

Poster Abstract

Solano County Agricultural Sustainability at the Crossroads... *Working Together to Make Choices that Work*

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Farmers and those interested in the sustainability of agriculture in Solano County are quickly approaching a crossroad of choices about what a branding of Solano County will look like for future economic impact. The results of e-mail surveys and focus group sessions conducted from June until September 2008 to assess preferences and opinions from consumers, policymakers and farmers has begun to reveal information to help set a course of 'next steps' for this longitudinal project

Results of these investigative efforts revealed that:

- Solano county consumers are supportive of their local farmers and businesses and that they visit local produce outlets frequently.
- Producers/Farmers report that at this time they would not be able to meet the demand of consumers should a marketing program be successful. Many are selling their products as agricultural commodities and not framing their products for niche markets. There is a need for education which may result in a change in growing patterns and a motivation to respond to interests of consumers and their growing demand for "fresh and local."
- Solano County policymakers (four of five Board of Supervisor members and six of seven Mayors responding) noted that they want to develop local Solano branding for produce and value added products and marketing methods to help increase local buyer awareness and choice.

As a result of these findings Cooperative Extension will continue to host grower meetings and workshops that will provide information to increase farmer/grower knowledge and confidence.

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