

San Mateo County Food System Assessment

A Practical Tool for
Food System Change

San Mateo County
Food System Alliance

MAY 2014



San Mateo County Food System Assessment



The San Mateo County Food System Alliance (SMFSA) is a community-based collaborative of farmers, fishermen, farmers' market managers, public health and environmental professionals, garden-based educators, distributors, and residents seeking to promote and support a sustainable food system. We aim to increase access to healthy, local food for all residents, increase the economic viability of our food system, and ensure that land and waterways are not just maintained, but are preserved for future generations.

Ag Innovations Network, a non-profit organization that convenes stakeholders to discuss challenges and create solutions to improve the food system, facilitates the San Mateo County Food System Alliance.

San Mateo County Food System Alliance, 2014

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Executive Summary

BACKGROUND

The San Mateo County Food System Alliance (Alliance) is a collaborative of farmers, fishermen, farmers' market managers, distributors, garden-based educators, residents, and public health and environmental professionals seeking to promote and support a sustainable food system. In this type of food system, all people have equal access to local,¹ healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate food; farmers and fishermen earn enough to sustain and maintain their businesses; and farmers, fishermen, and other stakeholders protect our land and waterways for future generations' use. Formed in 2006, the Alliance outlined several goals to achieve a sustainable food system. These include facilitating a connection between county producers and institutions, engaging parents in farm to school² efforts, promoting a garden in every school, ensuring that farmers have access to land and can build equity on their land, encouraging increased local food production by looking at land-use patterns in the county, and assisting cities with adopting sustainable food policies.

Working toward these goals requires a shared understanding of the state of our current food system. As a result, the Alliance decided to conduct a comprehensive local food system assessment. Get Healthy San Mateo County, an initiative that works collaboratively with individuals, communities, and organizations to bring about positive long-term change to the environments where people live, learn, work, and play, provided staff support for this report.

This document shares secondary data and key findings in five major components of the food system: production, processing, distribution, consumption, and reuse/waste disposal.³ It describes trends, challenges, and opportunities. The Alliance hopes that policymakers, residents, and advocates will review the programs and policies outlined in each chapter, and that these ideas will inspire action in communities across the county.

Photos courtesy of:

San Mateo County Food System Alliance
Don Pemberton
Redwood City School District

¹ Local food is produce, fish, or meat grown, harvested, or raised within the boundaries of the county.

² Farm to school is "the practice of sourcing local food for schools or preschools and providing agriculture, health and nutrition education opportunities, such as school gardens, farm field trips and cooking lessons. Farm to school improves the health of children and communities while supporting local and regional farmers." Source: The National Farm to School Network, accessed December 18, 2013, <http://www.farmtoschool.org/>.

³ Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition, "Food System," accessed October 4, 2013 <http://www.kcfoodpolicy.org/>.



KEY FINDINGS

PRODUCTION

- Though San Mateo County is small in land area, agricultural production is robust. In 2012, the county had an agricultural production value of \$140 million.⁴ Using a multiplier of 1.35,⁵ the agricultural production value is estimated to be approximately \$189 million.
- The production value of food crops and total number of acres in production has been decreasing over time, except for a very slight increase in 2012.⁶
- Seventeen percent of the agricultural production value comes from edible crops, and 81% comes from floral and nursery crops.⁷ The three top-grossing edible crops were Brussels sprouts (\$8.7 million), leeks (\$1.5 million), and peas (\$738,000).⁸
- San Mateo County producers grow over 50 types of vegetables, over 30 types of fruits and nuts, and six types of domesticated animals.⁹
- The production value of seafood, \$10.2 million in 2011, has been on the rise for the past six years. With a multiplier of 1.58 to 1.77, the multiplier for seafood, the value was between \$16 million and \$18 million in 2011. The main grossing commercial seafood was crab at \$8.2 million.¹⁰
- Between 1990 and 2010, the total amount of important farmland, as defined by the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Monitoring and Mapping Program, dropped 42%, from 9,169 to 5,292 acres.¹¹ The primary cause of the loss of productive San Mateo County farmland has been cessation of use rather than development, as was the main cause about 60 years ago.¹²
- Decreased availability of water is one of the primary causes of the decrease in active farmland production. Small streams are the primary source of irrigation water along the San Mateo County coast. Farmers limit or curtail use of streams when they are low, since these streams provide essential spawning and rearing habitat for steelhead trout, which are part of the commercial fishery in San Mateo County.¹³
- Despite a decrease in productive farmland, the number of San Mateo County farmers has been increasing since 2006.¹⁴

4 "San Mateo County 2012 Agricultural Crop Report," San Mateo County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures, accessed May 21, 2013, <http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/Attachments/agw/pdfs/cropreports/2010s/2012%20Crop%20Report.pdf>.

