effort to keep us in business and help to become our biggest advocates against everything that tries to bring us down. Our greatest strength, as a nation, is that we are able to produce our own food. Let us never lose this important asset."

Warren Weber, Star Route Farms - "It's important that the countywide plan update be clear and workable. So far, they have some good things in there. For sustainable agriculture to expand, we will need a plan reflecting the realities and needs of the entire agricultural community, so that when we need to improve or expand our small operations we can do so with the support and assistance of county government."



Sue Conley, cheesemaker - "I would like to look at the language we use when defining local, small-scale, organic agriculture. We refer to these farms as "family farms" when in fact, like Cowgirl Creamery, they might be owned in a partnership or corporation. Family farms can be small or large, organic or conventional, and sometimes there is no guaranteed succession from one generation to the next and no structure for offering ownership and career advancement outside of the family group. I would like to see a study of alternatives for financing and structuring farms using a small business model."

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2005 UCCE Workshops to Focus on On-Farm Practices of Tillage, Weed Control, Irrigation, and Soil Fertility

The 2005 schedule for farming and ranching workshops will feature nuts and bolts half-day presentations on farming practices like dry farming, organic weed control, irrigation systems, water management, tractor implements for the small farm, and overall soil health and fertility management.



Grower Peter Worsley, dry-farming potatoes in Tomales.

The weed management and soil health workshops will be held on-farm at Star Route Farms in Bolinas with the irrigation, dry-farming and tractor implement talks at our usual location at the Dance Palace Community Center in Point Reyes Station. This year's talks will draw heavily on UCCE

Farm Advisors from UC Davis and Cooperative Extension Offices around the state. As usual, the visiting Farm Advisors will be joined by our local farmers to make up a working panel. The topics this year are drawn from evaluations that workshop participants filled out over the last three years.

The March 10 workshop will feature Jim Leap from the Agroecology Program at UC Santa Cruz, who will talk about dry farming and tractor implements for the small farm. Dry farmer David Little from Tomales will join Jim.

Dry Farming in Marin & Tools and Implements for Small-Scale Farming

Jim Leap from UC Santa Cruz Agroecology
& David Little, Potato Dry-Farmer

MARCH 10, 2005

4:30 pm - 7:30 pm

DANCE PALACE COMMUNITY CENTER

Point Reyes Station

Call 415-499-4204 for information.

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Hede Hellberg, Marin Organic - "It is my hope that in 2005 producers, allied organizations, and government agencies will continue to work in concert to address every component of our food system -- social, economic, and environmental. And while we will actively pursue public education programs, healthier food in

schools, and increased economic viability for producers, I feel it is important to continually remind ourselves that the path toward sustainability must, itself, be sustainable. With this in mind, we will create an environment where not only every project, but every interaction is an equally important opportunity to work toward that goal."

Lynne Giacomini-Stray, Pt. Reyes Original Blue Cheese

"I would like to see communities outside of West Marin extending throughout the Bay Area to become more aware of our Marin farms and what we produce. Through continued marketing and education, we can teach and encourage consumers to buy locally. It is the consumer who keeps the supply chain open and the farms alive. I would like to convert all of the state into foodies who appreciate where their food comes from!"



Stacy Carlsen, Agricultural Commissioner

"I would like to see all Marin consumers value Marin agriculture not only for their contribution to environmental protection, but also their collective interest in preserving the farm heritage, which is the soul and inspiration for future success and a means for each individual to understand sustainability."



Brigette Moran - Marin Farmers Market

"Working together with all the different ag-related organizations, I would like to see a permanent public market place for Marin, where we could showcase all of Marin's farmers, ranchers, aquaculturalists, vintners, bakers, and food purveyors - a place where the community can get locally grown foods direct from the producer."



Anita Sauber, Marin Co. Organic Inspector - "I would like to see our producers begin to look at on-farm alternative energy generation. The newer technologies are more affordable and easier to manage. Things like methane conversion and bio-diesel are becoming more practical."



Sam Dolcini, cattle rancher, Hicks Valley - "We had this big discussion last night at the house. What we would like to see this next year is a clear and understandable definition of sustainable agriculture."

Nancy Scolari, Marin Resource Conservation District -

"I would like to see Marin County farmers receive a financial benefit for their agricultural land stewardship. Marin's farmers are taking on innovative land management practices and working hard to stay ahead of environmental laws. It would be great to see that work to their economic advantage. Careful stewardship would pay off in dollars and not just sense."



