



Fall 2020 Membership Meeting Agenda

NOVEMBER 18th, 5PM via ZOOM

Zoom Link (this will also be emailed to all members): <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82266705013>

Or Call in to the Meeting: (669) 900-6833, meeting ID: 822 6670 5013

***New to Zoom?** Log in 15 minutes early (4:45pm) for a brief tutorial

MINUTES:

As folks arrive, casual discussion of zoom settings.

Melanie: Thanks for your patience and for showing up, making NCGA history with this online meeting. It's exciting.

Portia began sharing screen, 1st slide of presentation.

Welcome, thank you for coming. Quick presentation of updates of what we've been up to this challenging, dynamic season.

If you have anything you need to share, please use the chatbox.

Treat this like a regular meeting, treat each other kindly. We hope we're reaching even more people than usual.

After presentation will open it up for open dialogue.

After each section, will open up for questions. At very end we can all come back together for group discussion.

Zoom Intro and How-to:

Orientation to Zoom tools: Microphone: How to mute and unmute yourself. Video: how to turn on and off. View options: speaker view or gallery view. Chat box. How to raise your hand, in "participants" menu. The host can lower your hand, or you can lower your own hand. How to rename yourself in your video feed.

An Icebreaker "Chat" (10 minutes)

- What was your biggest success of 2020?
- Type your response in the "chat box", and we'll share with the group!

Melanie: Hi everybody! We have a really sweet tradition of opening our meetings with a fun ice breaker. This year has been tough, full of surprises, and your board and staff have tried to stay focused on the positive throughout. We're holding to that with this icebreaker...

Type in the chat box, what was your biggest success of 2020?

Portia and Melanie read out responses from the chat:

-Actually making it to selling at the market.

-selling online

-staying healthy and rocking it at the farmers' market

-strawberry hydrosol!

-growing my CSA by 25 shares

-living with no sleep

-just making it through the first year and selling lots of radishes at the farmers market.
-starting doing home deliveries and started shipping feta
-happy that weekday markets were thriving
-David got a bicycle (joining us from Nicaragua)
-Fair Curve Farm Ben and Aubrey are going to be parents
-was worried at the first market but it turned out to be a positive
-people coming all the way to Shively for the pumpkin patch
Etc.: read the attached chat file for more!

Introductions (Board, Staff, Guests); Agenda Review & Zoom Guidelines

Starting with introductions: Tonight the board is here: Melanie Cunningham, President from Shakefork Farm, Chris Moore from Woody Ryno is Treasurer, Lauren from I and I Farm, Mike Egan from Mycality Mushrooms. David Fogle isn't here yet. Staff present: Portia, Ivy, Megan, Laura. We have a lot of members, including River and Niki who are running for the board, and May Patino from Humboldt Food Policy Council. Board took the lead on planning the meeting with input from staff and members who joined in our monthly member meetings. Will take turns leading sections of the presentation. Will open discussion at the end.

Review agenda: introductions, financial update, covid response on the ground, Harvest Box program, Food Hub, Weekday Market updates, working groups, board elections, open discussion

Financial Update

- Summary of current yearly income and expenses
- Stall fees to-date and previous year comparison
- Covid19 Budget Adjustments

Financial overview: Portia

Most of you received a packet with information regarding our financial report and covid response. Applied for assistance at every opportunity ranging from local support to federal support through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). We were very lucky to get into that program. Applied within the first couple of hours and still didn't make it into the first round of funding, but luckily we were able to get in the second round. Had a waiting period where we didn't know if we were going to receive that so it was a significant boost to us.

This year our income has been mostly affected by fewer vendors attending markets. Some vendors have chosen to take the season off for safety and personal reasons, and we also had a period when we couldn't have prepared food vendors or crafters on site, so it limited what we were able to have available at market. It impacted our income in terms of significantly reduced stall fees particularly at the Arcata Plaza market.

We will go through season highlight numbers with you, currently showing through October. We are not going to go through every detail of our P&L, you'll see at the final slide our budget is approaching the half million dollar mark annually so it's a big budget and we have a lot going on. Happy to join with you in our financial committee meeting in January to go over more details. But we have weathered the storm really well thanks to the help we were able to receive. Treasurer Chris Moore will share more details. (See Farmers Market Stall Fee Income slide).

Chris: We have seen a decrease in stall fees across the board. Numbers are a little different than what was in the packet, and are now more up to date. Stall fees are down by about \$21,000 this year. We're really fortunate we got the PPP and other funding to cover staff time and other costs from the management of covid response this year at markets.