5 The multiplier effect refers to an increase in income when money is reinvested in a community. The value of the multiplier varies depending on the crop, location, and existing infrastructure. The Monterey Institute of International Studies found that every dollar of agricultural production contributes \$1.35 in economic activity in San Mateo County. A report about this study will be released in spring 2014.

6 "San Mateo County 2012 Agricultural Crop Report," San Mateo County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures, accessed May 21, 2013, <http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/Attachments/agw/pdfs/cropreports/2010s/2012%20Crop%20Report.pdf>.

7 "San Mateo County 2011 Agricultural Crop Report," San Mateo County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures, accessed May 21, 2013, <http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/Attachments/agw/pdfs/cropreports/2010s/2011%20Crop%20Report.pdf>.

8 Ibid.

9 Data obtained from the San Mateo County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures.

10 "San Mateo County 2012 Agricultural Crop Report," San Mateo County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures, accessed May 21, 2013, <http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/Attachments/agw/pdfs/cropreports/2010s/2012%20Crop%20Report.pdf>.

11 The California Department of Conservation's Farmland Monitoring and Mapping Program defines important farmland as prime farmlands, farmlands of statewide importance, unique farmlands, and farmlands of local importance. Source: "Important Farmland Categories," California Department of Conservation, accessed November 22, 2013, http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Pages/map_categories.aspx.

12 "Sustaining Our Agricultural Bounty: An Assessment of the Current State of Farming and Ranching in the San Francisco Bay Area," American Farmland Trust, Greenbelt Alliance, Sustainable Agriculture Education, accessed November 22, 2013, http://www.sagecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/sustaining-our-agricultural-bounty-an-assessment-of-agriculture-in-the-sf-bay-area_march-2011.pdf.

13 Ibid.

14 "San Mateo County 2011 Agricultural Crop Report," San Mateo County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures, accessed May 21, 2013, <http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/Attachments/agw/pdfs/cropreports/2010s/2011%20Crop%20Report.pdf> and "San Mateo County 2006 Agricultural Crop Report," San Mateo County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures, accessed May 21, 2013, <http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/Attachments/agw/pdfs/cropreports/2000s/2006%20Crop%20Report.pdf>.

- Farmworkers play a critical role in production, and reports on the availability of affordable housing and the quality of farmworker housing vary. Some of these reports describe clean, affordable, long-term housing that helps retain valuable employees,¹⁵ and others describe overcrowded housing that lacks basic amenities.¹⁶
- Many San Mateo County residents participate in noncommercial food production. An assessment of county residents found that more than one in four people grow and consume food from their own garden,¹⁷ and as of 2011, 52% of San Mateo County public schools and 48% of private schools had vegetable or herb gardens.¹⁸

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRODUCTION

- Explore economic incentives for farmers and greenhouse operators to grow more edible crops.
- Determine how to use county GIS maps to encourage more agricultural production.
- Continue to work with local open space district and local land trusts to focus efforts on protecting agricultural land, increasing access to land, and building equity.
- Identify and support policies and other opportunities to improve affordable housing options, access to health care, and transportation for agricultural workers and their families.
- Explore agricultural conservation tools such as easements, affirmative easements specifically with parcels that are being actively farmed, opportunity to purchase at agriculture value, and equity leases.
- Adopt policies and programs to promote and support more backyard, school, and community gardens.
- Support and promote resources, programs, and funding to help local families pass their agricultural business on to the next generation by collaborating with organizations like California FarmLink.
- Promote education, training, and incubator programs such as UC Cooperative Extension's Beginner Farmer and Rancher Development Program for new farmers and ranchers.
- Identify and support policies for improving legal assistance to farmers at a pro bono or reduced rate when legal circumstances arise around apprenticeships and regulations.
- Continue to advocate for regulatory permit streamlining to facilitate construction of off-stream water storage for agricultural irrigation.
- Make a county GIS vacant parcels map that indicates potential sites for community gardens available for public use.
- Support sustainable food systems and urban agricultural education for youth, adults, and seniors.
- Explore and, if necessary, revise zoning laws that may discourage or prevent residents of certain cities from establishing backyard gardens or small-animal husbandry.
- Incorporate good food education into pre-K, elementary, middle, and high school curricula for San Mateo County students.

