

Farms to Grow, Inc.

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**FEASIBILITY STUDY
INVESTIGATING NORTHERN
CALIFORNIA FARMERS' INTEREST,
CAPACITY, AND CHALLENGES TO
PARTICIPATING IN THE HOPE
COLLABORATIVE'S LOCAL FOOD
SYSTEM**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The source of the data in this report are primarily from sixty seven (n-67) small farmers responding to a 26 question structured survey about their interest, capacity, and challenges to the proposed HOPE Collaborative fresh food convenience stores. Six interviewers contacted farmers via telephone, postal mail, email, and in person to ask their participation in the short survey. The findings indicate that these farmers are indeed interested, have the capacity to produce food for the stores, however, many of them are up against several challenges which may impede their participation in a local food system. This assessment also resulted in a list of 68 small farmers and potentially marketable products. This list of names include: African American, Latino, Hmong, East Indian, and other small farmers from nearby counties. This feasibility study may be viewed as an initial assessment into the challenges facing small farmers operating in Northern California.

Introduction

Californians enjoy a quality of access to fresh produce unique to many states in the United States. California farmers supply 11% of the nation's food. This food grown locally in the Central Valley and Northern California agricultural areas reaches around the nation, yet, for many residents of Oakland, California, they seldom if ever enjoy the fruits of these farmers' labor. For many families in Oakland, they have no access to fresh locally-grown vegetables, fruits, or meats in their communities. The HOPE Collaboratives Local Sustainable Economic Development (LSED) Team began trying to figure out how to address these gaps in access to fresh food. One concept being considered is that of forming corner convenience stores in the micro-zones. These corner convenience food stores would sell fresh locally grown affordable food sourced from the fields of local small farmers. This research serves to inform and assist HOPE in identifying local small farmers in close proximity who produce vegetables, fruits, and dairy products or raise livestock items on the 20 items food list. Ultimately, this research establishes a database of farmers and producers who would be willing to grow food for the corner convenience stores.

A 20 item food list was developed from previous research by The HOPE Collaborative, and was derived from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA accounted 20 food items that people eat most often throughout the year. These food items were then cross-checked in micro-zone corner stores by HOPE staff to ensure their availability. The 20 Item food list does not exhaust the available products in these stores or local supermarkets, in fact there are some markets, primarily Latino and Asian markets, which stock a larger variety of fresh food. However, these varieties of fresh food are not found in the majority of the corner stores in the micro-zones. In response, the 20 item list is a bench mark or starting point for the fresh food convenience stores to expand upon in order to meet the fresh food needs of its residents. Therefore, this research sets out to identify those who produce one or more items from food list, what their methods of production are, their barriers, and how they may best facilitate a local food system in Oakland.

20 Item Food List

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. White and whole wheat flour | 11. Apples |
| 2. Beef | 12. Strawberries |
| 3. Pork | 13. Broccoli |
| 4. Other meats (veal, lamb) | 14. Fresh potatoes |
| 5. Chicken | 15. Onions |
| 6. Fish | 16. Tomatoes |
| 7. Eggs | 17. Potato chips |
| 8. Fluid milk | 18. Canned vegetables (mixed) |
| 9. American cheese & other cheeses | 19. Frozen vegetables (mixed) |
| 10. Ice Cream | 20. Canned tomatoes |

Farms to Grow, Inc. proposed to the HOPE Collaborative and the Alameda County Community Food Bank to conduct an assessment of small farmers' interest and capacity for participating in a local food approach. The major elements of the study were to:

1. Determine levels of farmer interest in a local food system approach.
2. Determine if they grow the items on the 20 item food list.
3. Identify challenges that may exist which may preclude small farmers from participating.
4. Learn about the sustainable practices used by small farmers in Northern California.

Research Methods

The goals of the current study were to investigate the interest, capacity, and challenges among a small sample of local farmers who may potentially source the proposed HOPE local food system. The feasibility study consisted primarily of conducting a semi structured survey. Initially, the objective was to conduct 100 interviews. However, it became apparent that more time would be needed to achieve the 100 survey count. The 67 surveys (n=67) collected for the data analysis are rich with details and suggestions for next steps. Several surveys were received after the end of data collection and were not included in the data analysis. However, their contact information, if provided on the survey was included in the farmers list of names in the Appendices.

Survey Design

The original survey was developed by Mark Bauermeister, HOPE Graduate Intern from Iowa State University. The original draft survey, an open-ended survey, was comprehensive and covered an array of topics. Changes to the survey structure were made as the study goals and objectives became refined and the survey was modified to a closed-ended survey for ease of data management and data entry. Also, questions were added after meetings with the joint HOPE committees where members expressed an interest in including a scale which could identify the degree of challenges from least to most challenging. The HOPE committees made several recommendations to expand the original survey and those recommendations were included. After including the suggestions from the HOPE committees, the modified survey consisted of 46 questions. Interviewers discovered in the piloting phase that the 46 question survey took between 25 minutes to two hours to conduct. After conducting the pilot interviews, it was decided to reduce the number of questions to an amount that could be completed in a time frame of 10 to 20 minutes, to honor the time of the busy small farmers and increase the odds of finishing the survey. Therefore, the survey was reduced to 26 questions. The majority of the survey questions were closed-ended and respondents chose from an existing list of options or they could answer “other” and space was provided on the survey to record their answers. What is recommended for the questions that were deleted from the original survey, is for the HOPE Collaborative to pursue these questions as it builds relationships with farmers.

Survey Administration

Several strategies were used by six interviewers to collect the survey data. Adjustments were made to the recruitment strategies during the weekly phone meetings when interviewers shared feedback on survey results. Each week the interviewers learned what worked and what did not work well for them in recruiting

farmers for the survey. The postal mail and emailed surveys were self administered by the farmers and returned in the self addressed stamp envelope or via email. Otherwise, the surveys were administered by the six interviewers using four different methods:

- a) Telephone; b) face to face; c) email; or d) postal mail.

The interviewers conducted their surveys in English or Spanish. On average, surveys took between 15 to 35 minutes to complete. The pilot phase began January 3, to January 15, 2009. Surveys were collected from January 15, to March 9, 2009. For the most part, the farmers in the sample were accessed using a convenience sampling methodology. When surveys were mailed, the envelopes included: 1) a letter, in English or Spanish from Farms to Grow explaining the study and thanking them for their time and participation, 2) the survey in Spanish or English, and 3) a self addressed stamped envelope addressed to Farms to Grow.

Names of farmers and producers were accessed through:

- 1) Online web portals
- 2) Farmers' Markets
- 3) Farmers market association mailing lists
- 4) Farmers associations mailing lists

Online Sources

Several farmers were contacted through websites: marinorganic.org, growninmarin.org, and localharvest.org. Phone calls were made to all the farmers with phone numbers on their website. This produced results, but cold calling involved leaving a lot of messages, frequently not reaching farmers and playing phone tag. Most of the phone calls occurred during the day, but a few of the farmers were contacted in the evening. If the answering machine picked up, the interviewers left their name and telephone number, with a little information about the purpose of the call-- an opportunity to expand their market share into Oakland. A few calls were returned, but most of the calls were followed up on again by interviewers. Farmers were called until they were reached. It was clear that most of the meat/dairy/egg venders would not be reached through farmers markets so these meat farmers were contacted mostly from online websites and persistence was the key in getting interviews from them. Dairy farmers also gave referrals of other dairy farmers.