A few areas we were able to reduce our expenses this year. One was the music expense, which is a really large figure that we spend every year, and there are donations that come in to help offset that cost, but that was a large savings we were able to make that was in line with the requirements from the health department. Also had a lot of donations from the community, as well as from our farmers who were able to go above and beyond their stall fees at markets, and that was upwards of \$3500. That was something we heard from our farmer vendors, that markets were very profitable and went well this year and our customer base was really supportive. Covid response did increase our staff time, and PPP was able to cover 2.5 months of that. We also received funding from State Compensation Insurance Fund that covered all additional covid related supplies at market and in the office, including portable toilet in Arcata, hand washing stations, gloves, masks, sanitizer, signage, barricades, barriers, all kinds of things that would have added significantly to our expenses. Special thanks to the City of Arcata for reducing plaza rental fee. Also our member donors who gave extra with stall fees as well as one time donations, \$3765. Also had a number of donations from community members, and all of that is thanks to a significant well planned social media campaign to raise donations and that really reached people and spoke to people and we were really grateful. We were cautious during the beginning of covid about respect for the seriousness of everyone's personal financial losses, we waited some time before starting to ramp up our request our donations so most immediate needs could be met in terms of food aid, but we also provide significant food aid for the community so we felt comfortable asking for that help.

Also wanted to share how significant the increase in CalFresh EBT usage was. Customers received more EBT dollars on their cards this season as a response to Covid from the government. They received more benefits, and many new households also began to receive EBT after losing their jobs or reduction in work hours. Increased by over \$22K through September. Total EBT this year is already close to \$100K. Customers are also able to receive over \$62 in Market Match. Because of this increase, it also increases staff time to access additional market match funds to keep up with that increase. We had to dip into future pools of money for our 3 year market match grant just for this year, and we're in the process of seeking additional federal funds for that program. It's still well funded and intend to be able to keep market match available year round.

Wanted to share an overall financial snapshot. Will have the opportunity to answer more specific financial questions at the finance meeting or by email or phone call. Anytime we're happy to talk about all of this. Our budget to actual comparison is looking on track (see slide). Seeing total net income of ~\$23K, mostly thanks to all those grant funds we received in response to Covid, as well as a significant grant from Humboldt Area Foundation which funds the Harvest Box program, which we'll talk more about.

Any questions? Take a moment to answer any questions in the chat box. Quick reminder to let us know if you're having any problems? Check in? Folks are giving thumbs up. Moving forward.

Our Covid-19 “on the ground” response... the rest of the story

- Member testimonials of surprisingly epic sales
- Safety Protocols

Laura: This all came down in the middle of March at the very end of Winter Market so we had a little time to get our act together before the main season started. Most are aware of the additional precautions we've had to take this year like roping off booths, spacing, sanitizing, signage. We are lucky that agriculture was designated as an essential business so we've been able to operate throughout the pandemic as an essential business. Some of those rules have shifted recently, we're seeing more restrictions coming down the pike with the increase of cases. But we're really well positioned in terms of our measures in place and have been informed that we will be allowed to continue to operate. We'll keep you all informed as things change but for the most part we've had a really successful season. We adopted some protocols from the state very early on. We're lucky to be a part of a statewide network of markets that are quick to respond and set protocols for markets to follow statewide. We've been able to learn from each other, and figure out what works best for our markets, things that don't work. Looking ahead we don't really have any answers about how things will pan out, but we're expecting that we'll continue these protocols we've been following until we hear otherwise. And we'll always be responding, we've been quick to adapt. I'm proud of our market team and all of you for going above and beyond and taking additional measures that make all of our days a little bit longer and more complicated. We've seen a really good response from our community. Seeing an increase in people taking local food seriously and sourcing food from our local producers, which has translated into increased sales. Trying to take a middle ground as much as possible. People appreciate the protocols we're taking and many feel safer shopping at the market than other places.

Lots of members also tried out different ways to get product customers. Alternative payment methods, new CSAs, curbside pickup and delivery, etc. Everyone has adapted quickly even in a rough season. Those not able to attend markets have found ways to still be able to continue to participate through our Harvest Box program. We couldn't do this without a spirit of camaraderie and family. See the positive silver lining of all of this, the way we've been able to come together as a community, how much our community supports local food, the importance we have as an anchor in our communities for food access.