¹⁵ Steve Oku, e-mail message to author; November 6, 2013 and Burns, B.J. Personal communication, November 14, 2013.

¹⁶ "San Mateo County 2007–2014 Draft Housing Element, December 2012," County of San Mateo, accessed November 22, 2013, http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/Attachments/planning/PDFs/Major_Projects/Housing%20Element%20Project%20Draft/SMCo%20Housing%20Element%20May%202012.pdf.

¹⁷ "2013 Community Health Needs Assessment: Health & Quality of Life in San Mateo County," the Healthy Community Collaborative of San Mateo County, 2013, accessed May 24, 2013, http://www.plsinfo.org/healthysmc/pdf/2013_Executive_Summary_Final.pdf.

¹⁸ In 2010–2011, 171 San Mateo County public and 50 private schools were contacted. This is less than the total number of public and private schools in San Mateo County school districts. Though the percentage of gardens in each school district varied, data for specific school districts is not presented here because not all schools were contacted. A more robust data set is forthcoming from the UCSC Life Lab survey. This data will be available in spring 2014.

PROCESSING

- Based on the California Economic Development's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), in the first quarter of 2012, food manufacturers made up over one-tenth of the county's entire manufacturing industry. This census found that the number of processing establishments has decreased in the past 15 years and is currently dominated by bakeries and tortilla manufacturing, and sugar and confectionery product manufacturing.
- According to the QCEW, the total number of processing establishments in San Mateo County peaked at 123 establishments in 1998 and has since declined to 78 in 2012.
- Anecdotally, many producers process their goods outside of San Mateo County.
- The total revenue of the food manufacturing industry in 2009, the latest year for which data is available, was \$5.1 million, or 12.3% of the total manufacturing revenue in San Mateo County.¹⁹
- Ranchers, who must have animals slaughtered at a USDA-inspected and certified facility, and then butchered into individual cuts at a USDA-inspected facility in order to sell directly to consumers, restaurants, or stores, face many barriers to processing. The processing establishments are located a few hours' drive away, these facilities are small, and it can take months to schedule processing of one or two animals.²⁰
- There is limited data on food retail workers in San Mateo County. However, the U.S. Department of Labor suggests that the food retail industry pays its employees lower wages than most other industries, and food system workers often face poor working conditions.
- A national survey conducted by the Food Chain Workers Alliance found that over three-fourths of food workers surveyed didn't have paid sick days or didn't know if they had paid sick days, over half worked when sick, close to a third didn't always receive a lunch break, and over half had suffered an injury or health problem on the job.²¹

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROCESSING

- Explore how to process more San Mateo County products within the county.
- Assess the feasibility of establishing a county-based USDA-certified slaughter facility and USDA-certified cut-and-wrap (butcher shop) to enable ranchers to process beef more easily.
- Explore the formation of a county-based seafood distribution company.²²
- Determine how to increase the participation of eligible food system workers to access health insurance, Cal-Fresh, Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), and other governmental programs that can help reduce economic and health disparities.
- Participate in and serve as drop-off points for Community Supported Agriculture & Fisheries.

DISTRIBUTION

- Food grown in San Mateo County may be distributed to a wholesale distributor, a packing or processing facility, or a produce or seafood distributor, or directly to a consumer.

19 United States Census Bureau, 2012 Nonemployer Statistics, accessed November 22, 2013, <http://www.census.gov/econ/nonemployer/>.

20 Kathy Webster, e-mail message to author; December 16, 2013.

21 S. Jayaraman, the Food Chain Workers Alliance, "The Hands That Feed Us: Challenges and Opportunities for Workers Along the Food Chain" (2012): 3-68, accessed October 21, 2013, <http://foodchainworkers.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Hands-That-Feed-Us-Report.pdf>.