Phone calls were made to Pick Your Own Farms website. When the Pick Your Own farmers were finally reached on the telephone, the farmers were gracious and willing to either answer questions right at that time or to provide their email address to have a survey emailed to them. Also, the Pick Your Own Farms website produced mostly active phone numbers of farmers actively farming. However, some of these farmers because they are so visible were already established and not interested or they had too many acres of land. One farmer was contacted who had

10,000 acres and so he was not eligible for the survey. Interestingly, he wanted to complete the survey anyway. However, he was not interviewed.

Farmers' Markets and Farmers' Market Associations

We gained permission to interview small farmers the Pacific Coast Farmers Market Association farmers' market in Oakland to pilot the survey. Although we began with the farmers market approach to recruiting farmers, the interviewers found it extremely time consuming. Interviewers traveled to the farmers throughout the area, from Oakland to Stockton, locating the market managers first to ask permission, and to recruit farmers. Over 30 surveys were left with the market workers selling for the farmer at the farmers' markets. The worker was asked to give the survey to the farm owners. In only rare cases were those surveys returned to us. In most cases we did not receive the survey we left with the workers at the farmers' market. We contacted the Urban Village Farmers' Market Association to enlist their help in introducing us to the farmers at their farmers' markets. For the most part, farmers market managers and farmers market associations executive directors were eager to help and allowed us to talk to the farmers in their markets. We were most successful in getting the interview when the market manager introduced us to the farmer directly, but many of them were too busy in the market to make introductions in all cases. The general strategy at the farmers market was to meet farmers, explain a little bit about the project if they were the owner in particular, and get a contact number in order to call them back in the following week. This method seemed effective because the farmers after having first met the interviewer when the interviewer called were more likely to complete a survey. Approximately 15 farmers markets were visited in Northern and near Central California. The interviewers went to farmers' markets primarily on the weekends.

Farmers Associations and other mailing lists

ALBA and the African American Farmers Association of California were contacted and batches of surveys were mailed to these associations to distribute to their members through mail or directly handed to the farmer. Self addressed envelopes were included in all envelopes to their members. Several calls and emails were made to the National Hmong Association. We utilized a list of over 400 names of farmers and from this list, 200 surveys were mailed. There was another list of 100 farmers in farmers markets all over the State which included telephone numbers, email addresses, and addresses. From this list 100 surveys were mailed and follow up phone calls made. The list resulted in several phone interviews and a few mail surveys.

Survey participants were found within co-ops, non-profits and other larger associations representing small farmers. Many of these organizations would not divulge any contact information concerning their farmers. In general, most of the farmers markets associations were receptive. One woman we spoke with expressed concern with losing farmers to the proposed HOPE initiative. We assured her that if anything it would mean their farmers would be more economically stable and possibly reduce their prices since the farmers would have more outlets for products.

Altogether over 200 surveys were mailed from two separate lists of: 1) farmers in farmers markets and 2) farmers not involved in farmers markets. The mailing lists seemed to be the least effective method as it had a return rate of less than 3%. Following a lead from a farmer, we contacted the Brentwood Agriculture land trust. In general the survey data were gathered by website resources, visiting farmers markets, cold calling from farmer lists and other information gathered from sources. The two methods that seemed to be the most effective and also most time consuming were visiting farmers markets and calling from online sources. Overall the data collection was a game of numbers and one interviewer suggested you need to contact ten or more farmers before getting one survey due to many factors beyond the interviewers' control.

Overall, there were few rejections when farm owners were finally reached. The challenge was reaching them. In several instances farmers were retired. 10% of the surveys were returned by farmers who wrote on the top of the blank survey, thanks but retired. In one case a farmer said he may be interested in the HOPE project because of the method of approaching him, via phone, versus receiving a written invitation in the mail. He prefers the phone calls instead of mailings. The farmers who were interviewed seemed very interested in giving as much feedback as the interviewer could write.

Data Analysis

The survey data were managed and analyzed in Excel spreadsheet. The survey data was first entered into the Excel spreadsheet by the each interviewer conducting the survey interview. A total of sixty seven (n=67) surveys were collected. Codebook designed to facilitate data entry – (1) yes, (0) no, (999) missing, (666) not applicable, (777) refused, along with the inclusion of a string variable cell to enter the data. For example, Question 2: What types of products do you grow? Interviewers were instructed to enter a yes or no for each of the nine vegetables and fruits listed on the survey. The category other was also coded as yes or no and string variable cell set up to enter text data. After all data was entered and coded, interviewers exchanged surveys with a survey partner and checked for rater accuracy. Survey checks were done by systematic sampling of the 2nd and the 5th surveys conducted by each interviewer. They mailed surveys to survey partner who then checked for accuracy of data entry. The survey check for accuracy uncovered only slight errors in the data entry. Eight surveys were checked by interviewers for rater accuracy.

To protect human subjects we deleted farmer personal information from the spreadsheet database. Our promise to the farmers was that their answers would be kept confidential. The surveys were numbered and data entered into the spreadsheet by corresponding survey numbers. Each interviewer made a separate list with products grown by those farmers expressing an interest in being contacted. This information was maintained separately without any reference to the actual survey number.

Data were analyzed by counting the number of farmers responding to each yes, no, missing, not applicable response and the percentage of that number. The data were analyzed as number of yes and no responses to questions. Extensive regression analysis or statistical significance was not necessary for this study.

Results

Sixty seven farmers (n-67) were interviewed and included in the analysis. However, in addition to some of the farmers interviewed, the contact list of farmers includes farmers who were not interviewed but who expressed an interest in the project. Results indicate that these farmers by and large produce the foods on the 20 item food list. Also, we ascertained that these farmers are interested in a local food approach. A few of the farmers interviewed expressed interest in getting started immediately. Although interested, they have their share of challenges which may pose barriers to their participating in the local food system. We were interested in learning how to operate within the existing structures and the farmers indicated that they would be able to drop at certain points in their drive to the existing farmers' markets they already attend. A few of the farmers mentioned that they are doing similar projects with groups such as Farm Fresh and Veritable Vegetable. These may be groups worth contacting. As an interesting note, we interviewed a farmer who says that her family began the first farmers market in San Francisco and another farmer who says he was the first organic strawberry farmer in California.

We interviewed several women either managing their own farms or who were the primary managers of their family owned farm. We were able to interview African American, Latino, Hmong, and East Indian farmers in this sample. Approximately, 15 % those interviewed were ethnic minority farmers. This type of demographic, women and ethnic minority farmers could reflect the diversity of small farmers who participate in the proposed HOPE effort.

