

Local Food and Export Marketing

Discussion Leader: Karen Klonsky, UCD

Wed, Dec 3 2008

11am-12pm

Attendees:

Gene Miyao, UC Coop Ext Yolo

Ron Strohlic, CIRS

Christy Getz, UCCE, UCB

Jennifer Sowerwine, UCB

Pam Kan-Rice, UCOP

Gerald Thompson, Retired International Banker, ASI supporter

Steve Temple, UCCE Davis

Jenny Broome, UCCE Sac, Yolo and Solano

Laurel Kessler, Shambani Organics

Bethanie Mills, Fresno Metro Ministry

Bethallyn Black, UCCE Contra Costa

Sonja Brodt, UC Davis Ast, Ag Econ Dept.

Meena Kunwar, Humphrey Program, UC Davis

Susan Finlayson, UCD Community Development

Alida Cantor, CIRS

Renato Duarte Daconceicao, Humphrey Program, UC Davis

Opening Statements (Karen Klonsky)

We're talking about Exporting out of California (not country)

Karen's background is in organic and sustainable agriculture.

How do you get more farmers to stay in farming and implement sustainable and organic production? Karen's perspective is based mostly from producer side.

There is a false dichotomy between local and organic that is being pushed by the media.

Participant Introductions and Statements

Jenny Broom

-Grow local, buy local marketing campaign

-How do you include commodity growers in eat local initiatives in creative ways? (Form collaborative CSA's? Get local consumers to eat excess pears, for example?) How much exporting do you have to keep doing to stay viable?

Laurel Kessler

-Runs a Shasta County organic nursery

-Participates in farmers markets

-Market as point of connection to other people, learning things, collaborating (eg coordinating crops to optimize seed saving)

-Local defined as within a 2 hour drive

Bethany Mills

- Runs a Hunger and Nutrition program in Fresno
- Goal is to keep food produced in Central Valley local, to meet needs of the hungry
- Regulations don't allow farmers markets in commercial OR residential areas there. It is very hard to get permission. Markets often have to function without advertising. Ordinance is now revised.

Bethallyn Black

- Manages urban horticulture program for UCCE Contra Costa City
- Home food production classes
- Local task force to support Buy Fresh Buy Local
- Local organic producers who sell at Ferry Plaza
- How do you go from commodity marketing into a system that sells locally?
- Family owns farm near Chico; helping them transition into a diversified CSA

Sonja Brodt

- Does lifecycle assessment of greenhouse gas production throughout food systems
- Export vs. Local and the productive advantage (Some crops grow better in some areas than in others) -What about environmental reasons for export markets, growing something in CA vs. NYC?

Meena Kunwar

- manages program in Nepal that works with ag sustainability and poverty alleviation

Renato Duarte Daconceicao

- Works for Ag department in Brazil doing control of imports/exports of ag products
- At UC to study organic certification and production

Gene Miyao

- works with canning tomato growers
- balancing the many different food system needs (value added, food access, overproduction)

Steve Temple

- political economy of agriculture and labor issues
- evolving social certification schemes (beyond organic)
- issues facing disadvantaged farmers (eg. Southeast Asian)
- Scale, locality and organic: small farmers are not able to go certified organic, which creates a marketing challenge. How to solve this?

Jennifer Sowerwine

- Assessing economic viability of East Asian farms. How are they sustaining themselves?

- Regulation and cost is hard on small farmers.
- Challenge of local markets meeting continued year-round demands
- Alternative distribution schemes. How do small farmers get into larger marketing? Eg. Fresno farmers providing Asian vegetables to consumers across the country
- What about the distribution link? (Lots of people looking at production and consumers)
- How to develop local distribution (Fresno farmers having to send products to SF that then get sold back to Fresno consumers)

Pam Kan-Rice

-Works for the media

Discussion

- How do you eat locally in a harsh climate? (eg. Minnesota)
- Export farming contributes to the death of local farming economies.
- Ethnic foods?

Scale of Agricultural Production

- Is what we have now the most efficient? Are big farms more efficient?
- Should both scales be accessible to both markets? (ie, Should all consumers have access to local as well as imported food?)
- Farmers have to export some of their produce in order to stay economically viable.
- The goal is not to produce LESS food.
- Scale varies a lot depending on the type of food you're talking about. You can eat well in the winter in MA, using locally grown food staples, and supplementing with imported luxury foods (chocolate, coffee)
- There are a lot of foods people don't eat anymore that could be grown and eaten locally.
- Purist would say eat stored food and greens in the winter
- It doesn't have to be sacrifice only, because there are hedonic benefits to local eating.
- Is carbon a good way of applying a value to food systems? Examples of food systems in Europe that are local but produce more greenhouse gases. Not the case everywhere. Large scale assessments estimate that distribution of food is only 11 percent of greenhouse gas production. Other sources are storage, cooking, methane from production, tractors, water transportation.

Marketing Issues

- Foods have to have a story to have a value in consumer's mind.
- Information and labeling is key
- Carries certification and regulation costs.

- Non certified labeling works in direct marketing (eg. No spray, nutra-clean)
- If the US wants farmers in other countries to be certified if they are organic, won't this drive many small farmers out of business?

Go Local Backlash

- Fair trade movement
- By delineating a spacial boundary, how does this affect the fair trade movements?
- Fair Trade Farmers from Africa
- Food sovereignty
- Poor countries that are dependent on export agriculture... how does a US local food movement affect them?

Impacts of Local Food Production on Food Access

- Are the goals of increasing fresh fruit and vegetable consumption compatible with eating locally?
- Local food is a luxury, not affordable to low-income individuals.
- Homegrown is very expensive.