22 The Alliance hired Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) to research and analyze opportunities to aggregate, market, and distribute county-grown products. CAFF identified several strategies to enhance the livelihoods of food producers and increase buyers' and consumers' access to locally grown and harvested products. This report will be available online at the San Mateo County Food System Alliance website in February 2014.

- As there are five main hospitals that serve over 6,000 meals daily and employ close to 11,000 people,²³ more than 90,000 students attend public schools, about 1.5 million meals are served annually in county jails, and the top 10 employers have about 30,000 employees, there is a very large potential market for products grown or harvested in San Mateo County.
- Between 1997 and 2007, the number of farms engaged in direct sales (e.g., to a consumer via a farmers' market, community supported agriculture or CSA,²⁴ or farm stand) remained around 37, yet the value of direct market sales increased by 20% from \$820,000 to \$980,000, adjusted for inflation.²⁵
- Recognizing an interest in buying and selling goods locally, the San Mateo County Convention and Visitors Bureau, the San Mateo County Farm Bureau, and the San Mateo County Harbor District developed "As Fresh As It Gets." It is both a label that signifies that produce, fish, meat, dairy, flowers, or wine has been grown or harvested in the county, and an annual program recognizing restaurants, catering companies, and bed-and-breakfasts that prioritize buying and preparing meals with local products. The San Mateo County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures and the San Mateo County Health System funded and supported this project.
- The Alliance hired Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) to assess the feasibility of aggregating, processing, and distributing county-grown products to public and private institutions. The study recommended four strategic directions that should be implemented simultaneously: coordinating the production of crops to be sold to institutions; enhancing the As Fresh As It Gets brand; exploring whether horticultural greenhouses could be used for an extended season for fruit and vegetable production; and supporting an independently operated service facility that would aggregate, process, and help distribute products to institutions. More information will be available on the Alliance website in spring 2014.

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISTRIBUTION

- Incorporate a preference for local food in purchasing contracts.
- Develop ordinances encouraging institutions and businesses to buy products with the As Fresh As It Gets label.
- Encourage institutional food buyers to use their collective buying power to influence the food supply chain and provide healthier food and more foods grown, raised, harvested, and processed in San Mateo County.
- Explore funding to hire a market facilitator to implement some of the recommendations noted by the CAFF feasibility study, such as coordinating production and facilitating a link between buyers and consumers.



Photo courtesy of Community Alliance with Family Farmers

²³ Francine Serafin-Dickson, e-mail message to author, December 13, 2013.

²⁴ Community supported agriculture consists of a network of individuals who support one or more local farms, and both producers and consumers share in both the risks and benefits of production. Source: Suzanne DeMuth, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA): An Annotated Bibliography and Resource Guide, United States Department of Agriculture, 1993, accessed December 4, 2013, <http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/csa/csadef.shtml>.

²⁵ American Farmland Trust, Greenbelt Alliance, "Sustaining Our Agricultural Bounty: An Assessment of the Current State of Farming and Ranching in the San Francisco Bay Area," Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE), March 2011.

CONSUMPTION

- Between 1970 and 2010, Americans' daily calorie consumption increased by almost 500 calories.²⁶
- Americans cook less and eat out more frequently now than in the past.²⁷ According to the 2011–2012 California Health Interview Survey, almost one-third of San Mateo County residents consumed fast food once a week, and almost 9% consumed fast food four or more times a week—similar to the state averages of 37% and 11%, respectively.²⁸
- The proportion of overweight adults in San Mateo County has been rising but is starting to decline. It increased from 50.8% in 1998 to 56.7% in 2008, but decreased to 55.4% in 2013.²⁹
- The proportion of obese adults continues to rise. In San Mateo County, it increased from 13.4% in 1998 to 21.7% in 2013.³⁰ Obesity and related diseases are estimated to cost San Mateo County approximately \$574 million annually.³¹
- Regarding children, the number of overweight and obese fifth-, seventh-, and ninth-grade public school students in San Mateo County decreased by 5.6%, from 36.11% to 34.07%, between 2005 and 2010. This is lower than the state average of 38%.³² However, some school districts continue to have high percentages of students who are overweight or obese (i.e., South San Francisco, San Bruno, and Daly City).³³
- Over the past five years, there was a 46% decrease in daily soda consumption among county children aged 2–11 but a 17% increase in daily soda consumption among county youth aged 12–17.³⁴
- Most county residents have many options for purchasing food at one of 68 grocery stores, 487 corner stores (6,000 square feet or less), 972 counter service restaurants (also known as fast-food outlets), 911 full-service or sit-down restaurants, or 235 specialty restaurants, which include places like doughnut shops, coffee shops, and ice cream shops.³⁵
- While numerous establishments sell food, not all are healthy retailers. The Retail Food Environment Index (RFEI) is a ratio of unhealthy to healthy food retailers in an area.³⁶ In 2011, San Mateo County had an average RFEI of 4.5. This means that there were nearly five unhealthy retailers for every healthy retailer.³⁷