Generations Farming

The first two questions of the survey were exploratory questions. Farmers were asked how they got started farming and what generation of farmer they were. As noted from the data below most of these farmers were first or fourth generation farmers, 28% first and 25% first generation, followed by third generation and second generation respectively.

1st generation	28%	19
2nd generation	16%	11
3rd generation	21%	14
4th generation	25%	17
5th generation	1%	1
Refused	1%	1
Missing	6%	4

Table 1

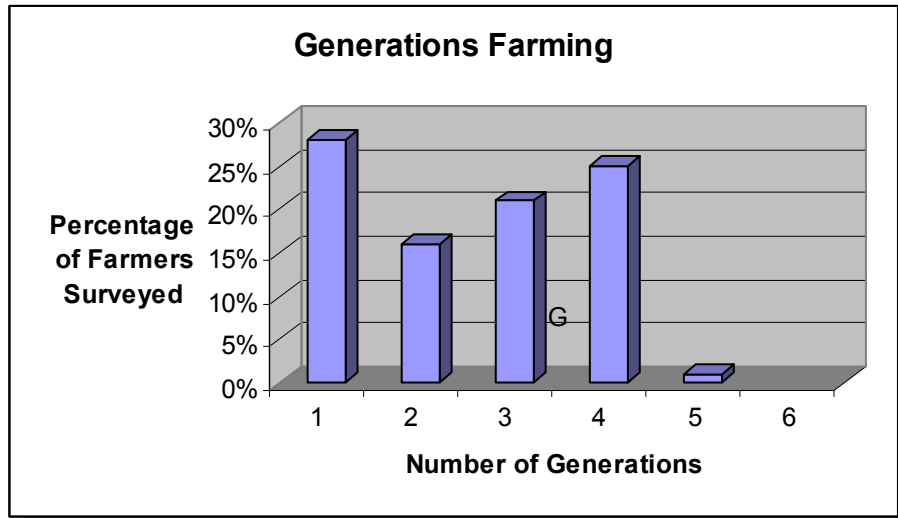


Figure 1

A few of the excerpts from comments made by farmers when asked how they started farming:

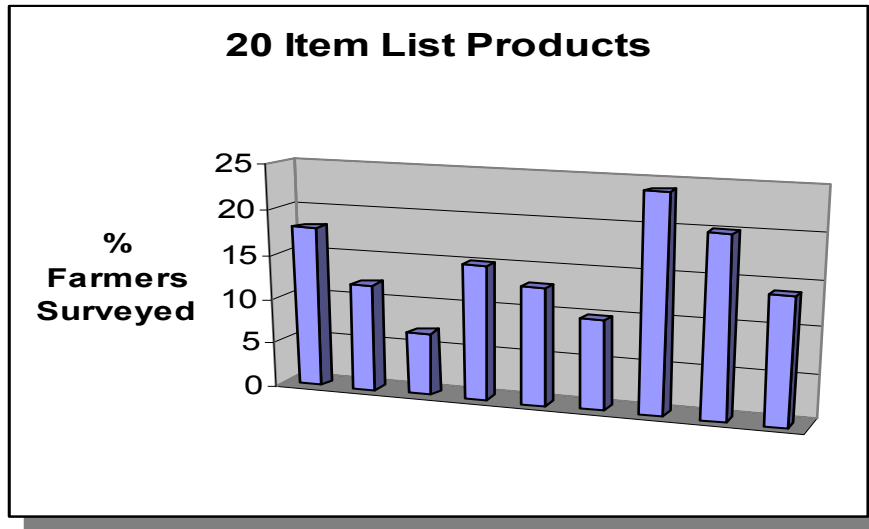
“My grandfather began farming in Modesto, growing almonds, grapes, carrots during the war; then a farm in Kettleman City, too.”

“We began farming in 1974, part-time farmers. Husband worked for five years in So. California before moving to Fresno. Worked 12 more years before retiring.”

“Grandfather farmed peas for 5 years and expanded to cabbage and green beans.”

20 Item List Produce Grown

This section indicates that these small farmers produce the items on the 20 item food list. The HOPE Collaborative may indeed be able to source the convenience stores with local Northern California produce. These farmers also produce vast assortments of other products that could potentially source the convenience stores. Other products listed: grapes, oranges, nectarines, plums, raspberries, squash, walnuts, apricots, blackberries, pistachios, melons, almonds, pomegranates, persimmons, pecans, asparagus, culinary herbs, peppers, beets, boysenberries, rhubarb, pears, salad and leafy greens, alfalfa, lemons, bok choy, olives, rice, cherries, citrus, sprouts, red cabbage, cauliflower, artichokes, guava, avocados, and pluots.



18%	12%	7%	15%	13%	10%	24%	20%	14%
Broccoli	Carrots	Sweet Corn	Onions	Peas	Potato	Tomato	Apples	Strawberries

Table 2

Farmers Raising and Selling Livestock

Of the 67 farmers interviewed, 27 or 40% indicated they also raise and sell livestock. Most of those who raise livestock primarily, say they are too small to be of real value to a local food system. Those who raise livestock primarily are beef producers. Although they had large acreage, they considered their operations too small to provide enough products for the convenience stores, yet, they still expressed an interest in helping out in any way they could. An interesting finding was that many of the meat farmers were discouraged by the lack of slaughter houses in California. Some livestock farmers simply felt there was not enough public awareness and knowledge about their plight for them to thrive. They feel that the lack of public awareness is tied to the lack of slaughter houses. For example, many non-agriculture residential zones do not want slaughterhouses in their neighborhood or near their towns. Without the slaughterhouses they cannot realize any value added profits. Other types of livestock raised by these farmers included: goats, ducks, peacocks, geese, and rabbits.

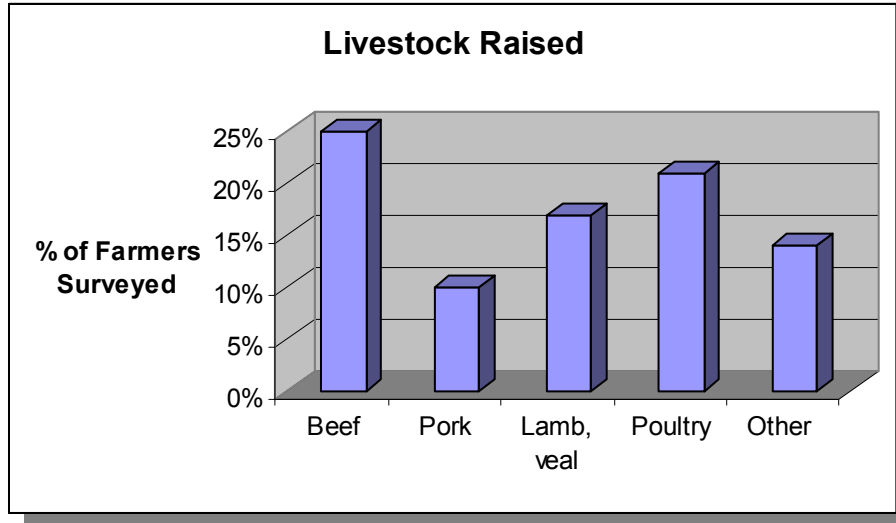


Figure 2

Value Added Products Sold

Table 3 shows that of the 67 farmers interviewed, 33 or 52% sell value added products. Products listed as other included baked goods, apple juice, apple butter, dried fruit, jams, vinegars, preserves, almond butter, sausages, beef jerky, wool, tomato paste, olive oil, canned salsa, ground lamb.

