



Regional Agricultural Marketing: A Review of Programs in California

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University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources
Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program



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Preface

Regional agricultural marketing programs are becoming more common in California. They are important components of localized strategies to increase the economic viability of farmers and their communities, especially given the challenges of current market and population trends. The effective place-based branding of agricultural products has the potential to raise farmer incomes while increasing consumer awareness about where the food they eat comes from.

In order to assess how regional ag marketing is faring in California, the University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program conducted 25 interviews with people connected to ag marketing campaigns at various geographical scales, from sub-county to the state level. It became apparent that many programs share the same objectives, but the strategies and resources they use to accomplish their goals are considerably different. Some key themes and issues are discussed in detail, both in a general context, and with the specific purpose of providing Yolo County with considerations related to the creation of its own regional ag marketing program.

We wish to thank the producers, University California Cooperative Extension specialists, agricultural commissioners, and agricultural marketing specialists who contributed time and information to this report.

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Introduction

The State of Agriculture in California

The pressures of population growth and today's global marketplace present California agriculture with many challenges. In the past decades the state has seen a general change in focus from livestock and field crops to specialty crop production, with a major emphasis on export (Giannini, 2004). As the costs of land and production have gone up, the number of farms and farmers, acreage devoted to agriculture, and commodity market prices have decreased. Concentration and vertical integration are major trends among the farms that remain; those with annual incomes under \$100,000 make up 74 percent of all operations, but only four percent of the total value of ag sales (ibid.). Mid-scale farms are especially vulnerable, as they are too small to compete in the highly consolidated commodity markets, and too large to take part in direct marketing and value-added practices that many smaller operations utilize (Kirschenmann, 2004). Concentration is also happening among the processing, shipping, and retail sectors, and farmers linked to large consolidated firms through contracts are losing power to make independent management decisions. Overall, fewer companies have greater control over the food economy.

One approach gaining momentum as a way to counteract these challenges is the move towards a local, community, or regional food system. The approach is based on the formation of more direct linkages between farmers and the local community. This shortens the chain from production to consumption and allows more of the food dollar to get back to the individuals who grow the food. In California there are numerous movements working to foster these connections, including farmers markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) projects, and farm-to-institution programs. The money spent on locally grown products confers a direct benefit to farmers; it also remains in the regional economy longer, potentially circulating many more times before leaving the area. For a local food system and agriculture to thrive, however, there must be demand for locally produced food. Regional agricultural marketing helps nurture and meet this demand, and is an important component of the local food movement.

Regional Agricultural Marketing

Ag marketing programs exist at many geographical levels. At one end of the spectrum are programs that promote commodity goods produced in the state of California (*Buy California* Marketing Agreement). At the other end are programs that aim to increase the viability of local agriculture in a smaller area such as a county or sub-region of a county. Point of origin is a critical component of all these campaigns, but those that pertain to a more specific region tend to be strongly based on a sense of place and identity. To this end, branding is the cornerstone of regional marketing, providing a relatively simple way for farmers to differentiate and add value to their products. A well-designed label conveys a set of values that are associated with the area it represents. The story that a regional label tells distinguishes its product from the mass marketplace, and establishes a basis for consumer patronage and support.

Most marketing programs are more than a logo, however. By increasing consumer awareness of local agriculture, regional ag marketing groups aim to preserve the culture and land in farming, add value to ag products, and help local farmers survive. They help to build needed infrastructure and provide technical expertise, enabling local farmers and processors to better compete in the global economy. Healthy regional food and farm economies are the desired result, in which farmers grow the wealth of the region, and in turn are rewarded by their communities.

Purpose of the Review

The University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (UCSAREP) completed a review of regional agricultural marketing programs in California for two central reasons. First, it was proposed as an important contribution to the developments taking place within the agricultural community of Yolo County. The county's agriculture commissioner was investigating the possibility of providing organic certification services through his office, with the hope of encouraging more Yolo County producers to make the transition from conventional to certified organic practices. In 2004, a task force was formed to explore the development of a marketing program for the county's organic agriculture, as a compliment to the commissioner's certification program. UCSAREP completed this report in 2005 to help the task force gauge the potential for a Yolo County agricultural marketing program.

Second, this work is part of UC SAREP's continuing participation in the multi-state research project *NE 1012, Sustaining Local Food Systems in a Globalizing Environment: Forces, Responses, Impacts*. The research was initiated with Yolo County's organic agriculture in mind, but the findings pertain to much wider geographical and academic areas. Various types of regional marketing programs were interviewed; most do not emphasize organic agriculture, but all aim to increase the viability of local agriculture. The information presented here should therefore be a helpful resource to a broad audience, including other regional groups in California wishing to market their local agriculture, and people more generally interested in the ways communities are responding to changes in the food system.

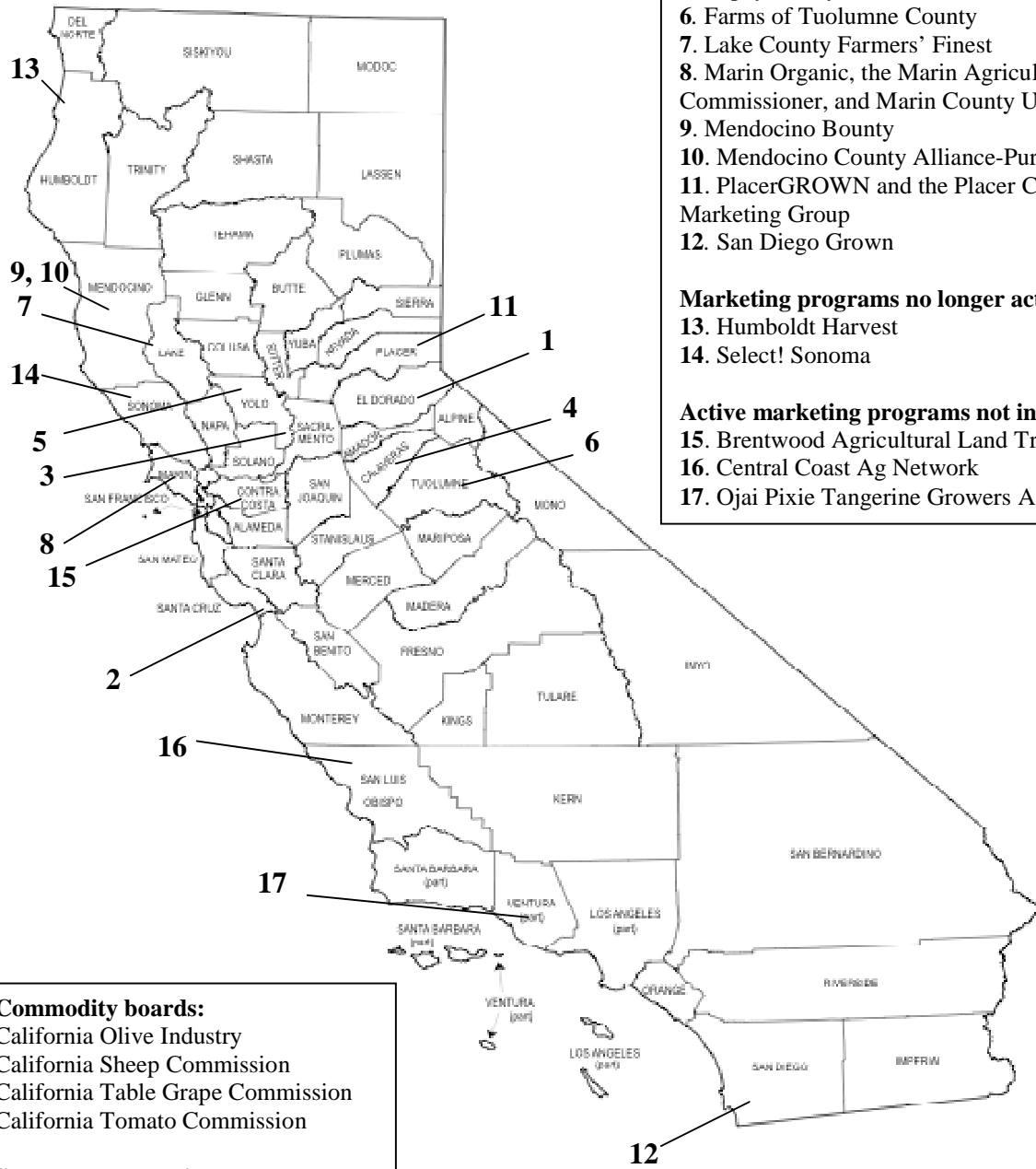
Methodology

This report concentrates on marketing programs that use a place-based approach in the promotion of local agriculture. Some are more specific to value-added products, agritourism, or broader concepts such as sustainability, but all center on a regional identity. Interview subjects were identified and located through personal communication and Internet searches. More established programs were easily located with the latter approach since marketing groups commonly use Web sites. Information on less established campaigns, and programs that are no longer in existence, were identified after talking to people with experience in ag marketing.

In total, 25 interviews were completed by phone and through e-mail correspondence from February to April of 2005 (see Appendix A for list of interview subjects). Contacts for 12 active¹ regional marketing programs and two that no longer exist were interviewed; contacts included member farmers, program directors, farm advisors, and agriculture commissioners, as well as a marketing consultant who contributed to the formation of many of the regional programs. The directors of the statewide *Buy California* Marketing Agreement, the Division of Marketing Services of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) that administers the agreement, and four of the program's participating commodity boards were interviewed as well. Overall, nine counties and five other multi-county regions were represented. The interview subjects are shown below in relation to their geographical location.

¹ Since the time of interviews, three other regional agricultural marketing programs were identified. See Appendix A for contact information.

