



Report Card

Ag “Speed Dating” Between Producers & Buyers



Summary

Monday’s Ag “Speed Dating” event received an “A-” by respondents according to answers in the event Survey. “WOW” and “Very Good” were the top vote getters. Luckily no one responded with “A Big Cow Pie” - also a choice.

To view results of the Survey, please see Pages 6-8. We’d like to thank our Sponsors and all those who took time to attend, participate and volunteer to make this first Butte County EDC Speed Dating event a success! We’d also like to thank the Sacramento Area Council of Governments Rural-Urban Connections program for lending us videos on local food markets and agricultural production. These were vital in setting the stage about local food production and the challenges and rewards of Buying Fresh & Buying Local.

One comment about more seeing more “ethnic growers” was well understood. To clarify, the Hmong growers, so vital to our local food scene, were aggressively approached. Most, however, were attending the week-long funeral for General Vang Pao in Fresno and were unable to attend. We heard from Producers that you’d like to see more small restaurants, upscale food markets, caterers, super markets like Raley’s, Safeway, and Trader Joes, bigger retailers and specialty retail stores and CSA’s.

People liked the short format but wished for food throughout the event instead of just at the end. Many commented verbally (no question on the survey) that early February is a good time to hold this. Monday is good for restaurants. There was also a suggestion for a better ratio of Buyers to Producers. We still want to hear from you as we consider whether to make this an annual event.

We have many new partners and are excited to go to the next level. Many of you contributed great ideas for where to go next. Thank you again for your comments. See those comments beginning on Page 6. Our Event Budget is included on Page 9.

Please feel free to contact Debra Lucero for additional comments and pass any names along or suggestions for a future event. E-mail Debra at deblucero@sbcglobal.net or call 530-228-2860.

Objective

To expand market opportunities for smaller agricultural producers, create rural jobs and increase local food sales.

Goals

- 1. Introduce local Producers to local Buyers** - 17 of 22 Producers responded they made 39 NEW business connections. 7 of 8 Buyers responded they made 29 NEW business connections. 5 of 6 Sponsors in attendance responded they made 18 NEW business connections. Total NEW Connections: 86
- 2. Create awareness about the local food supply chain, its challenges, open land and preservation and how this coincides with agri- and nature tourism** - Our facilitated video opening was a good commentary on the challenges of supplying a local market and the benefits of planning for open space and preserving ag lands. Noelle Ferdon, Program Coordinator for Buy Fresh, Buy Local, North Valley and the Northern California Regional Land Trust; and Butte County Ag Commissioner Richard Price were on hand to help set the stage locally. They presented facts on our local ag economy and answered questions. Butte County EDC Ag Innovation Committee member and CSUC professor Lee Altier also spoke quite eloquently as a wrap-up, addressing the need for a local Food Hub and small-scale operator assistance.
- 3. Stimulate agri-business via sales and face-to-face meetings** - 3 Producers made deals at the event while 10 others responded they had 20 potential deals. Four reported no deals. Buyers at the event reported 2 deals made with 10 more in the works. And Sponsors even got in on the action, reporting 1 new deal and 7 potential deals. Total value of the deals is unknown but follow-up phone calls may assist with this process.

Materials

We produced the following items for the event:

- Flier advertising Ad “Speed Dating” Between Producers & Buyers
- Instructional sheet to Buyers, Producers & Sponsors
- Buyer’s Guide to the Event
- “Dance Cards” for Producers to record their interaction with Buyers
- Survey

Procedures

1. The event was held at the Holiday Inn in Chico from 1pm-5pm on a Monday. It was determined by the Ag Innovation Committee that anytime later than early February would be difficult to get producers to come. This was confirmed by producers in attendance.
2. Each of the Buyers were positioned in stationary positions (at tables with identifying name plates). The Growers/Producers were strategically rotated to each of the Buyers throughout the two-hour period. This was a busy, loud time of business but can be quite productive. The 5-minute limit was strictly enforced to make sure each grower met face-to-face with each of the buyers and inform them of their production and delivery and/or pick-up capabilities. They exchanged cards, Producers supplied products (in some cases), information was supplied and transactions occurred.

Participants

BUYERS

- 1. Oroville Hospital, knorris@orohosp.com
- 2. Chico Natural Foods, jlloyd@chiconatural.com
- 3. Bacio (take-out and catering), amanda@baciocatering.com (DID NOT SHOW)
- 4. Spice Creek Cafe, rebeccaspice@sbcglobal.net (DID NOT SHOW)
- 5. Chico Unified School District, tharter@chicousd.org
- 6. Associated Students, CSU, Chico, elknapp@csuchico.edu,
- 7. Center for Nutrition & Activity Promotion CNAP (35,000 students serviced), CWolff@csuchico.edu, sbianco-simeral@csuchico.edu
- 8. Paradise Unified School District, shorn@pusdk12.org
- 9. Feather Falls Casino, bob.prather@featherfallscasino.com
- 10. S&S Produce, ssproduce@sunset.net