26 US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, "Loss Adjusted Food Availability Data," accessed December 31, 2013, <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/chart-gallery/detail.aspx?chartId=40070&ref=collection&embed=True&widgetId=39734#.UsNN6tjDsef>.

27 Bing-Hwan Lin and Rosanna Mentzer Morrison, "Food and Nutrient Intake Data: Taking a Look at the Nutritional Quality of Foods Eaten at Home and Away from Home," *Amber Waves* 10(2), Economic Research Service/USDA, June 2012, accessed July 9, 2013, <http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/783958/Data-feature.pdf>.

28 2011–2012 California Health Interview Survey, accessed November 18, 2013, <http://ask.chis.ucla.edu/main/DQ3/topic.asp>.

29 "2013 Community Needs Health Assessment, Health and Quality of Life in San Mateo," San Mateo County, accessed November 14, 2013, <http://sm-health.org/sites/default/files/docs/HPP/2013FullReport%28low%29.pdf>.

30 *Ibid.*

31 Chenoweth & Associates, Inc., "The Economic Costs of Overweight, Obesity, and Physical Inactivity among California Adults—2006," California Center for Public Health Advocacy, 2009, 1–9.

32 Susan H. Babey, Joelle Wolstein, Allison L. Diamant, Amanda Bloom, and Harold Goldstein, "A Patchwork of Progress: Changes in Overweight and Obesity among California 5th, 7th, and 9th Graders, 2005–2010," 2011, UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, accessed December 18, 2013, <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/8wr3t0zc>.

33 *Ibid.*

34 Susan H. Babey, Malia Jones, Hongjian Yu, and Harold Goldstein, "Bubbling over: Soda consumption and its link to obesity in California." UCLA Health Policy Research Brief, 2009.

35 San Mateo County Health Policy, Planning, Epidemiology Unit. A grocery store is any retail food store that has more than 6,000 square feet and has been identified by Environmental Health food inspectors to sell fruits and vegetables. A corner store has 6,000 square feet or less and may or may not sell fruits and vegetables. Due to limitations in the data collection methods and categorization, these definitions are approximate.

36 The Health System defined healthy food outlets as those that sell fruits and vegetables and unhealthy food outlets as those restaurants that offer counter service. San Mateo County Health System Environmental Health Division and Health Policy and Planning, Epidemiology Unit.

37 San Mateo County Health System, "Data and Community Health Profiles," Get Healthy San Mateo County, 2012, accessed December 16, 2013, <http://gethealthysmc.org/data>.