Melanie: So much gratitude for keeping up the energy and the positivity. Some days are harder than others, hard to get everything together. But also really rewarding, with the gratitude from customers for accessing food that felt safe, and it really was a successful season. Hearing from neighbors that meat sales have been up, nursery sales have been up, so it's been a surprisingly good year. Even though there were fewer customers, each customer spent more money. Thanks to the staff for doing what was necessary to keep markets running.

Harvest Box Program

- Program updates and future plans for expansion

Megan: Started the Harvest Box program this year, which is a curbside, hands-free multi-farm CSA style program. Was our response to folks who were in the high risk group or didn't feel comfortable shopping at market but still wanted to access our farmers' produce, how could we accommodate that. (See slide) 1889 total boxes distributed through October. Includes direct sales at market, but we were also able to partner with community organizations to get boxes to clients they serve (Family resource centers, St. Joes, Open Door.) Not something we anticipated when starting this program but was a cool result. Generated extra revenue for our

farmers this year (see slide), which was the main goal of the program other than getting food to customers. 15,000 lbs of produce distributed! Also offered add ons, items that wouldn't normally fit into a produce box. Henry's olives and Beck's Bakery for example, who weren't able to attend markets, we were still able to get products out there. Also able to secure funding to offer boxes to low income seniors through Food for People (the Senior FMNP program), and we were able to do an online donation campaign and raised over \$1000 to make snack pack Harvest Boxes for fire victims that had to evacuate.

In December, we will do another online campaign to raise money for Holiday Harvest Boxes that will be distributed through the network of family resource centers. Please share those social media posts.

Will try to distribute boxes into the winter as long as we can. We have 25-30 regular customers who return each week who rely on these boxes, so we want it to continue going until you run out of produce. Taking it on a month to month basis

In 2021, we would like to continue this program. Our community partners are responding well to this easy way for their clients to access fresh produce. They have access to prepackaged processed foods. To be able to get clients locally grown produce is really valuable. Open to suggestions about how the program can better serve current participants, or if you'd like to get involved. Any questions?

Food Hub Presentation by May Patiño of Humboldt Food Policy Council

NCGA has been in conversation with other local food-focused organizations to discuss the formation of an aggregation and distribution hub in Humboldt. The goal of this project is to increase the access that restaurants, businesses, food producers, and institutions have to locally grown and raised food, while providing services like bulk purchasing, storage, and marketing for members.

Introducing May Patino, Coordinator of the Food Policy Council to introduce the Food Hub concept.

Have been community conversations thinking about food aggregation and distribution issues within Humboldt County. This ongoing pandemic has been causing revisioning and strategizing about ways to strengthen the local food system. Restarted up conversations about a food hub. FPC has been doing some research around assessing and addressing impacts of pandemic in regional food system. 1. Have found our community has a really strong commitment to supporting locally produced food. 2. There is a need for increased options for coordinated food ordering, aggregation space, storage space, and distribution options. And thinking about how that might be able to address some of these community needs.

A food hub would be an organization able to connect wholesalers, retailers and institutions to local and regional food producers through services such as management and coordination of product aggregation and distribution, product storage, packaging, bulk purchasing, many different options and models out there to explore. What are some of these different models that could exist? What would make sense for serving some of these needs in our region? One of the key places NCGA comes in is understanding what our members' needs are? Any ways a food hub could be a potential benefit for you? Wanted to let you know these conversations are happening, to share your thoughts and questions, potential uses of the space. If you haven't had a chance to participate in the food hub yet, hopefully you will now, having more background on the idea of a food hub. Any questions? May will put her info in the chat if anyone wants to reach out to her directly to talk more.

Is the plan for this to be a nonprofit or commercial enterprise? We're not far enough along that line. We're looking at other food hubs for models. Nonprofit models tend to have been the most successful. We're thinking about this as a community space. Something that meets a lot of different needs of the community. Likely nonprofit, but not far enough in discussion.

Have you gotten surveys back? Yes, some responses. There was a paper survey sent out to our members as well as an online version. We can resend a digital copy of the food hub survey to members. If you have the paper survey, you can bring it to us at the market, or you can mail it to NCGA, PO Box 4232, Arcata 95518 if you're not going to see any market folks. We're excited to get all this data together.

Weekday Markets Overview (10 minutes)

- Season updates

Shoutout to our many market managers who have put this season together for us!