Figure 1: Regional Agriculture Marketing Programs in California



- Active regional marketing programs and some collaborators:**
1. Apple Hill
 2. Buy Fresh Buy Local Central Coast*
 3. Buy Fresh Buy Local Sacramento Valley*
 4. Calaveras Grown
 5. Capay Valley Grown
 6. Farms of Tuolumne County
 7. Lake County Farmers' Finest
 8. Marin Organic, the Marin Agriculture Commissioner, and Marin County UCCE
 9. Mendocino Bounty
 10. Mendocino County Alliance-Pure Mendocino
 11. PlacerGROWN and the Placer County Ag Marketing Group
 12. San Diego Grown
- Marketing programs no longer active:**
13. Humboldt Harvest
 14. Select! Sonoma
- Active marketing programs not interviewed**
15. Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust
 16. Central Coast Ag Network
 17. Ojai Pixie Tangerine Growers Association

Commodity boards:
 California Olive Industry
 California Sheep Commission
 California Table Grape Commission
 California Tomato Commission

State level marketing programs:
 CDFA Division of Marketing Services
 Buy California Marketing Agreement

* The *Buy Fresh Buy Local* campaign is run by the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF). The Central Coast region includes Monterey, San Benito, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz counties. The Sacramento Valley region includes Sacramento, Solano, and Yolo counties.

Results

The principal results and themes from the interviews are presented in the following sections (see Appendix B for interview questions). The findings are grouped into six categories, including why regional ag marketing programs are forming, how they are structured, and what types of strategies they utilize to accomplish their objectives. Next, funding and budgetary information is covered. Finally, the accomplishments and challenges faced by the various groups are discussed.

Motivations for Starting a Campaign

The 12 regional ag marketing groups gave many common reasons for their formation. Small farmers are finding it difficult to survive in an increasingly global market and need ways to compete more successfully. Crop and livestock production still make up a significant percentage of the landscape in many California counties, but agriculture's share of the local economy is shrinking. Productive land continues to be lost to urban growth and land prices make it very attractive for farmers to sell the land that they own. Regional marketing is a response to the market pressures faced by farmers and producers, and is a way to help increase their economic viability.

Major goals and objectives

All of the marketing groups interviewed share a central objective to increase local production and consumption of agricultural products. Two groups framed this as a desire to counter the "commoditization" of the food system, or make it possible for farmers to reduce their emphasis on the large-scale production of one commodity for export. A few groups specifically try to help small-scale growers increase small farm viability. Many respondents said explicitly that they want to develop more marketing alternatives for producers, especially to increase direct marketing opportunities. A mutually reinforcing goal mentioned is to raise consumer awareness about where their food is coming from, and to facilitate consumer education about local food production. In general, the programs aim to promote and add value to locally grown products, and increase the consumption of these products in local markets.

These goals are related to a desire to improve the local economy; several groups would like agriculture to be incorporated into economic and open space development strategies. Some feel it is important to simply initiate a dialogue about local agriculture and to get people talking about local agriculture issues. An increase in farmer/producer communication and networking opportunities is commonly emphasized. Finally, two groups aim to enhance the sustainability of local agriculture, specifically by increasing the prevalence of organic practices.

Organizational Structure

An ideal structural model for regional marketing programs does not exist; despite having similar goals, groups are organizing in many different ways. The form a program ultimately takes depends upon the local context and even the personalities of those who are initially involved. There are various ways to make a marketing group work; it seems that most important is whether people see a solution together, and whether they develop enough as a group to deal with challenges that arise.

Structure

All of the regional marketing programs are voluntary, membership-based associations. Many have obtained 501c3 non-profit status, or are housed within larger organizations that are non-profits themselves. As volunteer organizations, it is common to find a core of dedicated individuals that devote much time and energy to their respective programs. Groups that are affiliated with other established associations may potentially benefit from staff and services already in existence, such as Web page space, a bank account, or secretarial assistance. This is the case with the *Buy Fresh Buy Local* program that is overseen by the Community Alliance of Family Farmers (CAFF), and *Pure Mendocino* that is housed under the roof of the Mendocino Cancer Resource Center. The University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) and its farm advisors have also provided critical support for the start up and continued function of various programs. The UCCE office continues to oversee the program in Tuolumne County, but would like it to eventually move out and be a separate organization. In San Diego a regional marketing program was started with the help of the UCCE farm advisor, but the group has now merged with the county Farm Bureau.

Membership

Farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural producers are certainly the base of regional marketing programs, but a wider range of interests are getting involved in many parts of the state. There is an increasing recognition that consumers, retailers, restaurants, and other businesses are also necessary participants. Most of the marketing groups do collaborate with these other entities, but their investment through membership is actively recruited in some regions.

The number of participating members in the groups that were interviewed is highly variable, ranging from 24 to nearly 100. The portion of these numbers represented by farmers/producers and businesses varies. The size of the region represented, availability of financial resources, and the age of the program are all determining factors in group size and composition. Furthermore, many groups described a fluctuation in membership over time, and the size and strength of the active core is most important to program health.

Strategies and Implementation

The marketing groups' strategies and programs are grouped below in the categories of Education and Marketing/Outreach. Note, however, that there is considerable overlap between the two. For example, a Web site could be used as an educational and a marketing tool, and it is difficult to distinguish between consumer education and outreach.

Education

While regional marketing programs are geared toward the promotion of local agriculture, many also aim to increase the production and marketing capacities of farmers and growers. Several groups provide educational opportunities for growers/producers in these skill areas, in the form of farm tours, range walks, ag tourism workshops, marketing strategies workshops, farmer-to-farmer meetings, etc. The cooperation of specialists within University California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) is a major part of these efforts in several counties. *PlacerGROWN* puts on a farm conference with a different theme and speakers each year. *Calaveras Grown* aims for two or three major programs a year, including a two-day workshop for producers in conjunction with the local harvest festival. *Select! Sonoma* initially included an educational component that was very popular with its members. The education of retail and business partners is also facilitated through retail classes and presentations. In some cases this simply consists of training staff in stores how best to post signs and labels. Consumer education is considered to be part of outreach strategies described below.

Marketing/Outreach

Logo

The development of a logo was one of the first steps taken by many of the marketing groups at the time of their formation. A well-designed brand helps create an identity and convey a sense of place that can be associated with a quality product. Only one of the programs included in this study did not have a label, but that group intends to develop one. Interview participants consider "point of origin" and "certified sustainability" as two of the best ways to distinguish a product in the mass marketplace. A regional logo should not only reflect the place, but also tell a better story and express more genuine qualities than other brands.

Logo dissemination

Once a label is developed, there are many ways and multiple venues to get it out to the public. The efforts of CAFF and The Placer Ag Marketing Group provide good examples of how this can be done. Both stress the importance of market recognition and getting consumers to perceive their program labels as indicators of a local product.

Some groups have converted their logo into digital format and distributed it to members on a CD, allowing producers to easily incorporate it into their individual product labels. Most groups also provide members with hard copy materials such as signs, stickers, shelf-talkers (small logo tags for retail store shelves), and even twist ties. Other items that are used to increase name and logo recognition include aprons, bags, caps, shirts, buttons, bumper stickers, small stickers, posters, magnets, and bookmarks. These may be distributed to the public for free or sold to raise money, but either way, the group's name gets out to the public.

Visibility

Some of the more common venues to distribute these collateral items include promotional events and tables at fairs. The *Buy Fresh Buy Local* campaign focuses heavily on getting signs and shelf-talkers up in grocery stores. Increasing local farm visibility on shelves is an important education and outreach tool, raising the public's awareness about local produce, local farms, the loss of farmland, and the importance of farmland preservation for food security. They provide consumers with the choice between products grown locally and those that are not. This increases farm viability and consumer responsibility by supporting the local food economy.

Some creative approaches practiced by other groups include placing information and promotional materials in the county's Chamber of Commerce office and Visitor's center. *PlacerGROWN* features a rotating "Farmer of the Week" in the Visitor's Center, a strategy that promotes individual members and the group as a whole to people utilizing the center's resources.

Internet

The Internet plays a very important role in marketing, outreach, and educational activities. Eight of the 12 regional marketing groups have their own Web site, and two of the remaining four groups utilize existing UCCE Web space. Many sites are professionally designed and interactive, but at the very least they proudly display the group's logo. A local ag guide is often included on the Web site as well, including a list of all the local members, what they produce, and when and where their products can be purchased. This list may also be printed and distributed through other venues. The sites of some programs feature reasons to buy local, links to member pages, links to collaborating organizations, events calendars, an electronic version of program newsletters, and the opportunity to donate or join the program.

Media: newspaper and radio

Calaveras Grown started with a weekly radio show and solicited local musicians to compose a jingle for the group. Radio ad campaigns for *Buy Fresh Buy Local* are also used. Several groups write articles for local newspapers and other newsletters that highlight the program and specific farmers.

Newsletter and mailings

A monthly, quarterly, or annual newsletter is a common component of the groups' marketing efforts. The *Apple Hill* association has its own publication called the Cider Press.

Farm trails materials

A farm trails map and listing are more important in regions pursuing ag tourism such as El Dorado and Calaveras County, the homes to the *Apple Hill Growers Association* and *Calaveras Grown*, respectively. In conjunction with a farm trails program, quality signs with the group logo are provided to participants to display along the road, furthering the goal of name recognition.

Tastings

A logical way to promote agricultural products is to allow people to taste them. Some marketing groups provide food samples to potential donors, retail partners, and consumers at promotional events and dinners. *Apple Hill* began more than 40 years ago with a press picnic and

an “apple smorgie” that allowed people to taste what was being produced in the area. This strategy may have more potential impact today, as fewer people know what fresh, locally grown produce tastes like. *Marin Organic*, the Placer Ag Marketing Group and *Capay Valley Grown* all organize large dinners to raise funds and generate interest and awareness. In addition, *Marin Organic* insists that local, organic produce be sourced for all county meetings and functions that include food.

Collaboration

Collaboration emerged as a valued concept during this study’s interviews. Marin County is a prime example of how many, diverse groups can work together toward similar goals. The area is described as having a “culture of collaboration,” allowing for broader reaching efforts and impacts. Pulling representatives from many sectors of agriculture into a marketing group is one way to foster linkages across a region, but ag marketing groups can collaborate with other kinds of groups as well, including regional government, tourism boards, farmers market associations, and land trusts.

Some ideas in the works

A few groups spoke of strategies that are still in the development stage, including mail order gift baskets, collaborative marketing strategies that follow a cooperative model, and multi-county collaboration.