Table 3

YES	33	3	11	1	2	26
%	52%	6%	20%	2%	4%	46%
	Sell value-added products	Dairy	Eggs	Packaged goods	Canned vegetables	Other

Where do these Farmers Sell the Produce and Livestock?

Most of these farmers sell at farmers markets. Although this finding is hardly surprising given that we recruited many farmers from farmers market and the primary list used was a list of farmers operating in farmers' markets. The data indicate that many of these farmers are already in the Alameda County area and could provide a ready source of farmers who could provide the fresh produce for the micro zone convenience stores.

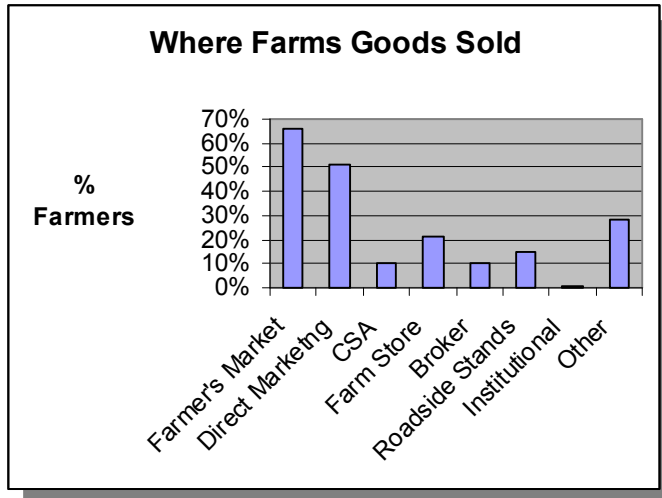


Figure 3

Distance Traveled to Farmers Markets

As Figure 4 below indicates, most of the farmers travel between 0 and 30 and between 76 and 100 miles to their markets. Seventeen percent travel between 101 and 150 miles. Eleven percent travel between 151 and 200 miles and 10% travel more than 201 miles one way to the farmers' markets. Interestingly, only 5% travel between 50 and 75 miles to farmers' markets. Not all of these markets are near Oakland, so this information gives clues to how far they are already traveling to markets. For 21% of these farmers, traveling more than 150 miles to reach their consumers is a weekly occurrence. However, 79% of these farmers travel less than 150 miles to reach their markets. This could be a good indication of how to view the definition of "local farmers".

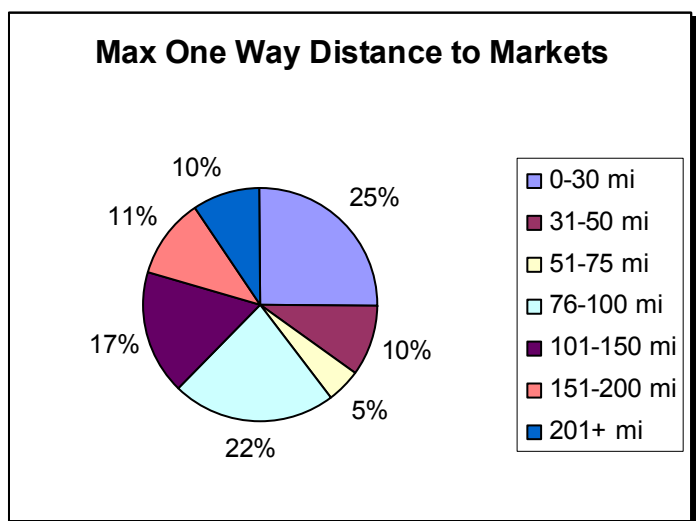


Figure 4

Dropping Off, Picking Up, and Producing More

In general, the farmers in this sample indicated a desire to produce more goods. They would prefer centralized drop off points slightly more than farm pick ups. With this information HOPE may be encouraged to pursue developing a place where producers can drop off products for the micro zone stores such as a distribution center.

	68%	71%	70%
Pickups		Drop-off Points	Produce More

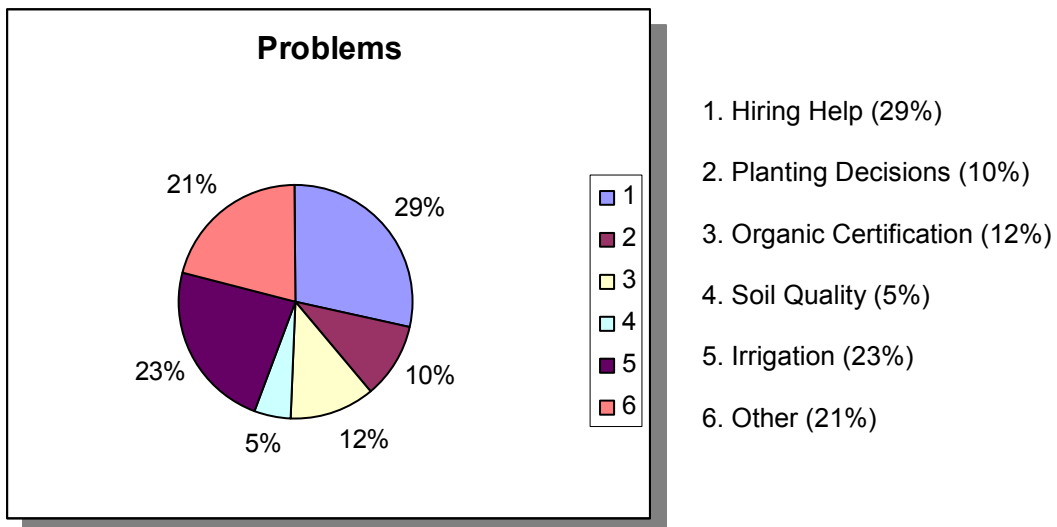
Table 4

Most farmers are willing to drop off produce if conveniently located on their current routes. However, for some farmers bringing more produce to the Oakland markets may be more costly to them unless they are able to sell significantly more products. For example, one farmer said his truck was loaded to the brim each week and if he packed more he would have to take the larger truck, however, the larger truck costs four times more money in gas than the smaller truck. If this farmer was able to sell all the produce to the convenience store at cost that would be feasible for him to bring more products. Another common concern was that the products would be bought out right and that the farmer would not be held responsible after the food was purchased by the HOPE Collaborative convenience stores. This may be most common with those farmers who sell processed goods, such as meats and value-added products, which have strict standards for resale.