Mike & Sally Gale, cattle ranchers - "Mike and I would like to see farms and ranches become small communities of bustling activity, with projects going forward in every direction. We would like to see multi-generational families and friends working on one ranch in a number of related agricultural businesses. By producing a great variety of healthy foods, and by bringing urban consumers out to the country to buy these foods, we will create space for the young farmers and ranchers we need to step into a bright future."

Dennis Dierks, farmer - "I'd like to see the development of high-quality artisan added-value products from individual farms. In Europe, most small farms have an added-value product that they make themselves. We would like to see our local government support us in this by streamlining the permitting process to help us all remain economically viable."



Ellie Rilla, UCCE Director - "We live in beautiful Marin, right next door to eight million potential purchasers of our food and products. My wish for 2005 is that more Marin and Bay Area consumers decide to purchase locally-made fresh and high quality products that we offer here in Marin. My second wish is to increase our retail and direct marketing outlets so that it's easier for consumers to find those great local products. And last, I hope that more of our farms and ranches will expand their products or at least explore the idea of how they can add more value to what they already do so well."

Dave Evans, Marin Sun Farms - "I'd like to see the farmers and ranchers find out about the advantages of sustainability in agriculture. They have an important part to play. Also, we need to bring conventional ag and community people together for increased interaction and communication. We need to increase Marin agriculture's ability to thrive by streamlining permitting and regulatory red tape."



Steve Quirt, UCCE - "I would like to see all farmers and ranchers recognized for the contributions they make to our landscape and food system. And I'd like to see the word "sustainable" be applied to every farmer and rancher who is doing a good job."

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thing is perfect, but it indicates that our diverse community of farmers, from the hobby farmer to the generational rancher, are coming under the umbrella of "agriculture."

Your answers suggested a few conclusions. One is that alternative farming and marketing practices are being talked about and implemented not only by the alternative farming community, but by the conventional farms and ranches as well. People are generally more optimistic that they can survive in farming. Also, everyone agrees that the recent work done by Cooperative Extension and Rangeland Consultant Lisa Bush to help educate county regulators and permitting agencies about agriculture and farm culture should continue. The biggest roadblock to farm and ranch diversification is the tedious and expensive regulatory processes that we all go through to get something new going on the farm.

But perhaps the most exciting thing to come out of the interviews is the consensus that progress toward an overall sustainable system is indeed happening, which will lead us to a profitable, sensible, and ecologically sound future for farming here in Marin County.

The Grown in Marin newsletter is published bi-monthly by the University of California Cooperative Extension, 1682 Novato Blvd., Suite 150B, Novato, CA 94947. Telephone 415/499-4204, <http://cemar.ucdavis.edu> and www.growninmarin.org. Production of this newsletter was made possible with funding from the University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program, the Clarence E. Heller Foundation, the Marin Community Foundation, and the County of Marin.

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Funding for the printing of this newsletter was provided by Marin Organic. Thank you!



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News from Marin County Farms, Ranches, and Producers

- ☞ **The Marin Agricultural Land Trust** has purchased the development rights to the 714-acre **Robert Giacomini Dairy** in Point Reyes Station, protecting the property permanently for agricultural use and open space.
- ☞ **Leah Smith** of the **Marin Food Systems Project** and **Miguel Villareal** of the **Novato School District** gave a presentation at the **2005 EcoFarm Conference** on their successful **Farm to School Cafeteria Program**.
- ☞ **Kevin Lunny**, from **Historic G Ranch**, has purchased **Johnson's Oysters on Drakes Bay** from the **Johnson family**.
- ☞ **McEvoy Olive Oil** received the highest overall score in the **September** issue of **Consumer Reports** survey of olive oils.
- ☞ **Cooperative Extension** received funds to conduct a livestock producers needs assessment survey for live stock producers in **Marin** and **Sonoma** Counties. The survey is planned for late spring and summer 2005.
- ☞ **Marin County Farm Day** is scheduled for **March 17** at the **Marin County Fairgrounds Exhibit Hall** from **9 a.m. to 12 noon**. This years theme is "**The ABC's of Agriculture**." Visit the website at www.marin.k12.ca.us.
- ☞ **Sam Dolcini** from **Hicks Valley** is the new president of the board of directors for the **Marin Agricultural Land Trust**.

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