Most of the sub-state programs are comprehensive as to what types of agricultural products are marketed, but the concept of *terroir* and the promotion of a specific item’s quality based on where it is grown are also gaining popularity. In Ojai, a group of tangerine growers branded their product based on varietal and place. They have developed a label and marketing program for the Ojai Pixie Tangerine.

Financial Information

The financial information for the marketing programs is presented in categories of start-up money, fee structures, fundraising strategies, annual budget estimates, and paid positions. It is important for a group to consider whether it is able and willing to maintain itself over time once initial funding sources run out. If the ultimate goal of a group is to be self-sustaining, it must determine how and where it will obtain necessary resources. Member investment is critical since membership fees provide an important contribution to many budgets, but they are often not sufficient to fund all the activities and services the groups wish to offer.

Start-Up

The amount of money used to start different regional marketing campaigns varies greatly. *Calaveras Grown* began their efforts by charging initial members \$10 to be part of a farm trails map. They later received a grant of \$10,000 that enabled the program to truly establish itself. *Farms of Tuolumne County* started with a small grant of \$440 from the USDA. CAFF's *Buy Fresh Buy Local* campaign began in California's Central Coast Region with start-up monies of approximately \$30,000; as little as \$375 was used to develop the logos of other participating regions. At the upper end of the scale, *PlacerGROWN* launched itself with a grant from the County Board of Supervisors worth close to \$100 thousand. *Marin Organic* used a total of approximately \$100,000 over a period of a few years until the spring of 2004, when it was able to significantly expand and hire an executive director. Fundraisers and donations have been critical to several groups while they were "getting off the ground."

Groups may find it beneficial to first seek local sources of funding whenever possible. It is important to have the initial support of local government or regional foundations; supplementary grants may be pursued later. Marketing groups have received money from non-local sources including the USDA (Fund for Rural America), USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program, California Nutrition Network, and other major foundations.

Fee Structures

Membership fee policies of the marketing associations depend upon the demographic characteristics of the region, the goals of the group, and the group's relative length of existence. In Mendocino, where the goal of *Pure Mendocino* is to promote a general culture of sustainability, there is no fee at all; people are not being asked to pay anything to participate, only that they use the label. In Tuolumne County, members pay \$50 to get their locations listed in the *Farms of Tuolumne County* ag guide. As mentioned in the previous section, *Calaveras Grown* began in a similar fashion with a \$10 listing fee. Their fees are higher now, and membership is extended beyond growers/producers. *San Diego Grown* appears to be the only association that charges a licensing fee for logo use that is separate from the cost to join. The remaining groups include the rights to their logos as part of membership.

Some of the groups use a sliding scale that corresponds to the member's occupational status, size and/or income. The most complex example comes from *Apple Hill*. Every member pays a baseline fee of \$175, but additional assessments are charged based on production acreage, any value-added food that is sold, the operation of a cider press, winery operations, wine or beer serving or tasting, the sale of crafts from a stand, and the square footage devoted to the sale of crafts indoors. This structure is well suited to the group's focus on agritourism, but would probably make less sense for a region that is strictly concerned with the marketing of local

agriculture. In Lake County, where the marketing group has partnered with the Farmers' market association, members of *Farmers' Finest* receive a discount on market stall fees.

Some categories of membership include:

- 1) General member: farmer/rancher/producer, processor (with a minimum percentage of ingredients locally grown)
- 2) Business (as defined by the marketing group)
- 3) Retailer
- 4) Restaurant
- 5) Supporter
 - a. Consumer/community member
 - b. Agricultural associations (a category unique to *PlacerGROWN*)
 - c. Other organizations, non-profits, businesses

The majority of marketing groups include some type of "Supporter" category, the fifth example listed above. In this way supporters of local agriculture, from community members to agricultural suppliers, can become honorary members through a donation to the organization. For example, the "Friends of *Marin Organic*" program is divided into categories of donation ranging from \$40-\$1,000. Donors receive creative "prizes" in return as a show of gratitude, such as a bird-watching trip or a pig roast, depending on the donor's interest. *San Diego Grown* is starting a similar program.

CAFF also has a distributor category in the *Buy Fresh Buy Local* membership, but at the time of the interview had no members in this category yet. It is really up to the group to define the membership categories they would like to include, as well as the rights and benefits that the categories receive. Some specific examples of fee structures are given in Table 1.

Fundraising Strategies

A few fundraising strategies include making membership available to people in the community, offering attractive incentives to encourage donations, and selling collateral items that promote a group's logo. Some groups have taken other creative approaches to raise money for their marketing efforts. The *Apple Hill* association started the *Apple Hill Harvest Run* 26 years ago as a fundraiser. First organized by two of the association's members, the run quickly grew in stature and became such a big money-maker that *Apple Hill* decided to hire a professional organizer every year. Now, after expenses are covered, all proceeds go to a local school. *Apple Hill* has also published and sold four volumes of a cookbook.

Lake County Farmers' Finest believes that having one or two big events each year to raise money is preferable to asking their members for cash on a frequent basis. At Christmas they put on a Crafts Fair, and use the profits for promotional purposes. As described earlier, tasting events can also be used for the purpose of fundraising, while providing opportunities for promotion and education. Residents of Marin County have made the "Taste of Marin" dinner put on by *Marin Organic* a huge success. The food includes local produce, cheese, wine, and bread and sold out last year, serving close to 300 people.

Table 1: Fee Structures of Regional Ag Marketing Groups (dollars per year)

Program	Producer	Business	Retailer	Restaurant	Supporter
CAFF Buy Fresh Buy Local	75-250	250	500-1,000	150-250	50
Calaveras Grown	50	200-400	200-400	200-400	20
Capay Valley Grown	100	Partnership program coming soon			
Farms of Tuolumne County	50				
Lake County Farmers' Finest	50	50			35
Marin Organic	75-150	150-1,000	150-1,000	150-1,000	40-1,000
PlacerGROWN	40	200	Fee to be decided upon joining		20
San Diego Grown	120 (logo use)				20
Humboldt Harvest (no longer running)	Based on sales	Producer organization only			
Select! Sonoma (no longer running)	100-300	Producer organization only			

Annual Budgets

One interview participant stated that a marketing budget should usually be larger than what most people are willing to believe, noting that a group cannot spend enough on promotional materials. The high monetary requirements of marketing came up during other interviews.

Unfortunately, most groups don't have even \$100,000 per year to spend, especially after initial grants run out. *Lake County Farmers' Finest* puts approximately \$2,000 per year toward promotional activities, and \$5,000-\$6,000 is used to run the three farmers markets they manage. *Capay Valley Grown* uses approximately \$20,000 to run its program. *PlacerGROWN* has a budget of \$40,000 but is currently funding some of its activities with a USDA-SARE grant. *Marin Organic* is operating on \$350,000 per year, half of which comes from foundation support. *Apple Hill*, which seems to be operating very well on its own, estimates their promotional budget to be approximately \$33,000. In contrast with some programs, *Apple Hill* allots very little money to the production of collateral items that other groups utilize in their marketing strategies, such as shirts, hats, aprons, magnets, and stickers.

Paid Positions

A few marketing programs benefit from the infrastructure and employees of a larger association with which they are affiliated. UCCE specialists helped launch *PlacerGROWN* and *Marin Organic*, UCCE offices continue to oversee *Calaveras Grown* and the *Farms of Tuolumne*

County, and CAFF employees assist with the *Buy Fresh Buy Local* campaign. Marketing programs that operate more independently of larger organizations tend to recognize the importance of having some type of staff assistance. Representatives spoke of the need for at least one part-time or half-time position to manage organizational, marketing, and membership responsibilities.

Depending on the financial resources available, some groups do hire people for these tasks. *Marin Organic* has a staff of four, including an executive director. *Apple Hill* has one hired employee that is mainly in charge of returning phone calls and e-mails, and maintaining the Web site. They have hired a few marketing people in the past, but found that the members are just as capable of generating creative ideas. *Lake County Farmers' Finest* also hires a part-time employee, but her duties are principally as a farmers market manager. *PlacerGROWN* employs a project director and market manager, whose positions are paid by its SARE grant.

Progress, Success

The definition of program success is dependent upon a program's goals. Most commonly, regional ag marketing programs aim to increase the economic viability of its members. When asked about the impacts of marketing on incomes and farmer viability, not many of the groups could provide quantitative measures of success. It is difficult to correlate sales directly to a program's label and marketing efforts. Numbers that reflect the visibility and activities of the groups, and anecdotal evidence of program success are more commonly reported. Some of the younger programs are unable to make any strong correlations yet.

The importance of monitoring the effectiveness of marketing efforts over time is certainly recognized, but considered difficult and even expensive. As one person framed it, "what exactly should be measured since these groups are really about social marketing?" For this reason, consumer awareness and label recognition are often the focus of evaluation. In March 2005, the Central Coast chapter of *Buy Fresh Buy Local* carried out consumer and farmer surveys to measure progress of their marketing campaign, the results of which are highlighted below (see Box 1). The Sacramento Valley chapter of CAFF is also tracking concrete numbers as much as possible. They gather baseline information from *Buy Fresh Buy Local* members as soon as they join by including questions on the membership form. This allows monitoring and follow-up to be much more possible in the future.

The success of activities that aim to make positive impacts on social, community, and ecological levels are important to consider as well. In some cases, numerical outcomes will have little to do with program success. The social value of creating an environment of support, and connecting with people through good intent, can also be a way that programs "work."

Membership

Membership was referred to as an indicator of success during several interviews. The basic observations that people are returning, paying dues, and that more are joining are seen as positive reflections of the groups. Presumably people would not become or remain members if they did not perceive some benefit to themselves. Membership levels do tend to ebb and flow, and several programs are currently experiencing upswings. For *Marin Organic*, membership is related to one of their principal goals- to support a higher conversion from conventional to organic agriculture. The association is also following statistics in the county's annual crop report to track the organic movement in the county. The total number of certified organic growers, crops grown, and acreage have increased significantly since the start of the *Marin Organic* program. The ag commissioner says that his office is now receiving more requests for organic certification than he can handle. *Marin Organic* is also monitoring farmers market and workshop participation.

