

HEALTH LEADERSHIP NETWORK
CDFA STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
March 3, 2010
Lake County Health Services

In attendance: Debra Sommerfield, Lake County Administration; Rachel Elkins, UC Pomology Advisor; Susan Jen and Jackie Armstrong, Health Leadership Network.

LOCAL FOODS FORUM: Susan reported that she and Jackie hand-delivered 100 invitations to local buyers for the Lake County Local Foods Forum. Invitations were also distributed electronically to HLN members and members of Farmers' Finest collaborative. An article was included in the last edition of the Farm Bureau newsletter and press releases regarding the Forum and Cook-Off would be broadcast this week. Jackie provided a list of registrations to date.

Susan added that the distribution was focused on growers and buyers with the expectation that they would be able to make connections that would expand access to local produce in keeping with the purpose of the Forum: to promote buying locally-grown produce and highlight marketing advantages.

ONLINE ORDERING SYSTEM RFP: Susan said that she planned to announce and distribute the RFP for a Lake County online ordering system at the Local Foods Forum and then follow that with distribution to other places including the Chamber of Commerce.

In response to Susan's request for feedback, Rachel said that she had forwarded the draft RFP to Shermain Hardesty, who is far more expert in this area, for review. Rachel added that the person selected to manage and promote the system needed to be someone that the growers would trust. Susan agreed that contractor selection would be critical to the success of the system, adding that the proposal needed to include a commitment to training growers and buyers in how to use the system as well as a business plan that demonstrated sustainability beyond the grant term. In response to Susan's comment that it seemed logical that there would have to be some fee for service, Rachel said that a membership fee might also be considered. Rachel added that participation would be voluntary.

Debra recommended that the system not be allowed to go live until there were a number of buyers and sellers participating and that a personal feel should be a design criteria with photos and brief statements from the growers about their operation or philosophy. She said that a major question that remained unanswered was whether the system should be local or regional.

Rachel said that it was impossible for growers to make a living selling only in Lake County and that she believed that they shouldn't expect someone else to find their business for them anyway. She thought that an important part of farming was finding markets for your product and that the online system would be most useful to growers and buyers after those initial relationships were established. Rachel added that meeting federal and state reimbursement requirements might present a challenge for local growers selling to institutions.

FUTURE MEETINGS: It was the consensus of those present that 1 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month would be the best day and time for monthly meetings through June 2010. Less frequent meetings would be scheduled for the duration of the grant term.

Jackie will email an updated Foods Forum program to members of the CDFA Steering Committee and Nicole Gentry so that Rachel can broadcast it to her farmers group.

Rachel suggested that Susan contact Julie Featherston, 4H Advisor for Children's Nutrition.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.