SPONSORS

- 1. North Valley Ag Services
mryanpierce@gmail.com, dcoughlin@northvalleyagservices.com (CAME; LEFT EARLY)
- 2. Buy Fresh, Buy Local North Valley, Noelle@landconservation.org

- 3. SprayChem, nancy@spraychem.com, cliff@spraychem.com
- 4. Slater & Son, howards@slaterandson.com (NOT PHYSICALLY PRESENT)
- 5. Llano Seco, davesieperda@llanoseco.com
- 6. Mooney Farms, MooneyFarm@aol.com (NOT PHYSICALLY PRESENT)
- 7. Tracy Realty Co., budtracy@gmail.com (CAME; LEFT EARLY)
- 8. Enloe Hospital, laura.hennum@enloe.org, debbie.silveira@comcast.net
- 9. BayTec Alliance, Weldon@hignell.com (CAME; LEFT EARLY)
- 10. Barbarosa Ranchers, John.Raftery@rabobank.com
- 11. Recology, JMatz@recology.com
- 12. Sierra Nevada Brewing Co., Laura@sierranevada.com (NOT PHYSICALLY PRESENT)

PRODUCERS

- 1. Berkeley Olive Oil, Oroville, darro@berkeleyolivegrove.com (COULD NOT MAKE IT)
- 2. Bertagna Orchards & Vineyards, Inc., Chico, bertagnaorchards@yahoo.com
- 3. Feather River Gold, Oroville (Consortium of Mandarin Growers), info@mandarins4you.com
- 4. Tehama Angus Beef, Red Bluff (Beef), borror@theskybeam.com
- 5. Llano Seco, Chico (Pork), davesieperda@llanoseco.com
- 6. Pedroza Dairy & Cheese Co., Orland (Cheese), tim@realfarmsteadcheese.com
- 7. Noble Orchards, Paradise (Apples, Stone Fruits), nobleapple@att.net
- 8. Chaffin Family Orchards, Oroville (Olive oil, citrus, chicken, stone fruit & more), chris_kerston@chaffinfamilyorchards.com
- 9. Sierra Cascade Blueberry Farm, Forest Ranch (Blueberries), info@sierracascadeblueberries.com

- 10. Red Barn Walnut Co., Chico
(Nuts), redbarnbabe@aol.com, redbarnwalnuts@sbcglobal.net
- 11. GRUB CSA Farm, Chico (General Produce), grubchico@yahoo.com, srwilliams@holymonkey.com
- 12. D'Niche, Orland (Fruit Spread), dniche@dishmail.net
- 13. LaViolette Family Farms, Oroville (Peaches, Nectarines, Cherries, Apricots)
- 14. McCarty's Very Berry Ranch, Oroville (Raspberries, Boysenberries), gtm615@yahoo.com
- 15. Barbarosa Ranches, Red Bluff (grass fed beef, lamb, goat, pastured poultry (chicken and turkey), and free-range hogs), John.Raftery@rabobank.com
- 16. Skylake Ranch, Durham, (Pomegranate products), skylakeranch@aol.com
- 17. Sawmill Creek Farms, Paradise, (Heirloom Tomatoes, Peppers, Lettuce, Beans) marshall-n@sbcglobal.net
- 18. Graves Orchards, Chico (Almonds) bnrgraves@sbcglobal.net (DID NOT PARTICIPATE AS A PRODUCER)
- 19. Ariza Farms, Capay (Stone Fruits, Guava, Kiwi) michaelariza42@gmail.com
- 20. Lodestar Farms, Oroville (Olive Oil) jamie@lodestarfarms.com
- 21. Massa Organics, Chico (Rice) Greg Massa, 530-519-8628 greg@massaorganics.com
- 22. Tin Roof Bakery, Chico (Bread) Brandon Siewert, 530-892-2893 (COULD NOT MAKE IT)
- 23. Sierra Nevada Chees Co., (Goat Yogurts, Goat Cheese, Farm Cheeses) Rachel Oriana Schraeder, ros@sierranevadacheese.com
- 24. Harpos Organics (WALK-IN)
- 25. R Farm (WALK-IN)

Survey Results 85% Overall Return Rate 32 of 39 present responding (total universe was 45 however not all were physically present. Those not present were primarily Sponsors; two Producers left prior to the survey)

PRODUCERS/SELLERS RESPONSES (20 of 22 possible respondents)

How did this event meet your expectations?

2 WOW! 14 Very Good 3 Okay 0 A Big Cow Pie

Would you attend a future event aimed at increasing local food sales?

17 Very Likely 0 Not Likely 2 Perhaps 0 Not on Your Life

How was the Speed Dating portion?

17 Just right 0 Too short 2 Too long 0 None 1 Your Suggestion: Respondent wanted 7-minute sessions vs. 5-minute sessions

Did you make new business connections?