Sales

In Calaveras County, there has been a positive correlation between farm sales and *Calaveras Grown* marketing efforts. The demand for locally grown food is very high, enough to warrant another farmers market. When there was an attempt to start one, however, there was not a large enough supply of produce to do so. Direct marketing with the *Calaveras Grown* label has been so successful that there are many other venues, especially local restaurants and stores, already purchasing available produce from farmers. Local wine tasting rooms are able to sell more products when using the label as well.

Marin Organic was able to provide specific numbers regarding the produce sales of its members. There has been an increase in sales returns, but it is difficult to separate out the direct effects of the *Marin Organic* marketing efforts. At the Point Reyes Farmers Market, the only market in the Bay Area with 100 percent local (from within 30 miles of the area), certified organic produce, there has been an increase in member sales from \$90,000 to over \$150,000.

At least once in the past, *Apple Hill* quantified the number of people who visited their members' locations and calculated the economic multipliers generated in the area from agritourism. The information is now out of date, but the group expressed plans to update the numbers since it is so important to show what the association is doing for its members and the community.

Box 1: Buy Fresh Buy Local Campaign Evaluation Results, Central Coast

The Central Coast chapter of CAFF interviewed or surveyed the following groups in Santa Cruz County in 2004: an independent retailer with three stores, 22 *Buy Fresh Buy Local* member farmers, 32 people (farmers and consumers) at the Aptos Farmers Market, and 21 shoppers at Deluxe Foods of Aptos. The results showed that:

After joining the *Buy Fresh Buy Local* efforts, the independent retailer increased the produce it purchased from 19 local farmers by over 30 percent in two years.

Of the 22 surveyed farmers:

Almost two-thirds said the campaign had increased consumer awareness of local food

Many said market attendance had increased due to the campaign.

Of the 32 people surveyed at the Aptos market:

63% said they have seen the label

100% said they thought it was useful

81% said it would influence what they purchased

Of the 21 people interviewed at the Deluxe Foods market:

50% had seen the label

100% thought it was useful

100% said it would influence what they purchased

(Nevin, 2005)

Recognition

Several groups also mentioned public recognition and visibility as measures of success. For example, the number of articles written each year in local and major newspapers about the *Buy Fresh Buy Local* campaign, *PlacerGROWN*, and *Marin Organic* are considered rough indicators of public interest and awareness of the groups. Web site hits are another indicator used. The attendance of people at tasting and promotional events is monitored in a few cases. The Taste of Marin dinner grew quickly from 80 to 280 people, selling out in three years. A sell-out crowd of 450 people was served in its sixth year in 2005.

Member perceptions

As mentioned above, the fact that members are returning each year is a success in itself; many groups have also received positive feedback from producers that reflects progress. *Lake County Farmers' Finest* claims that members who have stuck with the program are seeing benefits from label recognition. Members of the Sacramento Valley *Buy Fresh Buy Local* program are happy with the way things are running, primarily due to the retailer partnerships that have formed. Members of *PlacerGROWN* report that once they are listed on the Web site and in the ag guide put out by the Ag Marketing Director, they receive many more inquiries and phone calls about their products. In general, producers are observing higher consumer awareness and label recognition, and see a positive consumer response. Recognition of the *Select Sonoma* label is still high, even though the group doesn't exist anymore.

Communication and Networking

One of the successes that emerged from the interviews was an increase in communication and networking opportunities among the farming community. This was especially true in talking with *PlacerGROWN*, *CAFF*, *Lake County Farmers' Finest*, and *Marin Organic*. In some cases networking is being more actively fostered by providing the time and space for farmers to meet and learn from each other. In other cases communication has grown from the process of working toward a common goal. The process of forming a group and team building can be successful as a learning experience in itself. Participants may be better off for just having made the journey.

Leadership

The cultivation of leadership among the agriculture community is another intangible success of the ag marketing programs. They provide a vehicle for producers to actively influence the social and economic circumstances they are operating within.

Challenges

The establishment and maintenance of a regional marketing group does not come without challenges. Time and money were commonly mentioned constraints, and the melding of a diverse group of personalities can be difficult for some groups as well.

Time and Energy

Farmers are busy and usually don't have much free time to commit to marketing efforts. This can lead to low levels of participation at the member level, leaving few people to do most of the work. *Lake County Farmers' Finest* especially faces this problem since the community of farmers is small to begin with. Even *PlacerGROWN*, one of the larger, more established groups, experiences a low attendance level at meetings because its members are so busy. It may be wise to keep energy constraints in mind when first starting up, so that people don't burn out during the process of formation.

Another challenge is the amount of time needed for label recognition to become established, and for the benefits of the program to be felt by the members. A lot of patience is required to reach that point. Ironically, one of the reasons *Select! Sonoma* ceased operating was that its members became more time constrained as the program helped their businesses become more successful. *Calaveras Grown* also spoke of the culture that takes time to develop when a group is starting from scratch. Patience is required to establish the feel of a group and to define a clear focus, unlike the situation when volunteers join an established organization and know what to expect from the beginning.

Money

It was not surprising to hear that funding is a challenge to many marketing groups, even those with larger budgets. A few groups spoke of the difficulty in getting people to pay membership fees. Individuals may express interest in the program, but it is hard to convince them to actually write the check and join the group. There is a level of risk involved with personal investment, and people are often conservative about what they believe is a sufficient contribution. Unfortunately, indicators of financial benefit, which could give people more confidence in a marketing group, are usually expensive to measure.

Politics and Personalities

Some marketing programs have had to work through personality conflicts while trying to be inclusive and build a broad-based collaboration. Group dynamics have the potential to be challenging when diverse people come together around a common goal. This is especially true when members of the group or board of directors are strongly divided in terms of conventional and organic agriculture. In Marin, where *Marin Organic* advocates for an all-organic county, such conflict is avoided through a collaborative effort with the ag commissioner and UCCE offices. The three entities would rather bring people together and foster unity among the diverse producers and ranchers in Marin County. The large and small producers are not looked at differently differently, encouraging both alternative farmers and big ranchers to feel comfortable tapping into the resources, services, and advice that are offered.

Identity

Some related challenges may arise around how a group really wishes to define itself. It is necessary to set boundaries that delimit not only the type(s) of agriculture that may be included, but also the region covered by a marketing program. Even when a label promotes a specific county, boundaries may be blurred if growers right next door would like to participate. It can be more vague if a label pertains to a general geographic region, such as the Sacramento Valley (a *Buy Fresh Buy Local* chapter). Where do the valley end and the foothills begin? Furthermore, a local farmers market offers consumers the opportunity to buy food directly from the farmer, but it may include growers from hundreds of miles away. Similarly, a food or fiber processor in one county may process material produced in another county.

As the symbol of the group's identity, the design of a logo and tag line can also be difficult for a newly formed group. The actual creation of a logo and group name was a long and sometimes difficult process for some groups, lasting over six months in several cases. The cost depends on whether a professional marketing specialist, artist, or graphic designer is hired, but the main challenge seems to lie in reaching a consensus about what should go into the design. It is common for the growers and other group members to want a piece of themselves to be part of the logo. Some contacts recommended that a marketing team should create the design with input from the producers, so that the energy of the group can be better directed to other tasks.

Another concern is to ensure that a campaign's logo is properly utilized by members and retailers and maintaining its integrity. A marketing association has to decide just how much policing and quality control it is willing to do.

Commodity Marketing

Representatives from the *Buy California* Marketing Agreement and four commodity commissions were interviewed for several reasons. The first main objective was to get a perspective of the similarities and differences between commodity marketing groups/programs and regional ag marketing groups/programs. An additional goal was to determine the potential for such groups to work together.

History

Federal marketing orders were allowed by the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 (AMAA), while state orders and agreements were made possible by the California Marketing Act of 1937 (Carman et al, 2004). At that time, the state had many more small farmers. The goal of the state legislation was to strengthen agricultural commodities, and the farmers believed that power was in numbers. There are now a total of 52 marketing programs in the state of California including marketing orders (e.g., California Raisin Marketing Order), councils (e.g., Beef Council), and commissions (more focused on public relations, promotion, research, i.e., Strawberry Commission). The Division of Marketing Services of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) administers the laws and regulations that pertain to the groups as government-mandated entities operating under the California Food and Agriculture Code. The CDFA also administers marketing agreements, such as the *Buy California* Grown campaign.

How They Compare

Interestingly, the commodity groups gave reasons similar to the smaller regional associations for starting their marketing programs. A major difference between them is the promotional focus. Commodity groups wish to increase the consumption of individual products (tomatoes, almonds, olives, etc.), for the benefit of the producers and the industry. California's reputation as a source of high quality agriculture is used to promote the commodities, but the point of origin is not usually specified beyond the state level. In contrast, the goal of regional marketing is to increase consumption of a broad range of local products for the benefit of the local producers and the overall community. The quality of a product is denoted through its origin from a distinct region whose name and characteristics are familiar to the consumer. Furthermore, export promotion is a significant component of commodity programs today, while regional groups focus more on local marketing opportunities.

Another area of contrast is how orders are structured and funded. Marketing orders are government-mandated, meaning that the affected producers and/or handlers are required by law to participate in the program and finance its activities. Each producer pays an assessment levied on each unit (quantity or value) of the commodity marketed to provide funds to operate the program. Each commodity group then pays an additional mandatory assessment to the CDFA's Division of Marketing Services. This system has caused controversy lately, since some large-scale farmers who pay into marketing programs believe they could do a better job of promotion themselves, and are turning to litigation with requests to modify or terminate the arrangement.

Budgets and Strategies

Marketing orders authorize three broad categories of activities: (a) quantity control, (b) quality control, and (c) market support, such as advertising and research (Carman et al, 2004).

Each commodity group operates independently, and depending on the industry, can vary greatly in size and scale. In some cases there is one employee, while other groups have state and regional staff totaling forty people. The CDFA reports that budgets range from \$100,000 to \$38 million. The way groups allocate their funds and the marketing strategies they use also vary.

These choices are sometimes influenced by the circumstance of industry consolidation. The numbers of canneries, meat packers, shippers, and retailers have decreased significantly in California. In the case of table olives, for example, only two major canneries now process the olives of 850 growers, and control marketing. Since each olive processor markets its own brand, the California olive marketing program focuses more generally on nutrition and education.