- East Palo Alto is the only community designated as a food desert in San Mateo County.³⁸ The term food desert, as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture, is a region where healthy, fresh, affordable food is difficult to obtain.³⁹
- Overall, a survey of San Mateo County residents found that the overwhelming majority, 77%, rated the ease of accessing affordable fresh fruits and vegetables as “excellent” or “very good.” However, women, young adults, people with a high school education or less, those living below 200% of the federal poverty level,⁴⁰ blacks, Hispanics/Latinos, and residents living in the South County region rated access to affordable fresh fruits and vegetables as “fair” or “poor” more frequently than other respondents.⁴¹
- Food insecurity, defined as a lack of access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally relevant food at all times,⁴² in San Mateo County increased by 51.6%, from 28,000 in 2001 to 41,000 in 2009.⁴³ Some barriers to purchasing healthy food may include significant distance to a healthy food retail outlet from a person’s home or place of work, unreliable or nonexistent transportation, and lack of affordable, healthy food.
- As a result, food assistance programs diligently work to keep pace with demand. Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties provides food to low-income residents through 210 community-based organizations that have over 430 satellite locations. Between 2011 and 2012, they fed an average of 72,151 people per month in San Mateo County and distributed 11.8 million pounds of food, over half of which was fresh fruits and vegetables.⁴⁴ In 2012, the need for food grew by nearly 9%, yet food assistance programs kept pace by growing 8% in San Mateo County.⁴⁵
- Moreover, Village Harvest, a nonprofit that gleans⁴⁶ produce from backyards and small orchards in Santa Clara, San Mateo, and Yolo Counties, donates gleaned produce to community agencies such as Ecumenical Hunger Program in East Palo Alto and Hope House in Redwood City. In 2012, 231,291 pounds of produce were gleaned, of which 8,152 pounds were harvested in San Mateo County and 5,441 pounds were distributed throughout the county.⁴⁷
- Another kind of food assistance is CalFresh⁴⁸ or food stamps. Over the past six years, the number of residents participating in CalFresh has increased from over 21,000 in 2006 to nearly 56,000 in 2012.⁴⁹ Between 53,570 and 67,674 people were eligible but were not receiving CalFresh benefits as determined by an analysis of eligible versus participating residents.⁵⁰

38 US Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, “Food Access Research Atlas,” accessed October 21, 2013, <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/fooddesert/fooddesert.html>.

39 Ibid.

40 According to the 2013 Federal Poverty Guidelines, 200% of the Federal Poverty Level for a household of four is \$47,100 or less. Source: <http://www.familiesusa.org/resources/tools-for-advocates/guides/federal-poverty-guidelines.html>.

41 “2013 Community Needs Health Assessment, Health and Quality of Life in San Mateo,” County of San Mateo, accessed August 21, 2013, <http://sm-health.org/sites/default/files/docs/HPP/2013FullReport%28low%29.pdf>.

42 “Food Security,” USDA Food and Nutrition Services, accessed May 24, 2013, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsec/>.

43 M. Pia Chaparro, Brent Langellier, Kerry Birnbach, Matthew Sharp, and Gail Harrison, “Nearly Four Million Californians Are Food Insecure,” UCLA Center for Health Policy Research Brief, June 2012, <http://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/publications/Documents/PDF/FoodPBrevised7-11-12.pdf>.

44 Susan Takalo, e-mail message to author; January 8, 2014.

45 Ibid.

46 Gleaning is the process whereby volunteers or farm owners harvest and donate surplus fresh produce from backyards, small orchards, and farms.

47 Craig Diserens, e-mail message to author; August 1, 2012.

48 CalFresh, also known as food stamps, provides low-income eligible individuals and households with a debit card that can be used for the purchase of most types of foods at grocery stores and other stores that accept CalFresh in San Mateo County. Source: “CalFresh,” San Mateo County Human Services Agency, accessed October 10, 2013, <http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/portal/site/hsa/menuitem.cdaaf542325a7a5174452b31d17332a0/vgnextoid=f35153bc-299d0210VgnVCM1000001d37230aRCRD>.

49 Data obtained from the San Mateo County Human Services Agency, 2013.

50 The San Mateo County Health Policy and Planning Division collaborated with the San Mateo County Human Services Agency and the Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties to document the gap in the number of people participating and the number of people eligible for CalFresh. Using methodology from a Food Research and Action Council (FRAC) publication, “SNAP Access in Urban America, January 2011,” this analysis subtracted the number of people enrolled in CalFresh in San Mateo County, provided by the San Mateo County Human Service Agency, from the number of income-eligible residents for CalFresh, based on the 2006–2010 American Community Survey when an individual’s income was equal or less than 130% of the Federal Poverty Level.