17 Yes 39 connections made of the 17 who responded "Yes" 1 No

Did you write business or have a promise of a business deal? Yes? How many deals? 3

Not today, but we have a promise of a deal. 10 Of the 10 who responded with a promise of a deal, 20 potential deals were mentioned. 4 No deals

What type of product did you sell?

3 Meat 1 Dairy 4 General Produce 1 Fruit 7 Nuts 3 Beans 2 Other

What type of Buyers or Sellers would you want at a future event?

Small restaurants, upscale markets, caterers, super markets like Raley's, Safeway, Trader Joe's, bigger retailers and specialty shops, CSA's

Would your company benefit from a cold storage facility in this area?

10 Yes 6 No 3 Maybe

Would you benefit from a commercial kitchen in this area?

11 Yes 6 No 2 Maybe

COMMENTS:

- 1. Thank you for getting the ball rolling. I would love to see a chef/farmer connection event, focused on small-scale producers (sustainable practices). And also to help to create and educate buyers on what local seasonal and sustainable means and why it's important.

2. Need ratio of buyers to producers smaller. Too much standing around - maybe 20 buyers to 25 producers.
3. Possible interest in a certified kitchen
4. For a first-time event - great job
5. Appreciate all the effort in putting this event together
6. Good Meeting - thank you!
7. I do feel that a commercial kitchen would benefit the region
8. Thanks!
9. Great format
10. Wonderful opportunity - thank you so much!
11. Without collaboration between producers, it would be hard to service larger buyers. More medium-sized buyers.
12. A mobile commercial kitchen vs. a stationary one. It's problematic for time of use and when produce is in season.
13. Provide food throughout the event

BUYERS RESPONSES (8 of 8 respondents; two Buyers did not show up)

How did this event meet your expectations?

 1 WOW! 7 Very Good 0 Okay 0 A Big Cow Pie

Would you attend a future event aimed at increasing local food sales?

 6 Very Likely 0 Not Likely 2 Perhaps 0 Not on Your Life

How was the Speed Dating portion?

 7 Just right 1 Too short 0 Too long 0 Your Suggestion

Did you make new business connections?

 7 29 Yes (How many?) 0 No

Did you write business or have a promise of a business deal? Yes? How many deals? 2

Not today, but we have a promise of a deal. 10 How many? 4 No deals

What type of product did you sell? (n/a to Buyers)

___ Meat ___ Dairy ___ General Produce ___ Fruit ___ Nuts ___ Beans ___ Other

What type of Buyers or Sellers would you want at a future event?

More grains, more organic sellers of all kinds, more local meats, more local grower, ethnic growers _____

Would your company benefit from a cold storage facility in this area?

___4___ Yes ___1___ No ___3___ Maybe

Would you benefit from a commercial kitchen in this area?

___ Yes ___6___ No ___2___ Maybe

COMMENTS:

- 1. Thanks! Good to see all these growers!
- 2. Maybe a couple more minutes on the speed dating portion
- 3. More organic (doesn't have to be certified) sellers and growers



SPONSOR RESPONSES (5 of 6 respondents in attendance throughout the event)

How did this event meet your expectations?

___2___ WOW! ___3___ Very Good ___0___ Okay ___0___ A Big Cow Pie

Would you attend a future event aimed at increasing local food sales?

___5___ Very Likely ___0___ Not Likely ___0___ Perhaps ___0___ Not on Your Life

How was the Speed Dating portion?

___3___ Just right ___0___ Too short ___0___ Too long ___n/a___ Your Suggestion

Did you make new business connections?

___5___ ___18___ Yes (How many?) ___0___ No

Did you write business or have a promise of a business deal? Yes? How many deals? ___1___

Not today, but we have a promise of a deal. ___7___ How many? ___0___ No deals

What type of product did you sell?

___ Meat ___ Dairy ___ General Produce ___ Fruit ___ Nuts ___ Beans ___2___ Other

What type of Buyers or Sellers would you want at a future event?

Would your company benefit from a cold storage facility in this area?

Yes No Maybe (one answered n/a)

Would you benefit from a commercial kitchen in this area?

Yes No Maybe

COMMENTS:

- I. Perhaps some additional ag-related informational/educational break-out sessions? We heard interest in HACCP Programs; Organic processing issues.

Budget

INCOME

Event Sponsors	\$1,770.00
TOTAL Income	\$1,770.00

EXPENDITURES

Printing	\$350
Room Rental	\$400
Food	\$375
Beverages	\$160
Service Charge	\$187.00
Tax	\$92.56
TOTAL Expenditures	\$1,564.56

PROFIT from EVENT \$250.50

Debra Lucero & Associates In-Kind Time	\$1,500.00
Associate Time	\$500.00
	\$2,000.00

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR ON-SITE VOLUNTEERS: Ray Laager, Lauren Fee, Connie Wright, Earl Bloor (photography) and our Ag Innovation Committee