A few challenges mentioned were general funding, increased competition generated by imports from North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) members, and, in the case of smaller groups, a lack of staff to do the work. Web sites, television and radio ads, billboards, published materials, and booths at fairs are some of the marketing strategies used by the commodity groups that were interviewed.

Buy California Marketing Agreement

In 2001 the statewide *Buy California* marketing campaign was started in collaboration with the CDFA and Governor Gray Davis' administration. Major funding was first obtained through federal sources. The CDFA received \$19 million from a block grant that was awarded to the state California to support specialty crops. An additional \$6 million was later received from the state. Currently, 29 of the 56 commodity groups under CDFA's administration are participating in the *Buy California* campaign, and pay into the program through assessments and an annual licensing fee for logo privileges.

The campaign started when a number of industries recognized that state agriculture would fare better if Californians bought California products. Their objective is simple: to build demand and increase sales of ag products produced in the state. They are stressing that origin matters- that where the products that consumers buy are produced is important. The compelling point is the economic benefit to the state, and that California agriculture is part of the California lifestyle. The *Buy California* logo and advertisements are on television, billboards, radio, and signage in retail stores. Funding continues to be a major challenge, as the campaign's initial grants are running out, leaving the future of *Buy California* in question.

Monitoring/Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is a major area of emphasis for the *Buy California* program. The CDFA is required by the government to carry out effectiveness studies, especially since producers have begun to question whether they are benefiting from the mandatory program. Monitoring may range from surveys that measure consumer impressions, to econometric studies that calculate the returns for every dollar put into a marketing program. The CDFA works closely with agricultural economists at UC Davis and other groups. The individual commodity groups interviewed are also trying to track the progress of their efforts, but similar to regional marketing groups, they tend to rely more on anecdotal evidence and descriptive information of activities carried out.

The *Buy California* Marketing Agreement started with some benchmark surveys and has continued to monitor the program since then. Through interviews with retailers and paired store testing, researchers compare the sales between stores that are using the campaign to those that aren't. In addition, a more detailed study of program impacts was carried out in 2004. The *Buy*

California Grown campaign worked with economist Dennis Tootelian from Sacramento State University to measure the effectiveness of its marketing strategies. His 2005 report suggests that the campaign had a positive impact on California's economy. It estimates a seven percent increase in sales of California agriculture since the program's start, equal to approximately \$900 million. According to Horsfall, the success of the unified marketing efforts of all segments of California agriculture shows how useful it is to promote products under an umbrella theme like "California Grown." Other conclusions from the study include (Tootelian, 2005):

- When given the choice, 75 per cent of consumers say that they prefer to buy California grown products over those grown and/or produced elsewhere.
- One-third of Californians surveyed say they are now buying agricultural products from California more often than they were six months ago.

Opportunity for Collaboration

Interview participants had only positive things to say about regional ag marketing groups. Regional groups are essentially doing what *Buy California* is doing, stressing that origin matters, down to the county and sub-county level. It was pointed out that there are several regional commodity groups participating in the statewide program, such as the wine commissions working in Lake County and the Lodi-Woodbridge districts. Still, while commodity and regional marketing programs seem to be connected by some common themes, their priorities and politics are significantly different. Currently the emphasis on export is much greater within *Buy California*. The individual commodity groups made it clear that they don't see much opportunity to collaborate; their efforts are shaped by the interests of stakeholders who wouldn't benefit from regional marketing, such as major producers, processors, and shippers. The goals of regional and commodity marketing programs need to be more similar in order for collaboration to be possible,

Discussion

Several interesting themes can be extracted from the interviews. In addition to the fact that many of the regional marketing groups share similar goals and use similar strategies to meet their objectives, some other commonalities emerged.

Best Strategies

Broad representation, collaboration

Many groups emphasized the importance of having representatives from a broad spectrum of the community involved with the marketing group. It is especially helpful to draw people from each sector of local agriculture, such as crop, livestock, orchard, and vineyard production, and to include both organic and conventional farmers. A broad representation will contribute different perspectives and needs, providing a bigger picture with more potential for success. A possible weakness of *Humboldt Harvest* was that it was made up of only value-added producers and included few farmers or farm advisors. Members of several programs say that broad representation on boards of directors or advisory committees has proven very effective. For example, the boards of *PlacerGROWN* and *Calaveras Grown* are composed of representatives from the beef, wine, small farm, retail, and tourism sectors. This ensures there is wide investment from many interests, and allows greater opportunity for collaboration.

A diverse group may also be better able to handle the political aspects of regional marketing. Groups must include broad constituencies willing to do political work over a sustained period of time. This process can be thought of as a strategic network of partners that is able to maintain a continuous dialogue with stakeholders. In Marin County emphasis is placed on the whole community, not individual units. *Marin Organic*, the Ag Commissioner, and UCCE form a strong core, but there are nearly 30 additional organizations working with them to strengthen the local agriculture, environment, and economy.

Let people taste the food!

Several contacts said that regional ag marketing is about taste. It is necessary to demonstrate that locally grown is better, and a campaign should focus on taste and quality before it can move on to other distinguishing qualities. Samples, dinners, tasting events/fundraisers, and meals prepared for meetings of county officials are some ways for the taste and quality of local produce to become known. *Apple Hill* was founded during several events based on tasting local products. More recently, other groups used dinners made from member produce to launch their marketing programs or as fundraising events to promote the quality of locally grown food.

Art and agriculture

Although it wasn't a predominant theme, the connection between art and agriculture came up several times in the course of the interviews. In Placer County the AGRO-Art festival is an annual event that highlights both entities; the Arts Council is a major collaborator with *PlacerGROWN* and the Ag Marketing Group, especially in sponsoring the annual Farm and Barn festival. *Mendocino Bounty* also sees an opportunity to take advantage of connections between art and agritourism. A more obvious example of how art and agriculture can work together is provided by the logos that the regional marketing programs are using. Several were designed with the creative input of local artists, and many are beautiful representations of the region they are promoting.

Emerging Benefits

Networking

While not always an explicit goal, networking is often perceived as a benefit of programs. Collective marketing efforts facilitate both formal and informal networking opportunities through which members can connect with each other, provide opportunities to talk about challenges and strategies, and form a broader community of growers. Farmers in the Central Coast chapter of CAFF's *Buy Fresh Buy Local* specifically said they would like to see more networking opportunities.

Sustainability of Program

Time and energy

There is usually not much time or resources in the farming community, both of which are required to sustain a marketing program. It may be unrealistic to ask farmers to do so much volunteer work when the point of the marketing group is to help them with activities they normally don't have time for. Establishing a marketing agreement and recruiting new partners take time and staffing. It is common to find one person or a small core group of people doing a large part of the work. Burnout can be a problem. Therefore it is recommended by many groups that at least one half-time person be hired to take care of communication and organizational responsibilities. It is helpful to have a "champion" to move things forward.

Money

Marketing budgets run the whole spectrum from "on a shoestring" to "high end." It may be advantageous for a group to pursue initial funding from sources as close to home as possible, so that local stakeholders are personally invested from the start. If continued funding is a concern, a significant portion of this initial money can be put toward finding more, including hiring a grant writer. Some groups said it would be ideal to have funding for at least a half-time executive director to get things "up and running." Most importantly, growers must buy into the program, seeing it not as a membership, but as an investment. One way to put it is that "they must own it enough to feel pain" if the program falls apart.

What to Promote?

Local vs. Organic

It is interesting to compare the views people have regarding the pros and cons of a "local" versus a "local organic" label. One view is that "point of origin" and "certified sustainability," (organic, if possible), are two of the best ways to distinguish a product in the mass marketplace. Right now, just place is not enough; it will be sufficient only when everyone is farming in a sustainable manner. Given current trends, the majority of farmers will move toward these practices eventually, at which point certified sustainability won't matter as much any more. What might remain are distinctions based on species, varieties, and place. In other words, sustainable farming practices are important characteristics for marketing right now, but point of origin will ultimately be more valuable. This concept can be seen with wine appellations and cheese.

A contrasting view is that focusing on "local" is insufficient as a marketing strategy or a social movement, and that some aspect of sustainability is necessary as well. The concepts of "local" and "sustainable" are not equivalent, nor is one more important than the other. Instead they are and must be intimately and ultimately connected, as one cannot sustain itself without the

other. A local label might work for a few years, but that the growing movement of sustainability will overrun it, and that sustainability will be more important as a distinguishing feature over time.

Recent food system research raises similar questions about what an “alternative” or “local food system” really means. Many people are challenging existing (or non-existent) definitions of “local,” and warn against the development of “defensive localism.” While the consumption of fresh, local produce can undoubtedly support good nutrition and reduce the use of fossil fuels, there is also a common association between local purchasing and best practices. A consumer is likely to connect “local” with “sustainable” or even “socially just,” even though this is not always the case. It may be incorrect to assume that a transaction is more honest, fair, or environmentally friendly because it is more proximate. Issues of labor, race, gender, and environment are not always illuminated by the “local” quality of a farm.

The regional context that a marketing group is working within will most likely inform the decision of what product qualities, place characteristics, or production practices to promote. For example, “local” is considered easier to sell than “organic” in San Diego County, in spite of the fact that there are approximately 400 registered organic growers there, about 20 percent of the state’s total. On the other hand, Mendocino County has a history and local culture that is intricately tied to the sustainability movement. *Pure Mendocino* therefore intends to promote organic agriculture, sustainable energy, and the fact that Mendocino was the first California county to ban the agricultural production of genetically modified organisms (GMO’s).

Most of the regional marketing groups stress unity and are trying to get people to be more collaborative. Because the breadth of “local” as a concept is generally wider than organic, it is more popular as a marketing tool. Several people even said that their consumer preference is for organic products, but when it comes to the label, local is the priority. *Calaveras Grown* developed an organic focus briefly during its first years, which was a discouragement to some of the members in the wine and beef sectors. The group’s present goal is to represent every local entity. Marin County, home to the only regional organic label, seems to benefit from a weaker divide between organic and conventional than other regions. *Marin Organic* would like the county to achieve 100 percent organic status, but local agriculture is already considered to be “clean and balanced.” There is a very fine line between conventional and organic practices, especially in livestock, a dominant sector of the local agricultural economy.