Overall we had a pretty successful weekday market season. Vendor attendance was generally down, especially from nonag prepared food folks, and crafters which make up a big part of SoHum markets. Some folks chose not to come to market either because they were in a high risk group, or weren't able to attend markets early on due to protocols prohibiting food/crafters. Those protocols shifted later in the season and some non/ag crafters were able to return, but not everyone did. Those markets that have more nonag vendors generally were more impacted this season by vendor attendance. At the same time we saw an increase in customer traffic and support for local food. Some folks felt more comfortable shopping at smaller weekday markets bc less crowded. Some of our vendors had their best Thursdays ever (those that do AM/PM markets). First year merging with SoHum markets, and we did well all things considered. Learned some things about how SoHum markets operate that we can adapt for our markets, like weekday market stall fee structure, etc.

David has been in Nicaragua for the season, so we had to get really creative with our staffing to fill in some of the gaps. Laura took over management of Henderson and Old Town in the beginning. Then Mia took over Old Town and Garberville later on.

(Share season market statistics, see weekday market update slides.)

Laura is happy to share specific market details and numbers with anyone interested.

Old Town - started later this season, max of 10 vendors, vendors that attended did well. Chef demos piloted at the market

Henderson - despite lack of prepared food vendors, had new vendors and the market is on par with last year. 23 vendors at the height of the season.

Fortuna - max of 19 vendors at height of season, attendance good.

McKinleyville - max of 11 vendors this season, vendor income better than last few years. Some folks did better this season than ever before. Still a slow start, may consider a later start like with Old Town, which was appropriate this year.

Willow Creek - Bryan Dykstra new manager there, did a great job. Community resident, able to leverage lots of relationships and get new vendors to attend. Max of 9 vendors that season, did fairly well despite location changes and fires out there.

Garberville - fewer vendors this season due to crafters not being able to attend early on. Had a max of 20 vendors this season. Also piloted a new market layout which allowed us to use more space. Most vendors liked the new layout.

Miranda - opened a month early this year due to demand for garden starts. Need for more produce vendors there. Thanks to Toni for her volunteer management there. Steady stream of tourists

Shelter Cove - volunteer managed by Charlotte Griggsmiller. Missed having crafters this year, but a success that they made it through the season.

Question: Are SoHum markets covering their expenses? Yes. Toni and Charlotte are volunteer managers, they are not paid staff. Can't tell them how much we appreciate them for what they do to run their markets. Those markets are small but they're very important outlet for the folks that they serve. Would like to see how we can expand outreach at those markets if that's something those managers would like to see and would benefit those communities.

Received a lot more EBT in Garberville when we normally would.

We've been lucky this year to have customers and community taking food more seriously. Hoping that the trend continues and local food and farming stays salient and top of mind for people moving into next season, even as we hopefully return to more normalcy. We need to keep the markets relevant and accessible/affordable for people and still serve our members needs.

Toni: would like to see more EBT outreach in Miranda market area. There is a great need there for people to sign up. Would like to have an outreach person come to market to help people sign up for CalFresh, like Rachel Lamell (from Changing Tides) used to in Henderson Center. Let more people know and encourage them to sign up, through the schools, whatever we can do, with publicity, etc Miranda would get a lot more people shopping if they used EBT. the local store does not accept EBT, so I think that keeps people from coming to spend their money in Miranda.

That is definitely a community we can expand out CalFresh EBT outreach. Also equates to increasing customers at market and more income moving through. Also want to figure out a way we can get EBT access.

Have been doing alot of work focusing in on these markets, and some of these markets have been struggling. So the fact we can say good things about these markets in such a challenging year is a success.

Working Groups (15 minutes)

These groups are led by NCGA board/staff and rely on member involvement. Meetings will take place via Zoom over the winter months

Tried to set up the working group schedule in advance to try and get as much participation as possible from our membership. Meetings will take place over Zoom during the winter months. You can sign up now in the chat if you like. Will send out a finalized schedule in the e-news, and we will email and call all of you who have signed up.

- Weekday Markets - Review current stall fee structures and propose a new tiered system that captures more from higher earners and reduces stall fee burden on smaller producers; present recommendations to Board. Consideration of potential schedule changes
 - CoChairs, Chris Moore and Lauren Riley
- Marketing & Branding - Review current merchandise designs; discuss advertising/outreach strategy and vision for 2021; present recommendations to Board for approval.
- Rules and Regulations - Review and update current rules and regs; present recommendations to Board for approval.
 - Melanie and Lauren chairs

- Board Recruitment & Elections - Review Board member recruitment and onboarding process and materials; create timeline including nominations window and vetting process; present to Board for review and implementation ahead of Fall 2021 board elections.
 - Has traditionally been board led, but would like to include more members in this process. Have improved the way we onboard new board members, but have had some challenges with retention and would love input.
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion - Review practices and policies that present barriers to BIPOC; continue to cultivate & grow our vision of what equity and diversity means within our organization.
 - New working group. Not new to our strategic planning vision, but new to our member conversations.
 - Cochairs Ed Cohen and David Fogle.
 - Welcome member participation in relevant and timely working group
- Fundraising & Financial Planning - ongoing and ever-important.
 - Chair: Chris Moore
- Music Selection Committee *contingency plan*.