Problems Farming

The major problem facing these farmers is hiring help. Twenty nine percent indicated a yes to this question. Irrigation, not surprisingly was a close 2nd problem followed by other, 21%.

Figure 5



Soil quality was the least of the problems facing these farmers. One logical explanation for why these farmers have few soil problems could be because they are practicing a sustainable, low to no pesticide farming. This sustainable farming practice conserves the soil quality and water. On the one hand, many of the diversified farmers were not organic; because they used a closed loop system however, they can be viewed as sustainable. On the other hand, organic does not necessarily mean sustainable. If farmers are only using organic fertilizer and not operating within a mixed system, their farm operations may not be a closed loop system. A closed loop system is where no inputs are brought on to the farm. Soil fertility is maintained by cover crops and on farm animal manure. This closed loop system we know today as sustainable agriculture had its beginning in the practices of traditional and indigenous farmers the world over.

It would be recommended that the HOPE Collaborative work with those farms who may not necessarily be certified organic but who practice a closed loop system where all farm by-products are reused back on the farm and no pesticides are used. In the long run it is environmentally friendly for streams and waterways not to be polluted with harmful fertilizers and pesticides from farms. Some of the non-certified organic farmers indicated that they saw little value in the organic certification label because it required a lot of time to maintain paperwork, and they already practice a no fertilizer and low chemical input agriculture. It will be important to understand the political and economic barriers these small farmers face in attaining their organic certification. It will be just as important to recognize the role these sustainable farmers are performing in keeping the agricultural land and waterways healthy. The responses noted to other problems were: liability insurance, not enough space to expand, not enough income to pay bills, capital for infrastructure improvement, monitoring runoff, county issues, and money.

Number of Acres Farmed

Figure 6 paints a picture that many of these farmers are large land owners. That is misleading. The 14 mostly beef farmers own over 201 acres and two farmers own acres of 400 or more. The beef farmers own larger acreages and are all pasture and grass-fed operations, which requires more acres per head. Other large acreage farmers are those with fruit orchards: stone fruits (peaches, apricots, cherries), as well as apples, pears, wine grapes, and citrus fruits—all requiring large acreages.

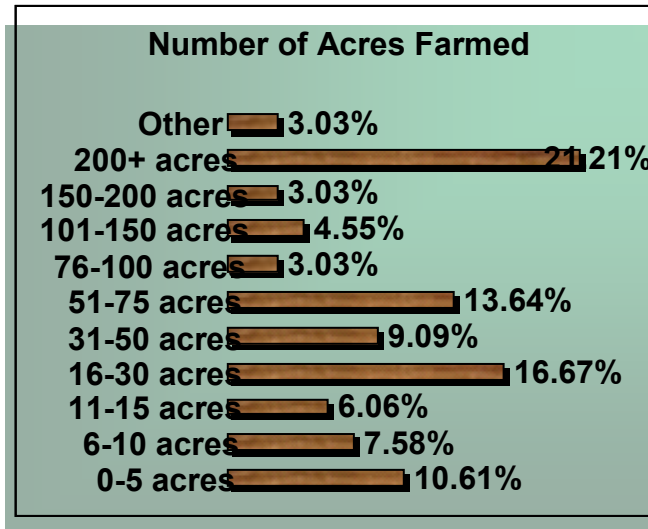


Figure 6

Sustainable Practices

The data analysis included the number of yes responses to: 1) Certified, 2) no chemicals, and 3) non GMO. Of this group that answered yes, 67% indicated they used no or low pesticide. While 47% indicated they were certified organic; 53% used no chemicals, and 65% were non GMO. There was a ten percent missing data. By and large, these farmers are growing healthy food using few or no chemicals.

Growing Year Round

Seventy-two percent indicated that they are able to grow year round. Knowing that these farmers are able to grow year round gives an indication of the products' availability. If the producers are growing year round, Oakland may be able to access these locally grown food products year round. This is more support for the micro zone idea.

YES	46
%	72%
NO	18
%	28%

Table 5

Rating Scale Section

In the final section of the survey, farmers were asked to rate a set of challenges that might prevent them from participating in the HOPE Collaborative local food system. They responded with:

- 1) Not much of a challenge
- 2) Moderate challenge
- 3) Really big challenge.

Farmers were asked to respond to eleven questions. Of these responses, the data indicate that for livestock producers, their major challenges were farm costs too high, for example: a) water, b) feed, c) timing of sales and cash flow, d) fuel, e) insurance, f) land developers encroaching. Only three of the livestock producers mentioned labor as a really big challenge. On the other hand for the growers, the major challenges they indicated were: a) labor, b) water, c) fuel, d) equipment, e) energy costs, and f) materials. This finding is consistent with the question which indicated hiring help as the major problem as indicated Figure 5.

By and large, these farmers' major challenges are farm costs too high. Pretty much across the board, few farmers had challenges getting loans, accessing distribution outlets, transportation, with too much debt, support from family, local laws and policies, access to relevant information, or enough acreage to expand. Table 6 gives the results of only 16% of these farmers who indicated that not enough acreage was a really big challenge. This signals that these farmers have enough land to increase their production.

Getting Loans

Not much of a challenge %	38
	62%
Moderate challenge %	13
	21%
Really big challenge %	10
	16%
N/A	2
Refused	1
Missing	3

Table 6

Lack of Distribution Outlets

Not much of a challenge %	35
	58%
Moderate challenge %	16
	27%
Really big challenge %	9
	15%
N/A	1
Refused	1
Missing	4

Table 7

Lack of Transportation

Not much of a challenge %	45
	73%
Moderate challenge %	16
	26%
Really big challenge %	1
	2%
N/A	1
Refused	1
Missing	3

Table 8

Too much Debt already incurred to deal with potential new growth

Not much of a challenge %	39
	63%
Moderate challenge %	13
	21%
Really big challenge %	10
	16%
N/A	1
Refused	1
Missing	3

Table 9

Not enough support from the family

Not much of a challenge %	48
	79%
Moderate challenge %	9
	15%
Really big challenge %	4
	7%
N/A	2
Refused	1
Missing	3

Table 10

Local Laws and policies constraining agricultural product development

Not much of a challenge %	32
	53%
Moderate challenge %	16
	27%
Really big challenge %	12
	20%
N/A	3
Refused	1
Missing	3

Table 11

Lack of access to relevant information needed to handle financial matters related to growing

Not much of a challenge %	49
	79%
Moderate challenge %	11
	18%
Really big challenge %	2
	3%
N/A	1
Refused	1
Missing	3

Table 12

Farms Costs Too High

“Farm costs too high” was the only question that elicited answers indicating some degree of challenges for these farmers. Farm costs too high to produce more question results are: 37% of these stated that farm costs were a really big challenge and 27% stated that farm costs were a moderate challenge. This may be the most telling indicator of the barriers these farmers face in providing food to the micro zone convenience stores. If fuel cost, feed cost, and other operating costs continue to climb, they may not be able to sustain their small farms. Water conservation and usage cannot be overstated. Any program involving these local farmers has to keep costs down because they are challenged by:

