

California Foodshed Funders Final Report to Nell Newman Foundation February 29, 2016

We are writing to share some exciting updates from the California Foodshed Funders and give you a sense of what's in store for 2016, made possible with generous support of the Nell Newman Foundation. We are so glad you've joined us to help us grow a more dynamic and just food system in California and beyond and hope that you'll continue your support in 2016. All indications point to 2016 being a pivotal year.

In 2015, we focused on learning from outside experts while building our organization. We met with leaders such as Kathleen Merrigan, Mark Bittman, Navina Khanna, Marion Nestle, and Patrick Holden. We toured ranches that are building healthy soils and regenerative landscapes for our food systems, including Stemple Creek Ranch, True Grass Ranch, and TomKat Ranch. We also met to discuss projects, share knowledge, and explore how we can create meaningful impact as a group. Finally, four new member organizations have joined us, with two more in conversation.

In the process of coming together on a regular basis, we discovered that this group contains a great wealth of knowledge, experience, and depth of thought from which we can all benefit. Our best investment of our limited time, as a group, may be to learn from each other and identify leverage points (and funder opportunities) to collaboratively shift our food and farming systems in California.

Therefore, starting in 2016, we are focusing more on peer learning from within our community, including how our funders make grant awards, what we're funding, and who else we can inspire to fund critical, underserved, California food systems projects.

We are hosting a series of monthly meetings with in-depth, open conversations for our contributing members to share and discuss our work. We expect to host six to eight of them, and we have added a video and phone conference option for remote attendance. In addition, we have begun hosting a series of meetings to better understand the food and agriculture policy landscape in California, and create a host committee for the annual SAFSF policy meeting taking place in Sacramento in December 2016. Each quarter, we will also hold a larger, in-depth presentation from one of our funders or a recognized expert, open to the broader California Foodshed Funders community (non-contributing members and networks).

We strive to build upon the trust we have developed over the last two years and dig deeper into our individual grantmaking objectives, while being open to new ideas and organizational improvement. Currently we have 10 contributing member organizations (plus three pending), most of whom attend a large number of our meetings.

Sarah's role and this coordinated effort are only made possible by the collective financial support of our members. The \$5,000 grant from Nell Newman Foundation helped support two

months of Sarah's monthly salary of \$3,900, including a 10% fee (\$500) to our fiscal sponsor Community Initiatives.

We thank you for your participation. If you continue to see value in this peer network and our ongoing efforts to expand our impact on California foodsheds, we hope that you will renew and even consider increasing your participation in 2016.

Some of our accomplishments to date under Sarah's leadership include:

- Secured \$68,000 from 10 partners, with three more committed for 2016
- Connected with members to discover interests and focus areas
- Co-created a vision and plan for future learning and information sharing
- Hosted or Co-Hosted the following events:
 - Three steering committee meetings
 - Lunch gathering with speaker Kathleen Merrigan (January)
 - Member networking & check-in at EcoFarm conference (January)
 - Lunch meeting with Marion Nestle (March)
 - Conversation on a national food policy with Mark Bittman and Navina Khanna (June)
 - Holiday gathering with special guest speakers Shawn Harrison – Founder & Co-Director [Soil Born Farms](#) Urban Agriculture & Education Project, Judith Redmond, [Full Belly Farm](#), Jeanne Merrill, Policy Director, The [California Climate and Agriculture Network](#) (CalCAN) (December 4)
- Attended the following conferences, events and meetings:
 - EcoFarm (January)
 - San Joaquin Valley Power Building presentation at 11th Hour Project (recorded notes of presentation) (January)
 - Justice in Food Systems talk at UC Berkeley (March)
 - SAFSF Forum in Chicago (June)
 - Carbon Farming tour of two ranches in Marin County with science and policy experts (September)
 - First casual no-host lunch for members to discuss questions and issues and share information in an open conversation (September)
 - Positive Pastures Conference at Cavallo Point with Patrick Holden, November 2015
- Established membership criteria and recruited four new members
- Began collecting and sharing events of interest through our Google Group
- Collected, organized, analyzed, and shared food systems and agriculture projects funded by CA Foodshed Funders committee members

We have some exciting plans in store for FY 2016, including:

- Continuing to expand our membership base both in donor support and meeting participations
- Hosting 4 quarterly community events and facilitating monthly internal learning discussions, with the following currently in planning:
 - Policy learning landscape, which began February 2016 with a dynamic panel from California Food Policy Council, CalCAN, Roots of Change, and CAFF
 - A monthly series to discuss grantmaking efforts, lessons, and methodologies focused on shared learning, leverage points, and opportunities for collaboration, which began in February with Esther Park of Cienega Capital
- Facilitating more networking and social opportunities
- Distributing regular email newsletters with events and information of interest
- Facilitating more inter-disciplinary conversations among other funders with shared values
- Creating online sharing tools for members
- Reaching revenue of over \$85,000 for year three

We greatly appreciate your support and all that you do to help make this work possible. Some of our members have said their best outcomes come from collaboration, and our impact is only as strong as our member's investment of shared information and financial support. We hope you will consider renewing your support in 2016 to help ensure we can continue this important work.