The Culture in Agriculture

Another view expressed during the interviews is that the next wave in raising awareness of regional agriculture will focus on the culture of farming. If the goal is to change consumers’ purchasing and eating habits, it will be ineffective to accuse them of harming the environment, or to explain how organically managed soil is better. Instead of segregating organic from conventional in the promotion of agriculture, the culture within agriculture should be examined more deeply. It is possible to draw the urban world into the ag community with greater emphasis on an emotional feeling. For example, family history is important to people, and by going back a few generations many individuals can connect their grandparents or great-grandparents to the farm. The concept of family can be powerful in both a community and political context. If the farm is really emphasized as a beneficial unit and incorporated into the dialogue, the, it will be possible to generate more interest in local agriculture.

These complex benefits are echoed in the saying that “farming is not simply a business, it’s a way of life.” Farms used to provide an example of how the American family can be

productive and self-determined, creating a livelihood rather than holding a job. Farming communities were characterized by self-reliance and a “can-do” spirit that allowed rural people to tackle practical challenges with great resourcefulness. With the transformation to a commodity food system, farming became more of a reflection of the needs of agribusiness, and less a "way of life." Without trying to resurrect an idealized agrarian society, local agriculture that still exists at the family level may benefit from reminding consumers of the positive qualities that the lifestyle entails.

Considerations for Yolo County

Yolo County's agriculture commissioner intends to offer organic certification through the county office. He applied for USDA accreditation in 2005. The county program cannot include funds for the marketing of organic (or local) agricultural products, as the USDA prohibits an official certifier of the National Organic Program standards from providing marketing assistance to its clients. Still the county recognizes that regional marketing could be important for the success of his certification efforts. UCSAREP proposed that a feasibility study be conducted, including this background report on past and current ag marketing programs in California. The interviews and information summarized in this report should be useful to a broad audience, but they were initiated to assist the decision-making process in Yolo County. The purpose of this section is to make more specific connections between those findings and Yolo County's agriculture setting.

Meaning of 'Yolo'

More people are realizing the importance of supporting local agriculture and connecting the consumer to the producer. The branding and marketing of regional agriculture is one strategy to accomplish this, but a brand must have meaning behind it. A strong sense of place and local pride are what make the marketing programs such as *PlacerGROWN*, *Calaveras Grown*, *Lake County Farmers' Finest*, *Capay Valley Grown*, and *Marin Organic* stand out. Residents of those areas know the quality of local products, which contributes the brand's effectiveness. An important consideration for the success of a Yolo County branding initiative is whether the same value would come from a Yolo County label. In an article written for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Georgeanne Brennan and Ann Evans make the case that Yolo's reputation as a gastronomic and cultural center is indeed growing (Brennan and Evans, 2003).

Existing Labels

Another critical issue is how a Yolo Organic or Yolo Grown label would fit into the marketing environment currently in place. First, some materials such as packing boxes are already available to local growers that have "Organically Grown in Yolo County" printed on them. Second, two of the organizations interviewed for this report are situated in Yolo County, and are carrying out their own labeling and marketing initiatives. CAFF's *Buy Fresh Buy Local* covers a wider area including the Sacramento Valley, while *Capay Valley Grown* pertains to a sub-region of the county.

CAFF and *Capay Valley Grown* members continue to discuss the best way possible for both labels to work together. The *Buy Fresh Buy Local* campaign serves as an effective umbrella-labeling tool, using the Sacramento Valley as a geographical designation to promote produce to Bay Area consumers. The *Capay Valley Grown* label is effective within Yolo County, reaching people familiar with the valley. A Yolo specific label may be helpful in targeting consumers that identify more closely with the county, while providing interested producers that reside outside the Capay Valley with marketing opportunities.

Market Saturation

While the *Capay Valley Grown* and *Buy Fresh Buy Local* programs indicate support for a Yolo County-wide marketing effort, the task of fitting multiple labels together is a challenge. Autonomy is important, but market saturation and the duplication of marketing strategies with

are real concern. The addition of a Yolo County brand would indeed require a further nesting of labels. Whether an organic focus is maintained or not will also affect how labeling schemes relate to each other. It is unclear how a Yolo County brand fits, especially since the details aren't worked out yet, but the Capay group is open to collaboration. Communication between CAFF, *Capay Valley Grown*, and proponents of a Yolo label will be critical in the decision process.

Organic versus Local

The groups interviewed expressed differing views regarding what regional ag marketing groups should promote, specifically "local" or "local organic." Most support the idea of being as inclusive as possible. The circumstances will be different in Yolo County once organic certification is offered at the county level. *Marin Organic*, which is also operating in conjunction with county certification, is a strong voice in support of the organic label/marketing concept. The organic option for Yolo County will be a question of what leadership is present, and what local producers are interested in. Most importantly, does it make financial sense? Where is the marketing edge? *Marin Organic* is excited that Yolo is discussing the idea of a regional organic program and have offered to provide technical support for the benefit of the overall organic movement. Still another option is to develop both a Yolo Grown and a Yolo Organic label.

Structure and Funding

Yolo County must consider where a marketing program should be housed, and what roles, if any, the ag commissioner's office, UCCE, UC Davis, and the Yolo County Farm Bureau should have. These questions have both political and financial implications. Like most California counties, there are no extra resources to spend on a regional labeling and marketing program in Yolo County. This makes membership investment very important. Processors and retailers in the area could provide additional support to a marketing program, as long as there is an incentive for their participation. With the potential for a greater number of members, it might be possible to hire an executive director, as recommended during many of the interviews.

Regional Agricultural Marketing Case Studies

The marketing groups *PlacerGROWN*, *Marin Organic*, and *Capay Valley Grown* are presented here in greater depth to illustrate a variety of origins, organizational goals, structures, funding, and histories. In addition, *Marin Organic* and *Capay Valley Grown* are especially pertinent to Yolo County and the interest in a local organic label. More specific financial background and strategies are covered, as well as the details that characterize the workings of the groups. Because these programs continue to evolve, current information may differ from what is written here.



PlacerGROWN

The Place

Placer County is located in northern California and home to approximately 260,000 residents. It shares boundaries with El Dorado, Nevada, Sacramento, Sutter, and Yuba counties as well as the state of Nevada. Agriculture is still an important component of the county's culture and economy, but has faced difficulties for several decades. The ag commissioner's report from 2003 estimated the total gross value to be \$66 million (not including timber), with rice and nursery products ranked highest, and pasture lands occupying the most acreage.

Urbanization pressures are extreme in the region; in 1997 Placer was ranked the fifth fastest growing county in California (Campbell and Feenstra, 2001), and Western Placer is still undergoing rapid changes. Between 1990 and 2000 the population increased by 43.8 percent. Agricultural land that lies near existing cities is being converted to nonagricultural use as more people are drawn to the quality of life beyond city boundaries. Ironically, the increase in population in these areas and subsequent development reduces the quality of life characteristics that attract people there to begin with. Overall, the county has seen a decrease in the proportion of its land devoted to agriculture from 50 to 15 percent since 1950.

History and Context

Placer County was the second California county to create a local ag marketing organization. Land use issues and development pressures were major motivations for the creation of the program. In 1994 several community discussions and ultimately an Ag Forum were held to discuss ways to strengthen the county's agricultural economy, make the county more food self reliant, and to protect open space. A marketing work group saw an opportunity to address these issues by connecting local agriculture to local residents through an ag marketing program. With guidance from the Cooperative Extension office of Placer County and the energy of community leaders, the group gathered the information and support necessary to solicit start-up funds from local government. The Placer County Board of Supervisors allocated \$97,458 from the general fund, specifying that the funds be considered seed money only (Campbell and Feenstra, 2001). The money allowed the group to realize many accomplishments during the first year, including the "branding" of Placer agriculture.

The Program

The public began to recognize the *PlacerGROWN* label and name, but a significant problem arose once the process of "branding" was complete. There was no money remaining for staffing, marketing, or other activities. The organization was supposed to be able to sustain itself with fees after initial funds ran out, but this did not occur. The group has had to seek grant

funding. Fortunately for *PlacerGROWN*, marketing and promotion of local agriculture are now largely overseen by a separate, county-funded position. This arrangement arose from a decision by the Board of Supervisors in 2000 to act more formally to preserve county open space, farmland, and habitat. A citizen’s advisory committee started the Placer Legacy Project to accomplish these goals. One of the project’s main activities is the purchase of farmland conservation easements, but the committee also urged the county to provide local farmers with marketing assistance. The Placer County Agriculture Marketing Program and a corresponding director’s position was created, separate from *PlacerGROWN*.

This county funded position is unique in California. The director of the Placer County Agricultural Marketing Program receives \$84 thousand a year, half of which goes towards salary, and the other half to outreach. The *PlacerGROWN* label is used in this

marketing work, but the position is completely separate from the *PlacerGROWN* group. The marketing director focuses on advertising, billboards, distribution of items with the *PlacerGROWN* label on it including bags, postcards, and bumper stickers, providing produce for welcome center displays, gifts, and for chefs who are making group dinners at meetings for the rotary club, slow food convivium, etc. The program publishes 100,000 copies of the Placer Ag Guide every Mother’s Day, putting 70,000 of them into the local newspaper. It has also been critical to the success of the *Placer Mandarin* and the *Farm and Barn* festivals. In 2004, 25,000 mandarins were individually handed out to recruit people to the Mandarin Festival. 30,000 people ended up coming, many of whom had received one of the fruits.

The marketing director’s work allows the *PlacerGROWN* organization to focus on educational programs for its members. A three-year USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education marketing grant is covering the salary of a project director to provide educational resources to members to increase both farm and market sales. This includes workshops for farmers at the annual farm conference. *PlacerGrown* is also facilitating farmer-to-farmer networking meetings where farmers can share ideas with each other, and field trips out of the county to observe various agricultural operations, including “U-Pick” farms. A steering committee made up of *PlacerGROWN* members was formed to determine the topics of meetings and trips.