1. Energy, PG&E, water fuel – number one cost listed is fuel costs
2. Supplies, fertilizer, seed, grain
3. Labor costs and challenges of maintaining stable labor
4. Farm equipment and parts costly
5. Issues around irrigation
6. Taxes, insurance, debt to a smaller degree
7. Issues around land development, land distribution

Farm Costs too High

Not much of a challenge %	22
	37%
Moderate challenge %	16
	27%
Really big challenge %	22
	37%
N/A	1
Refused	1
Missing	5

Table 13

Enough Acreage to Expand the Farm Operation

Not much of a challenge %	42
	68%
Moderate challenge %	10
	16%
Really big challenge %	10
	16%
N/A	1
Refused	1
Missing	3

Table 14

Interested in Participating in the HOPE Local Food System

Not much of a challenge %	54
	87%
Moderate challenge %	5
	8%
Really big challenge %	3
	5%
N/A	1
Refused	1
Missing	2

Table 15

As noted in Table 15, these farmers are interested in participating in the proposed convenience store program. Interestingly, one common challenge for growers may become an asset for

the convenience stores-- these farmers say they often produce more than they can sell. Many farmers felt that a good way for this project to obtain goods would be to buy the food from farmers when they have over produced. These are the types of products farmers have a real need to sell so they do not lose money. In addition to the over produced goods there were a number of farmers who just regularly produce a lot of one product and have a need to sell these items. These farmers were familiar with Oakland and sympathetic to the idea of getting fresh food into the underserved areas of Oakland.

Overall, the responses and reactions of the farmers we spoke to about the idea were enthusiasm, curiosity, and uncertainty. Interested farmers asked numerous questions about the program concerning benefits and downfalls. Many farmers equated the program with the food bank or farmers market, until further explanation was given. Although, cautious, the farmers were interested in expansion, resources, problem solving and helping others. The small farmers that were not interested did not think that the program could help them, or they were getting ready for retirement. Other farmers were not interested because they were already involved in too many programs.

With this research data in hand, the HOPE Collaborative may be encouraged to proceed to facilitate programs that bring the bounty of local farmers to the dinner tables of Oakland residents through the micro zone corner stores. The data contained herein suggest that such an endeavor will have the interest of local farmers. The challenge obviously will be to develop the economic feasibility of costs, operation, etc. to start up and the trajectory of when such an enterprise might totally fund itself. Enterprise structures would be the next task to explore. Will the community participate in such an enterprise and how much can their products be reasonably priced to sustain a local food system?

Conclusions and Recommendations

The farmers indicated that the proposed HOPE local food system sourced with local produce from small farmers is that the concept would be an economic asset to the micro-zones, creating and encouraging job growth, while supporting small farmers in the area. Minimizing operating and fuel costs for the farmers will be a key strategy in enlisting and maintaining interest in the program. With regards to dairy and fish, we were unable to interview local producers who were producing dairy on their farm to supply 5000 people. Therefore, it is our recommendation that HOPE facilitate relationships with one of the larger producers, such as Straus or Clover to provide the dairy products and encourage them to add some of the small dairy farmers we interviewed who expressed an interest in the idea. Both of these companies may be interested in receiving products from these smaller farmers. Straus, for example, receives its products from three farmers. As their market grows, so too will their demand for farmers. Also, there may be an opportunity to have a small dairy farm in Oakland somewhere, perhaps the Hegenberger Farm idea. More jobs and a closed loop is the strategy in the long-run. If HOPE Collaborative could seek out a location to develop a small meat locker or slaughter house, this would be a benefit to both the farmer's needs and micro zone stores.

Regardless of farm size or the products they grow, some of them expressed concern over how exactly they can contribute to the vision of the project. It would be helpful, as the project develops, to think about the specific logistics entailed in having the farmers participate/contribute. For those who have provided their contact information, make a point of contacting them along the way to let them know how the project is progressing and in what ways they may be able to help, if they are so inclined. Also, the reluctance expressed by several farmers in even completing the survey is a result of having been asked to participate in “similar sounding projects in the past” but then never hearing any kind of follow-up. Also, there needs to be communication with other like programs so that farmers will not be saturated with the same research.

Moving forward with this new information, the HOPE Collaborative can build relationships with small farmers of Northern California being sensitive to their specific challenges and needs. In fact, the HOPE Collaborative may be able to leverage resources to fund seeds, feed, and grain for farmers in their local food system. Other options can be used to support and trade for services/ barter to support the farmers capacity to work with local city governments and local nonprofits to bring them into Oakland communities. These small farmers not only have a constant supply of fresh food, they also practice sustainable, low harm food agriculture, which does little harm to the soil and waterways in their surrounding areas. However, these farmers have several challenges. Escalating fuel costs are the major challenges facing these farmers; therefore, creating some type of central drop

off or centralized pick up location(s) would work best for getting their produce into Oakland, minimizing their fuel costs.

NEXT STEPS

The project has great potential. One potential roadblock though may be the timing of when the program actually gets started. Many farmers were not willing to take the project seriously or vest a lot of time or energy until it seemed clear that this project would be taking off in the near future. Perhaps a pilot store could be set up in order to see how the whole process may actually work.

- Begin to develop communications with farmers on the list provided.
- Develop more targeted questionnaire(s) about volume capacity, information about which transportation routes they travel if drop offs preferred.
- Share this data with the City of Oakland to discuss how collaborations might be formed to bring the vast food bounty of California's small farmers into the food desert communities of Oakland.
- Set up a pilot store in one of the micro zones to see how the logistics would actually work.

FARMS TO GROW, INC. GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THIS RESEARCH WAS FUNDED BY THE ALAMEDA COUNTY FOOD BANK

Appendix A: Survey

Thank you for volunteering your time. Again, to clarify, we are working on behalf of the HOPE Collaborative, seeking out farmers interested in providing healthy, fresh food for Oakland neighborhoods. This survey will help us gather some information on the farmers interested in helping out. None of your answers will be connected to your name or farm in any way. You may choose not to answer any question, and may stop the interview at any time if you feel the need to do so. We appreciate any information you can offer us.

1. Tell me about your farm history? **Prompts:** *When did your family first begin farming? How did you begin farming? Are you first, second, third generation?* (Mark box below)?