- If all eligible residents participated in CalFresh, economic activity would likely increase and access to food would be enhanced. Specifically, one report estimates that the county could earn an additional \$84.8 million, resulting in a \$152 million increase in activity due to a multiplier effect.⁵¹
- WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) offers food vouchers for affordable, healthy food and nutrition education to San Mateo County pregnant mothers and their children who are five years old and younger. In March 2013, the San Mateo County WIC offices served about 13,475 clients. As of March 2013, they were running at 90% of their caseload, or 12,138 clients.⁵²
- In 2009, nearly 20,000 San Mateo County students participated in the National Free and Reduced Lunch program, but another 10,000 children were eligible but not enrolled.⁵³ Over 7,000 students participated in the National Free and Reduced Breakfast program, but another 12,000 were eligible but were not enrolled.⁵⁴

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSUMPTION

- Collaborate with community partners (e.g., cities, the County, the County Health System, and others) to review data such as the RFEI and high rates of overweight and obese youth, and implement activities (e.g., conducting a healthy corner store makeover, creating a healthy corner store network, or developing a healthy mobile vending policy) to increase the number of retail outlets that offer healthy food.
- Adopt wellness policies that offer guidelines for food and beverages served in internal meetings and at public events.
- Develop programs and policies to increase participation in food assistance programs (e.g., the Free and Reduced school lunch and breakfast programs, CalFresh, WIC, after-school snack and dinner programs, and the many programs offered by Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties).
- Explore ways to help more stores accept CalFresh and WIC.

REUSE AND WASTE DISPOSAL

- Waste management policies (e.g. AB 939 and AB 341) can promote a sustainable food system by encouraging the diversion of food scraps and other organic materials into compost facilities. Compost is a beneficial substance that enriches soil and can be made available to farmers and gardeners.⁵⁵
- There is widespread availability of waste management programs for residences and businesses. In fact, 17 out of 21 jurisdictions provided curbside pickup of both yard and food waste for residents.⁵⁶
- One way to assess waste management compliance is assessing the residential disposal per capita or employment disposal per capita in each jurisdiction. Data indicate that all cities met their residential disposal per capita targets and all but two cities met their employment disposal per capita targets.⁵⁷
- Implementing AB 341, which encourages 75% of California waste to be source-reduced, recycled, or composted (which includes anaerobic digestion) by 2020, could generate economic growth opportunities. With enhancements in composting and recycling infrastructure, collecting and processing materials and manufacturing new products, 100,000 full or part-time jobs could be added to California's economy.⁵⁸

51 Kenneth Hanson, The Food Assistance National Input-Output Multiplier (FANIOM) Model and Stimulus Effects of SNAP. ERR-103. U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, October 2010, http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/134117/err103_1.pdf.

52 Sujatha Tadimeti, e-mail message to author; May 3, 2012.

53 California Food Policy Advocates, "2010 San Mateo County Nutrition and Food Insecurity Profile," accessed January 13, 2014, <http://cfpa.net/GeneralNutrition/CFPAPublications/CountyProfiles/2010/CountyProfile-SanMateo-2010.pdf>.

54 Ibid.

55 "California's New Goal: 75% Recycling," CalRecycle, accessed February 10, 2014, <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/75percent/Plan.pdf>.

56 "Haulers," San Mateo County, Recycle Works, 2013, accessed February 5, 2014, http://www.recycleworks.org/resident/haulers.html#aw_sanmateo.

57 "Per Capita Disposal and Goal Measurement (2007 and Later)," Recycle Works: A Program of San Mateo County, http://www.recycleworks.org/per_cap_disposal.html#2010, accessed February 10, 2014.

58 "Update on AB 341 Legislative Report," Cal Recycle, October 2013, accessed February 12, 2014, <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/75percent/UpdateOct13.pdf>.

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR REUSE/WASTE DISPOSAL

- Explore ways to support cities and the county to implement AB 341, and use and distribute city- or county-made compost.
- Reduce loss and waste in the food system.



NEXT STEPS

The Alliance will review and analyze data from this assessment to observe trends, gaps, challenges, and opportunities in the San Mateo County food system. In addition to reviewing and analyzing data from this study, the Alliance will incorporate findings from other studies into its analysis, most of which should be completed by spring 2014. These include an assessment of the feasibility of aggregating, processing, and distributing county-grown products; an analysis of the viability of San Mateo County agriculture and how Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) can preserve more farmland; and findings on the economic multiplier effect of food and other crops grown in San Mateo County.

As a result of this work, the Alliance will prioritize programs and policies for the upcoming year; engage with various community stakeholders on strategy development and potential partnerships, and identify indicators to measure progress over time, helping us to ensure that we are effectively working toward supporting San Mateo County's food system in a holistic way.



Ag Innovations Network
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