Some other components of the group’s outreach include a quarterly newsletter and a Web site. Members are encouraged to make use of the Internet, and to list their operation on the *PlacerGROWN* site. They also collaborate with the Farmers Market Association and the Visitors

***PlacerGROWN* At A Glance**

<i>Where:</i>	Placer County
<i>Founded:</i>	1994
<i>Start Up Funds:</i>	\$97,458
<i>Current Funding:</i>	\$93,000 USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) grant over three years
<i>Membership Fees:</i>	\$40-\$200
<i>Staff:</i>	Project Director, funded by the USDA SARE grant
<i>Main Activities:</i>	Web site, member workshops, field trips, farmer-to-farmer meetings, quarterly newsletter
<i>Collaborations:</i>	Placer Ag Marketing Group, Visitor’s Bureau, Farmers’ Market Association

Bureau. Members receive exposure as “farmer of the week” and are featured at the Placer County Visitors Center with samples of produce.

Even though *PlacerGROWN* and the county marketing director’s activities are technically independent, it is impossible to break apart their effects. Label recognition appears to be high, and farmers are reporting a marked increase in interest for their products after being listed in the ag guide and on the group’s Web site. Members say the opening of markets and the staging of marketing events every year are also beneficial.

Funding continues to be the principal challenge for *PlacerGROWN*. The group struggles with the fact that it is a membership organization, generating approximately \$5,000 a year through fees, which is not enough to support everything they wish to accomplish. The program is trying to figure out how to generate money that can be put back into educational efforts, and would like to see the group become self-sustaining. This goal seems particularly important because the county marketing director contract ends in 2006. One idea being investigated is a structure similar to the Gold Coast Growers Collaborative’s cooperative approach.

Some lessons learned and recommendations by *PlacerGROWN* and Placer County Agricultural Marketing program include:

- A marketing group needs a clear mission statement about its goals, and who it benefits.
- Funding for a half-time position (at least) executive director from the beginning is ideal.
- *PlacerGROWN* represents the full scope of the county’s agriculture, with a representative from each of the major grower groups on the board.
- Coordinating with the farmers market and marketing is very beneficial. Fundraisers and other events that highlight local agriculture put growers in touch with a wide range of people.
- Encourage member participation by advertising successes in outreach tools like newsletters. The “Farmer of the Week” program at the county Visitors Center provides exposure for individual members.
- Anticipate that it will take five years to cultivate a successful program. Most don’t show success until the third year.
- A realistic funding base to start a regional ag marketing program is \$400,000. Use at least a third of the money to hire a grant writer, to generate more funding and develop relationships.
- A marketing program should be housed within the ag commissioner’s office.



Marin Organic

The Place

Marin County is located on the coast of California, north of San Francisco and South of Sonoma. The gross value of agricultural production there has fluctuated between \$45 - \$55 million dollar over the last ten years (2003 Marin County Agriculture Commissioner's crop report). Major contributors include livestock products (mainly dairy), and livestock and poultry. In 2003 these two categories comprised more than 75 percent of the total value. Pasture makes up most of the acreage devoted to agriculture. Milk and milk products have dominated agricultural sales for over 125 years. The number of operations has decreased significantly during the past 50 years, however. In 1950 there were approximately 200 dairy ranches in Marin, but by 1960 that number had fallen to 150, and in 1972 there were fewer than 100 dairies left. Today, there are only 34 working operations. All told, tens of thousands of acres and almost 90 percent of Marin's dairies have been lost in only a few decades to competition from larger operations. (*Marin Organic* History of Agriculture, *Marin Organic* Web page).

At the time of the interviews for this report, Marin was one of only two counties in California to offer organic certification through the ag commissioner's offices (Monterey is the other). Because of Yolo county's interest to develop a similar program, *Marin Organic* is being used as a case study example.

History and Context

Marin Organic had its origins in a small group of organic farmers that were concerned about the long-term health of local agriculture. They formed the West Marin Growers in the mid 1990's to develop a mutually supportive group of ranchers and farmers, and discussed how they could create an identity and increase the consumption of local foods. Initial members included some of the better-known organic producers in California, including Albert Strauss, Straus Family Creamery; Sue Conley, Cowgirl Creamery; Warren Weber, Star Route Farms; and Peter Martinelli, Fresh Run Farm. UC Cooperative Extension helped to organize the group, and together with the help of a marketing consultant, the group created an organizational and business development plan. In 1999 the farmers officially evolved into *Marin Organic*. Initial funding came from a Marin Community Foundation grant of \$20,000, which was later supplemented by small annual grants until. Start-up funds totaled approximately \$100,000 over several years. A board of directors and a four-person staff, including an executive director, now run the organization.

At the same time the West Marin Growers started, the county ag commissioner began discussion about offering organic certification through his office. Initially, Doubts were

expressed about the efficiency that a local certification model would provide, and California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) voiced concern that the commissioner's office was intruding on CCOF's certifications. With subsequent discussion, however, the idea began to receive more support from farmers and CCOF. By 2000 the ag commissioner's office was preparing the Marin program for USDA accreditation. The office was approved in its first review in April 2001, and began *Marin Organic Certified Agriculture* (MOCA).

As *Marin Organic* and MOCA began, UCSAREP received funding for the program's organic initiative from the Clarence E. Heller Charitable Foundation, the True North Foundation, and a California Department of Food and Agriculture *Buy California* Initiative/USDA grant. The monies were designated for county-based organic research and extension activities. In early 2002 Marin County received funding for an UCCE organic and sustainable ag coordinator position. This led to the "Grown in Marin" program to assist farmers and ranchers with diversification, to strengthen the viability and long-term success of agriculture in the county. The program provides information about new and profitable marketing opportunities, individual field trials assistance, a Web-based directory that connects farmers and consumers, and a bi-monthly newsletter.

Box 2: Goals of *Marin Organic*, MOCA, and UCCE Organic and Sustainable Ag (From their respective Web sites)

Marin Organic

- Create a sustainable local food system that ensures a wholesome, diverse, and nourishing food supply for all residents.
- Practice responsible stewardship of natural resources and wildlife.
- Practice organic farming in a way that strengthens the local economy and supports the broader community.
- Preserve the beauty and landscape of Marin County for future generations.

Marin Organic Certified Organic (MOCA)

- Provide a service that verifies through certification the authenticity of agricultural products marketed as organically grown.
- Enhance the credibility of organic agriculture as a sustainable system.
- Enhance the preservation of our environment to optimize the health of microorganisms, plants, animals, and people.
- Assure consumers that organically produced products adhere to the National Organic Program laws and standards.
- Facilitate commerce in fresh and processed food that is organically produced.
- Encourage and promote organic agriculture in the local community.

Grown in Marin, UCCE Organic and Sustainable Ag Publication

"We support the growing agricultural diversity in Marin through research and education and promotion that creates public awareness, especially your awareness as an educated consumer, to find and purchase local and regional agricultural products. Doing this simple act will ensure the preservation of Marin's agricultural heritage for generations."

Marin Organic, MOCA, and UCCE continue to work together. Just as it is hard to distinguish between the impacts of *PlacerGROWN* from those of the Placer Ag Marketing Group, it is hard to separate the elements of the Marin County collaboration. The stated goals of each group reinforce each other (see Box 2). The ag commissioner works to share the stories of programs that are working well elsewhere with local producers. *Marin Organic* offers resources and assistance for marketing, but also provides education and outreach with social programs such as an organic school lunch program. UCCE provides additional education and technical knowledge. There also are many other organizations working in support of local agriculture, including the Marin Ag Land Trust, Marin Ag and Education Alliance, Marin County Farmers Market Association, and the Marin Food Systems Project.

The Program

Marin Organic now has a budget of approximately \$300,000 per year, half of which comes from foundation support. Producers pay membership fees in the range of \$75-\$150 per year, after which they receive about \$300-\$400 dollars back in services and materials (signage,

<i>Marin Organic At A Glance</i>	
<i>Where:</i>	Marin County
<i>Founded:</i>	1999
<i>Start Up Funds:</i>	\$100,000 over several years
<i>Current Funding:</i>	\$300,000 a year, foundation and private support
<i>Membership Fees:</i>	\$75-\$150
<i>Staff:</i>	4 person staff including an Executive Director
<i>Main Activities:</i>	Web site, farm tours, farm stand, school lunch program, sponsorship of farmers market, newsletter, membership brochure, Taste of Marin annual fundraiser, collateral materials for members
<i>Collaborations:</i>	Nearly 30 organizations including Marin County Ag Commissioner, UCCE, Marin Ag Land Trust, Marin Ag and Education Alliance, Farmers Market Association, Marin Food Systems Project

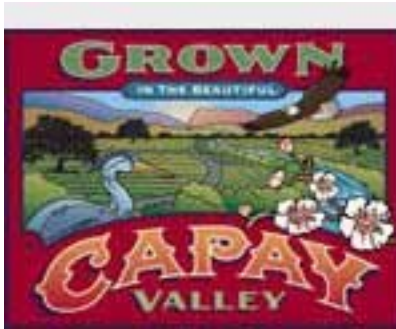
bumper stickers, twist ties, workshops, etc.). Fees are not considered a significant resource however. The organization aims to make organic agriculture more viable, a goal that would be compromised by relying only on member contributions.

The bold vision of an all-organic Marin County drives the program, and they are working to integrate organic food into all aspects of the community. Education and outreach efforts concentrate on three main target groups: producers, the public, and retailers. In 2001 the organization expanded to include more farm-to-farm support, public education, and media relations/publications. The group makes a particularly strong effort to reach children and lower income populations of the county.

The group is trying to figure out a way to fund the organic certification inspections for the producers; they already raised the money to fund the MOCA inspector’s salary. Some of the outstanding qualities of Marin County agriculture and community have also assisted the collaboration’s efforts. Community donations provided *Marin Organic* with a truck for their organic

school lunch program, and the resources to hire an entry-level biologist for the county certification program. Both of these instances reflect the high level of confidence and support that *Marin Organic*, MOCA, and UCCE receive from the community. They also reflect economic circumstances unique to their county that don't exist elsewhere.. They also reflect economic circumstances unique to their county that don't exist elsewhere.