2. 1st Generation 2nd Generation 3rd Generation 4th Generation

3. What types of products do you grow? (Circle all that apply)

Produce

0. None

1. Broccoli

2. Carrots

3. Sweet Corn

4. Onions (yellow, white, red)

5. Peas (snap, snow, etc.)

6. Potatoes

7. Tomatoes

8. Apples

9. Strawberries

10. Other _____

4. Do you raise and sell livestock? (YES/NO) If **yes**, go to Q4. If **no** skip to Q6.

1. Yes 2. No

5. What types of livestock do you raise/sell? (Circle all that apply)

Livestock

0. None

11. Beef Cattle

12. Pork

13. Lamb, veal, other

14. Poultry (chicken/turkey)

15. Other _____

6. Do you sell value-added products? (YES/NO) If **yes**, go to Q6. If **no** skip to Q7.

1. Yes 2. No

7. What types of value-added goods do you sell? (Circle all that apply)

Value Added Goods

16. Dairy (cheese, fluid milk, cream)

17. Eggs

18. Packaged goods (potato chips, flour, mixed vegetables)

19. Canned vegetables (tomatoes)

20. Other _____

8. Where do you sell your farm goods? (Circle all that apply)

Market Outlets

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Farmers' Market | 5. Broker |
| 2. Direct Marketing
(Restaurants/Grocer) | 6. Roadside Stands |
| 3. CSA | 7. Institutional (schools, hospitals) |
| 4. Farm Store (pick your own) | 8. Other _____ |

9. What is the maximum distance (one-way) you travel to these markets? (Circle one)

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. 0-30 miles | 5. 101-150 miles |
| 2. 31-50 miles | 6. 151-200 miles |
| 3. 51-75 miles | 7. 201 + miles |
| 4. 76-100 miles | 8. Other _____ |

10. Would you be interested in farm goods pick-ups at your farm? (YES/NO)

1. Yes 2. No

11. Would you be interested in a centralized farm drop-off point for customers? (YES/NO)

1. Yes 2. No

12. Are you interested in producing more goods? (YES/NO)

1. Yes 2. No

13. Do you experience any of the following problems with your farm? (Circle all that apply)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Hiring help | 4. Soil quality |
| 2. Planting decisions | 5. Irrigation |
| 3. Certification (i.e. organic) | 6. Other _____ |

14. How many acres do you currently farm? (Circle one)

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. 0-5 acres | 7. 76-100 acres |
| 2. 6-10 acres | 8. 101-150 acres |
| 3. 11-15 acres | 9. 150-200 acres |
| 4. 16-30 acres | 10. 200 + acres |
| 5. 31-50 acres | 11. Other _____ (eg. sq. feet) |
| 6. 51-75 acres | |

15. In your farm operation, do you practice (read list; circle all that apply)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. None or low pesticide use | 7. No chemicals used or sprays |
| 2. Certified Organic | 8. Non-GMO products |
| 3. No fertilizer | 9. All of the above |
| 4. Humane treatment of animals | 10. None of the above |
| 5. Hormone Free | 11. Other _____ |
| 6. Free range | |

16. Are you able to market your produce/farm goods year 'round? (YES/NO)

1. Yes 2. No

HOPE SURVEY

PLEASE RATE THE FOLLOWING CHALLENGES WHICH MAY POTENTIALLY PREVENT YOUR PARTICIPATION IN A LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM'S APPROACH FOR OAKLAND, CA.

	Not much of a challenge	Moderate challenge	Really big challenge
	1	2	3
16. Enough labor to support the farm to grow	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Getting loans for new equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Lack of distribution outlets to sell more produce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Lack of transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Too much debt already incurred to deal with potential new growth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Not enough support from the family members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Local laws and policies constraining agricultural product development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Lack of access to relevant information needed to handle financial matters related to growing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Farm costs too high to produce more If so, exactly what two major costs are too high: 1. 2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Continued

	Not much of a challenge	Moderate challenge	Really big challenge
	1	2	3
25. Not enough acreage to expand the farm operation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. Lack of interest in participating in a local food system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

That concludes our discussion. Thank you for taking time to help us with this important survey. If you are interested in providing some of your farm food items or further assistance, could we contact you?

County : _____
Farmer's Name: _____
Address: _____
City/Zip: _____
Farm Address: (if different) _____
City/Zip: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Potential marketable food item(s):

Please list below additional farmer's names/contact information who may be interested in this project:

Notes:

Appendix B: Letter From Farms to Grow



Dear California Small Farmer,

We are mailing you this survey because you are a California small farmer. Farms to Grow, Inc. in collaboration with the HOPE (Health for Oakland's People and Environment) are looking for small farmers to help us develop a local food system for Oakland residents. Farms to Grow and HOPE envisions a vibrant future for Oakland neighborhoods that provide equal access to affordable, healthy, locally-grown food; safe and inviting places for physical activity and play; sustainable, successful local economies—all to the benefit of the local food system, families and youth living in Oakland's underserved neighborhoods and California's small farmers.

Your participation in this survey will allow us to get a better idea of how you and your farm can contribute to this vision, ultimately playing a role in improving the local food system and providing a higher standard of living for Oakland's residents through increased access to healthy, fresh food. In addition, your farm products may be sold through Oakland-based food stores, potentially allowing for increased economic opportunity for Oakland residents and potentially increasing your income.

We want to reassure you that your answers will be held in the strictest confidence and will not in any way identify you or your farm. Your personal information will not be shared with anyone. If you have further questions regarding this survey feel free to call Gail Myers at (415) 359-7825 or email me at gpmyers@farmstogrow.com.

Thank you again for your participation.

Best Wishes,

Gail P. Myers, PhD
Founder/Executive Director

Appendix C: Survey in Spanish

Gracias por su tiempo como voluntario. Una vez más, para aclarar, estamos trabajando en nombre de la ESPERANZA de colaboración (The HOPE Collaborative), la búsqueda de los agricultores interesados en la prestación de salud, alimentos frescos para los vecindarios de Oakland. Esta encuesta nos ayudará a reunir información sobre los agricultores interesados en ayudar. Ninguna de sus respuestas se conecta a su nombre o explotación de cualquier forma. Puede optar por no responder a ninguna pregunta, y puede detener la entrevista en cualquier momento si se siente la necesidad de hacerlo. Agradecemos cualquier información que nos puede ofrecer.

1. Hábleme de su granja historia? Preguntas: ¿Cuándo comenzará su familia en primer lugar la agricultura? ¿Cómo comenzar la agricultura? Es usted primero, segunda, tercera generación? (Marque el cuadro a continuación)?

1. 1r Generación 2. 2do Generación 3. 3ro Generación 4. 4to Generación

2. ¿Qué tipos de productos que hacen crecer? (Marque todas las que apliquen)

Producir

0. Ninguno

21. Brócoli

22. Zanahorias

23. Maíz Dulce

24. Cebolla (de color amarillo, blanco, rojo)

25. Guisante (broche, nieve, etc.)

26. Patatas

27. Tomates

28. Manzanas

29. Fresas

30. Otros tipos _____

3. ¿Se plantean y vender el ganado? (SÍ/NO) Si la respuesta es sí, vaya a la 4. En caso de que no pase a la 6.

1. Sí 2. No

4. ¿Qué tipos de Ganado lo que plantea/vender? (Marque todas las que apliquen)

Ganadería

1. Ninguno

31. Ganado bovino

32. Carne de cerdo

33. Cordero, ternera, otros

34. Aves de corral (pollo/pavo)

35. Otros tipos _____

5. ¿Vende productos de valor añadido? (SÍ/NO) En caso de sí, vaya a la 6. Si no vaya a la 7.