Proposed Meeting Dates will be sent in E-News, are also list on Slide (see presentation):
 Have been hosting monthly member phone calls, and we see these regular working groups as opportunities for members to participate in regularly so we can keep the monthly connection going between members, board and staff

Do we have a Southern Humboldt working group? Yes, there are a few other working groups that are ongoing, but these are the main ones that the board identified to put energy into right now.

We do a lot of the nitty gritty work of the behind the scenes in the winter months. Great way to get to know your fellow members, good way to have your voice heard, they're really productive meetings with a small group, and they're super easy now because they're on zoom. You don't even have to leave your house. Hope we have a lot of participation in those meetings. Our members are the stuff of the organization and the organization is lacking when we don't hear from you. It's about all of us and all of our voices.

Board Elections

- 3 positions up for re-election, plus two vacancies to fill (total of 5 open slots)
- Candidate introductions.
- Note: Voting Process will include mail-in ballots and therefore results will not be available immediately, ballots are due November 21, 2020

In the past, trouble filling positions. This year was difficult. 2 board members not able to fulfill the rest of the year. Hoping through Zoom, more people would be able to participate in board meetings. Bylaws require 5 of the 7 members be farmer members, 2 members can be nonag members. Have considered bringing in fresh perspective in the past. 2 new nominees, River Walker from Happy Hearts and Niki Gribi, a community member and supporting members.

Niki: lives in Arcata. Met Ivy and Laura working at Food for people. Shops at the market every week. The market is her favorite thing about living in this area. Working in nonprofit program management for almost 20 years, lots of experience in budgets, finances, keeping organized and getting things done. Would be excited to bring those skills to NCGA.

River: Lives in Petrolia, been doing markets for 5 years. New Zoom meetings are an opportunity to be more a part of the NCGA and the board. Would like to be a part of making decisions. Attend all the weekday markets and am interested in those. Thanks for the opportunity.

David Fogle was appointed to fill a vacancy mid season. He is not here tonight to share, but is on the ballot to be ratified.

Everyone was mailed a ballot.. Once we received all of your ballots we will count them. They need to be handed in or postmarked by this Saturday. Our board election process also allows for nominations to be made from the floor. Term starts Jan 1 for new board members, and runs for 2 years. Commitment is ~4 hours per month. 1 standing board meeting every month for about 2 hours, could be longer, and we expect members who throw their name in the running that they're in the position to take on the commitment. Often a lot of work between meetings, especially in the winter when we take on this committee work. We ask that you not have more than 2 unexcused absences.

Hope Wright from Hope Spring Botanicals has also put her name in the running just now. Let's welcome Hope to say hello.

Hope: a non-ag vendor at Southern Humboldt markets. Doesn't have a lot of experience but is very motivated and enthusiastic.

Write in candidates are allowed as well.

(See slide of ballot)

Any additional nominations?

Sean Armstrong from Tule Fog Farm has expressed interest in the past. Is he interested? He is only interested if there are not enough candidates on the list. Currently his plate is full.

Reminder you can write in any candidate.

Unfortunately we won't have the fun final answer tonight but we'll let you all know in the e-news and future conversations.

Open discussion / Wrap up (15 minutes)

- An opportunity for members to discuss any additional topics

We've reached the end of our agenda in record time. We wanted to give an opportunity for our membership to share. Thank you all for being here tonight and showing up to the new and interesting format. First official online meeting definitely making history. Makes meetings more accessible for people from their homes without a long drive. Hopefully we'll hear from folks throughout the county. Feel free to sign off if you've heard what you came to hear, or you're welcome to stay for some open conversation.

David from Nicaragua. Hi, he misses us, doing well down there. Working on getting back up here.

Can you change your vote if you sent it in already? Yes, just let Laura know and she can change it for you. Bylaws allow for only one vote per member.

Several members had their first zoom tonight. Thank you for joining us!