Marin County has seen many conversions from conventional to organic agriculture in recent years. There were 80 organically certified acres when *Marin Organic* began in 1999, and more than 5,000 certified by 2005. These changes are partially attributed to the growing awareness of the support and resources *Marin Organic* offers to local farmers, demonstrated by the testimonials of a farmer that said the presence of *Marin Organic* was enough to give him the confidence to make the transition to organic. Still, it is the collaboration with so many other organizations that allows *Marin Organic* to exist. Local producers and community members know they can rely on the solid network of collective resources and infrastructure that now exists.



Capay Valley Grown

The Place

The Capay Valley is located in western Yolo County. It is bisected by Highway 16, which follows the line of Cache Creek from the unincorporated town of Esparto at the southern end to the northern end of the valley, passing through the smaller towns of Brooks, Guinda, and Rumsey. Esparto is the largest community with approximately 2,000 residents. Many visitors come to the valley to enjoy the natural beauty of surrounding ridges, foothills, riparian habitats, and wildlife.

Irrigation from Cache Creek, together with the large variety of soils and landscapes that are found in the region, support an agriculture that is quite diverse within a relatively compact area. Farming operations tend to be on a relatively small scale, though some valley land is leased out to conventional growers from other parts of Yolo County. Based on acreage, valley production is most focused on walnuts, almonds, wheat, oats/hay, tomatoes, alfalfa, and organic production. Livestock and vineyard crops also make up a significant part of the landscape, though wine grapes are a more recent development. Organic agricultural production in and around the Capay Valley is on an upward trend, and in 2005 included 25 registered organic growers on over 700 acres.

History and Context

Capay Valley Vision (CVV) was founded by a diverse group of residents in 2000 and was incorporated as a non-profit in 2001. The timing coincided with the growing popularity of the Cache Creek Casino in the town of Brooks, and the opening of the selling and tasting room of the RH Phillips Winery north of Esparto (since 2001, the Casino has undergone a \$200 million expansion to become the largest casino resort in the northern California). The organization wanted to generate communication about the future of the valley and facilitate a more collaborative planning process. Five task forces were created, including Agriculture and the Environment, Economic Development, Housing, Recreation, and Transportation. They then formed a working group to develop strategies to help preserve the rural character and “sense of place” of the Capay Valley-Esparto region. One method was to create a label and brand to tie the unincorporated towns in the area together as a micro-region of the county and of the state.

Box 3: Capay Valley Grown Goals

- Increasing consumer awareness and access to superior and consistent freshness, flavor, quality and diversity of the region's seasonal and year-round agricultural products.
- Increasing profitability of farming and ranching in the Capay Valley to preserve and enhance the region's resources, rural character, and way of life.

The brand concept resonated with people in the area. After research into ag marketing programs, the Economic Development and Agriculture groups created the *Grown in the Capay Valley* label. It is one in a series of labels with the same artwork but different captions. *Hand Made*, *Crafted*, and *Inspired in the Capay Valley* were also developed. While *Capay Valley Grown* is the most active of the four labels, it is one piece of a broader co-branding tool that helps to embody and share a story about the entire region.

The Program

Capay Valley Grown was launched in 2003 as a partnership among 23 farm and ranch charter partners who wanted to increase the marketability of their high quality products, while preserving the way of life of the valley (see Box 3). They started with \$2,500 from founding members to develop a logo with a graphic designer. The design itself was done as an in-kind contribution from an artist who sketched a beautiful rendition of the valley. The graphic designer transformed the sketch into digital format. A marketing person was then hired to help develop a brochure and the Web site, and a \$15,000 grant from the Community Alliance for Family Farmers (CAFF) helped the group become established. The *Capay Valley Grown* label was launched with a dinner that was held in conjunction with the Hoes Down Festival on Full Belly Farm. Chefs were invited from Sacramento restaurants to prepare locally produced food, which helped create a deeper connection between the

Capay Valley Grown At A Glance

Where:	Yolo County
Founded:	2003
Start Up Funds:	Approximately \$20,000
Current Funding:	Membership fees and donations
Membership Fees:	\$100
Staff:	Full-time Exec. Director of Capay Valley Vision (CVV) dedicates 15% time to <i>Capay Valley Grown</i> ; AmeriCorps position with CVV dedicates 20% time
Main Activities:	Web site, label distribution, collateral items, promotional events, collaboration building with local retailers
Collaborations:	CAFF and Buy Fresh Buy Local campaign

urban visitors and the area farms.

Capay growers made a significant investment in *Capay Valley Grown*, and in-kind contributions have also played a major role in its development. The organization's outreach is focused on four areas. The first area is the use of the brand as a tool for growers. They use a partnership agreement patterned after those used by *PlacerGROWN* and *Buy Fresh Buy Local*. Farmers join by agreeing to membership parameters and pay a \$100 annual fee. They receive a CD of all labels in electronic format to incorporate into their own marketing programs. A second form of outreach is the development of collateral items, like t-shirts, caps, magnets, and buttons. A third outreach focus is promotional events, such as a booth at the Yolo County fair. Members staff the booth and sell products grown and made by people in the organization. They also have a presence at the local Almond Festival and Hoes Down celebration. The fourth area of outreach is the establishment of collaborative marketing strategies. This requires more time and effort, but members understand the development process. Currently they are working on having area stores feature local, branded products, and are coordinating the use of labels. They also have developed a "point of purchase" brochure and a simplified version of the logo for multiple uses.

As of the fall of 2005, the *Capay Valley Grown* Web site was reaching completion. The sense of pride in the area and its agriculture is strongly conveyed through words and pictures on the site. The *Capay Valley Harvest Newsletter* is available there, and farmer profiles are being featured with a list of members. Up until now, promotional work has been done with little funding, and the group has benefited greatly from farmer support. *Capay Valley Grown* hopes to start a partnership program with businesses in order to increase support and financial resources. An individual supporter option will also be available.

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Appendix A. Resource List: Programs and Contacts

Active Regional Ag Marketing Associations

Apple Hill

<http://www.applehill.com/>
(530) 644-3862

CAFF: Buy Fresh Buy Local, Central Coast

<http://www.caff.org/programs/bfblRC.shtml>
(831) 761-8507

CAFF: Buy Fresh Buy Local, Sacramento Valley

<http://www.caff.org/regions/yolano.shtml>
(530) 756-8518

Calaveras Grown

<http://www.calaverasgrown.org/>
(209) 754-6477

Capay Valley Grown

http://www.capayvalleyvision.org/capay_valley_grown.html
(530) 796-4160

Farms of Tuolumne County

<http://cetuumlumne.ucdavis.edu/Custom%5FProgram/>
(209) 533-5686

Lake County Farmers' Finest

<http://www.lakecountyfarmersfinest.org/direct.htm>
(707) 279-0950

Marin Organic

<http://www.marinorganic.org/>
(415) 663-9667

Mendocino Bounty

<http://www.gomendo.com/food/index.html>
(707) 462-9720

Mendocino County Alliance- Pure Mendocino

<http://www.gomendo.com/calendar/events/331.html>
(707) 462-9720

PlacerGROWN

<http://www.placergrown.org/pg1/index.jsp>

(530) 745-0238

Placer County Agriculture Marketing Program

(916) 663-9126

San Diego Grown

<http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/research/lobo.html>

(858) 694-3666

Active Regional Ag Marketing Associations Not Interviewed

Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust

<http://www.brentwoodaglandtrust.org/index.cfm>

(925) 634-6738

Central Coast Ag Network- Central Coast Grown

<http://slobuyfreshbuylocal.org/contact.html>

(805) 595-9653

Ojai Pixie Tangerine Growers Association

<http://www.pixietangerine.com/>

(805) 646-4212

Dissolved Regional Ag marketing Associations

Humboldt Harvest

Arcata Economic Development Corporation

<http://hafoundation.org>

(707) 442-2993

Sonoma Select

<http://www.aginnovations.net/>

(707) 823-6111

Ag Commissioners and UCCE Extension

UCCE Marin County

<http://cemarin.ucdavis.edu/Custom%5FProgram600/>

(415) 499-4204

Marin Organic Certified Agriculture

Marin County Agriculture Commissioner's Office

<http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/AG/main/index.cfm>

(415) 499-6700

Monterey County Certified Organic
<http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/ag/MCCO.htm>
(831) 758-7325

Marketing Consultant

AG Innovations
<http://www.aginnovations.net/>
(707) 823-6111

Commodity Marketing Associations

California Tomato Commission
<http://www.tomato.org/>
(559) 230-0116

California Olive Industry
<http://www.calolive.org/>
(559) 456-9096

California Sheep Commission
<http://www.californialamb.com/>
(530) 757-5700

California Table Grape Commission
<http://www.freshcaliforniagrapes.com/>
(559) 447-8350

Statewide Ag Marketing Programs

Buy California Marketing Agreement
<http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/mkt/mkt/buycal.html>
(916) 651-7384

**California Department of Food and Agriculture
Division Of Marketing Services**
<http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/mkt/mkt/>
(916) 341-6005

Appendix B. Interview Questions

Yolo County Regional Marketing Feasibility Study: Interview Protocol

How and why was the program started?

What were the initial goals of the program? Mission, purpose?

How is the program organized? Non-profit? President, board of directors, committees?

Who are the participants and partners?

What are the main strategies used to meet your objectives? Outreach, education, marketing etc.

What progress is being made towards your original goals?

How are the members of the program benefiting?

How is progress measured/monitored? Are there any concrete indicators of success?

What is your greatest achievement to date?

What are some challenges that have come up? How have they been met?

Has the group's focus or direction changed at all?

What sort of start-up or seed money was needed, where did it come from?

How is the program currently funded (after initial funds were exhausted)?

How does the program maintain itself? (Financial and organizational structure)

Where do you see the group in five/10/20 years?

Some lessons learned? Advice to groups with similar goals?

Additional Questions for Commodity Groups and State Marketing Programs:

What do you think about marketing programs such as *Buy Fresh Buy Local*, about regional labels such as *PlacerGROWN*?

What type of relationship exists between these groups and *California Grown*? Do you see an opportunity for collaboration?