1. Sí 2. No

6. ¿Qué tipos de bienes con valor agregado lo que vende? (Marque todas las que apliquen)

Productos de Valor Añadido

36. Productos lácteos (queso, leche)

37. Huevos

38. Productos envasados (patatas, harina, las mezclas de hortalizas)

39. Conservas de verduras (tomates)

40. Otros tipos _____

7. ¿Dónde vender sus productos agrícolas? (Marque todas las que apliquen)
- Salidas de mercado**
- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Mercado de Agricultores | 4. Tienda granja (elija su propio) |
| 2. Comercialización directo (mercados/restaurantes) | 5. Broker (Corredor) |
| 3. CSA (Agricultura Apoyada por Comunidad) | 6. Soportes carretera |
| | 7. Institucionales (escuelas, hospitales) |
| | 8. Otro tipo _____ |
8. ¿Cuál es la distancia máxima (por ida) de viajar a estos mercados? (Circule uno)
- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. 0-30 millas | 5. 101-150 millas |
| 2. 31-50 millas | 6. 151-200 millas |
| 3. 51-75 millas | 7. 201 + millas |
| 4. 76-100 millas | 8. Más _____ |
9. ¿Interesa que los clientes recibieran en la granja los productos agrícolas? **(SÍ/NO)**
1. Sí 2. No
10. ¿Estaría usted interesado en una explotación centralizada de bajada para los clientes? **(SÍ/NO)**
1. Sí 2. No
11. ¿Está usted interesado en la producción de más bienes? **(SÍ/NO)**
1. Sí 2. No
12. ¿Tienes alguno de los siguientes problemas con su granja? (Marque todas las que apliquen)
- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Ayudar a la contratación | 4. La calidad de la tierra |
| 2. La plantación de decisiones | 5. Irrigación |
| 3. Certificación (es decir, orgánico) | 6. Otro tipo _____ |
13. ¿Cuántos acres usted actualmente granja? (Circule uno)
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1. 0-5 acres | 7. 76-100 acres |
| 2. 6-10 acres | 8. 101-150 acres |
| 3. 11-15 acres | 9. 150-200 acres |
| 4. 16-30 acres | 10. 200 + acres |
| 5. 31-50 acres | 11. Otro tipo _____ (por ejemplo, metros cuadrados) |
| 6. 51-75 acres | |
14. En su operación de la granja, ¿no la práctica (lea la lista; círculo todos los que apliquen)
- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Ninguno o de bajo uso de plaguicidas | 7. No utiliza productos químicos o aerosoles |
| 2. Orgánicos Certificados | 8. Productos no-GMO |
| 3. Sin fertilizantes químicos | 9. Todas las anteriores |
| 4. Tratamiento humanitario de los animales | 10. Ninguna de las anteriores |
| 5. Libre de hormonas | 11. Otro _____ |
| 6. Granja al aire libre | |
15. ¿Es usted tiene la capaz de comercializar sus productos agrícolas año redondo? **(SÍ/NO)**
1. Sí 2. No

ENCUESTA DE LA ESPERANZA (HOPE)

TASA POR FAVOR EL SIGUIENTE DESAFÍOS QUE PUEDEN POTENCIALMENTE PREVENIR SU PARTICIPACIÓN EN UN LOCAL DE ALIMENTOS DEL SISTEMA DE ENFOQUE OAKLAND, CA

	No mucho de un desafío	Desafío Moderado	Gran Desafío
	1	2	3
16. ¿Labor suficiente para la granja o para crecer la granja?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. ¿Obtención de nuevos préstamos para equipo?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. ¿La falta de puntos de distribución para vender más productos?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. ¿Falta de transporte?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. ¿Demasiada deuda que ya se ha incurrido para hacer frente a posibles nuevos crecimiento?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. ¿No hay suficiente apoyo de los miembros de la familia?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. ¿Las leyes locales y las políticas que limitan el desarrollo de productos agrícolas de la creciente?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. ¿La falta de acceso a la información necesaria para manejar los asuntos financieros relacionados con la creciente?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. ¿Demasiado elevados los gastos de la explotación para producir más? Si es así, exactamente lo que dos grandes costes son demasiado elevados :	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.			
2.			

	No mucho de un desafío	Desafío Moderado	Gran Desafío
	1	2	3
25. ¿No hay suficiente superficie para ampliar la operación de la granja?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. ¿Falta de interés en participar en un sistema local de alimentos?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Que llega a la conclusión de nuestro debate. Gracias por tomarse el tiempo para ayudarnos con esta importante encuesta. Si usted está interesado en la prestación de algunos de sus explotaciones agrícolas o alimentos más ayuda, se podría en contacto con usted?

Condado : _____

Nombre del agricultor: _____

Dirección: _____

Ciudad / Código Postal : _____

Granja Dirección: (si es diferente) _____

Ciudad / Código postal : _____

Teléfono : _____

Correo electrónico: _____

Potencial comercial alimento (s):

Por favor, la lista de nombres adicionales agricultor / información de contacto que puedan estar interesados en este proyecto:

Notas:

Appendix D: Letter in Spanish



Queridos pequeños agricultores de California,

Estamos de correo que este encuesta porque usted es un pequeño agricultor de California. Farms to Grow, Inc., en colaboración con el HOPE (Salud para la gente de Oakland y Medio Ambiente) están buscando los pequeños agricultores para que nos ayude a desarrollar un sistema local de alimentos para los residentes de Oakland. Granjas para crecer y ESPERANZA prevé un futuro vibrante para los barrios de Oakland que ofrecen igualdad de acceso a precios asequibles, sanos, los alimentos cultivados localmente, e invitando a los lugares seguros para la actividad física y el juego; sostenible, el éxito de las economías locales, todo en beneficio de la comida local sistema, las familias y jóvenes que viven en los barrios bajos de Oakland de California y los pequeños agricultores.

Su participación en esta encuesta nos permitirá tener una mejor idea de cómo usted y su explotación puede contribuir a esta visión, en última instancia, desempeña un papel en la mejora del sistema local de alimentos y la prestación de un mejor nivel de vida para los residentes de Oakland a través de un mayor acceso sanos, los alimentos frescos. Además, sus productos agrícolas pueden ser vendidos a través de Oakland a base de tiendas de alimentos, lo que potencialmente permite una mayor oportunidad económica para los residentes de Oakland y potencialmente aumentar sus ingresos.

Queremos asegurarle que sus respuestas se llevará a cabo en la más estricta confidencialidad y no de cualquier manera que usted o identificar su granja. Su información personal no será compartida con nadie. Si tiene alguna duda con respecto a esta encuesta no dude en llamar a Gail Myers (415) 359-7825 o envíeme un email a gpmyers@farmstogrow.com.

Gracias de nuevo por su participación.

Mejores Deseos,

Gail P. Myers, PhD
Fundador / Director Ejecutivo