

**San Francisco Food Alliance Meeting
December 15, 2003
Ferry Building, Port Commission Hearing Room**

Introductions:

Larry Bain (Jardinière, Acme Chophouse, Next Course), Ilana Bar-David (independent), Barbara “Mother” Brown (United Council of Human Services’ Bayview Hunters Point Multi-Service Drop In Center), Maribeth Goldstein (independent), Tatiana Graf (Next Course), Earl “Spunk” Hampton (Hunters Point Community Youth Park Foundation), Karen Heisler (independent), Susana Hennessey-Lavery (SFDPH Tobacco Free Project), Vinita Jacinto (Episcopal Community Services’ CHEFS Program), Paula Jones (San Francisco Food Systems), Lynn Lampky (independent), Tracy Lerman (Public Citizen), Jamaica Maxwell (Funders for Sustainable Food Systems), Sraddha Mehta (Department of the Environment), Bu Nygrens (Veritable Vegetable), Fernando Ona (San Francisco Food Systems, Department of Public Health), Stacey Parker (Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council), Jessica Prentice (CUESA), Leah Rimkus (San Francisco Food Systems), Zoë Rossing (San Francisco Food Bank), Sue Trupin (Sustainable Agriculture Education),

The purpose of this meeting was to educate one another on the five local food systems issues prioritized by the group during the previous meeting and to discuss where the Food Alliance could potentially plug in on such issues, either as individuals or as a group.

(Last minute addendum) Presentation by Tracy Lerman: Irradiated Food

- San Francisco Board of Education members Mark Sanchez and Sarah Lipson proposed a resolution on December 9th which would ban the use of irradiated food in the school meals
- One Board member voiced opposition to the resolution, sending it back to the Superintendent’s office for review. Resolution will be voted on again no later than February
- USDA approved use of irradiated beef in the National School Lunch Program in May 2003
- Several school districts have banned irradiated food, including Los Angeles Unified
- Irradiation exposes food to ionizing radiation in order to kill bacteria
- Process destroys essential nutrients, creates toxins and carcinogens (like benzene and toluene) and “unique radiolytic products”
- Improper food handling more likely to be the cause of food-borne illness than unclean meat
- Contact Tracy at Public Citizen for more information (tlerman@citizen.org)

Presentation by Paula Jones: Food assistance at farmers’ markets:

- There are currently six farmers’ markets in San Francisco: Heart of the City (Wed/Sun), Ferry Plaza (Tue/Thu/Sat), Alemany (Sat), Fillmore (Sun – but closed until next season), Western Addition/Kaiser (Fri), and Noe Valley (Sat).
- Markets are an avenue for increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables among all (including low-income) consumers
- Each market operates independently and decides whether to accept food assistance (Food Stamps-EBT, WIC FMNP coupons, Senior FMNP coupons)

- Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) technology requires a special machine in order to process food stamp expenditures – machine is \$900 but currently provided free by the State
- Farmers’ market managers or individual farmers/vendors must be certified with an FNS number to accept any such benefits and must also assume transaction costs
- The Ecology Center (Berkeley) has a statewide grant to assist in process of developing a scrip system in which all transactions are centralized in one market manager’s booth
- San Francisco Department of Human Services is working to encourage individual farmers at markets to accept these benefits
- There is a lack of outreach to food stamp recipients informing them of this option and low utilization of food stamps by SF residents who are eligible
- San Francisco Department of Human Services has committed to send a mailing to all food stamp recipients with info on which markets accept food stamp benefits
- How to plug in
 - Advocate for markets to accept food assistance
 - Help to distribute flyers and other outreach/promotional materials

Presentation by Leah Rimkus: Farm-to-school Salad Bars

- Farm-to-school
 - Comprehensive approach to food and nutrition in schools including sourcing cafeteria food from local/regional sources, integrating food systems based education, cooking classes, farm visits, taste tests, gardening, composting, etc
 - Farm-to-school serves freshest, tastiest produce that students and staff will want to eat
 - Ventura Unified School District converted a \$231K deficit into \$80K revenue during first year of implementation
- San Francisco Unified School District
 - 116 schools and about 60,000 students
 - 59% of student population qualifies for free/reduced price school meals
 - Meal programs are underutilized because of lack of appeal (“brown, soggy lettuce”), competitive food sales, open campuses, stigma around the cafeteria lunch line
 - Student Nutrition Services (department overseeing programs) must sustain itself financially as a department – cannot draw from the district’s general fund
 - Barriers to change– financial constraints, shortage of labor, inadequate facilities
- San Francisco Food Systems
 - Working with SNS to find a way to implement farm-to-school in SFUSD
 - Planning to start pilot salad bar
- Other factors of influence
 - SFUSD Student Nutrition and Physical Fitness Advisory Committee, which was born out of a Board of Education Resolution, is now making recommendations to the District Superintendent around food and nutrition in schools
 - LEAF grant from California Department of Education is helping to promote California-grown produce in pilot sites, Lowell and Mission High School
 - California Food and Justice Coalition is working on farm-to-school statewide
 - Federal legislation was introduced around farm-to-cafeteria: S1755 (Leahy, Specter) and HR2626 (Upton, Kind)

- How to plug in
 - Identify parents who are interested in this issue to build demand
 - Identify teachers interested/willing to do food systems based instruction
 - Identify funders willing to support farm-to-school
 - Help build demand and show that students and staff will buy lunch if it offers fresh produce sourced from local/regional growers

Presentation by Karen Heisler: Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs)

- Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
 - Reciprocal economic relationship between the consumer and the farmer wherein the consumer pays for a share of farm's harvest and receives a regular box of local, seasonal produce
 - "Direct marketing" opportunity for small farmers
 - There are currently about 8-9 CSAs serving San Francisco
- How to ensure access to CSAs for people of all income levels?
 - Is there a way to allow CSAs to accept food assistance?
 - Difficult to provide funds up front to farmer (paying for entire year)
- What are others doing?
 - Just Food (NYC) acts as a matchmaker between institutions or groups and a farm, training them for one year, and strongly encouraging the use of a sliding scale for the price of a CSA share
 - Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition (MACSAC) is another potential model of organizing for San Francisco
 - There is no support organization for CSAs in California
- Possible directions
 - Consider starting up a similar support program in the city
 - Link CSA farms with other projects like farm-to-school or farm-to-institution (but must be a farm or farms with enough production/yield to supply a large institution)
 - Link CSA farms to faith-based organizations similar to the Garden Project – Unitarian Church connection
- For more info, see www.justfood.org or www.macsac.org

Presentation by Susana, Sraddha, Zoë (for Sara M) & Cece: Access to healthy food in District 10

- Produce Market
 - Redevelopment Agency has been looking at a vacant site in Bayview (4800 Third Street) as a potential spot for a produce marketplace
 - Site is currently owned by Redevelopment but is unused
 - Affordable housing unit is planned for site within 1-2 years but it is possible to have retail space on ground floor once housing is in place
 - Need some entity to step in and present a business plan
 - Redevelopment may provide support but it is unclear how much funding and support they are willing to give towards fixing up this site, refrigeration costs, etc.

- Desire to get maximum use out of the space and develop an indoor/outdoor produce that community could rely on every day
- Food Pantries in District 10
 - Food bank is shifting focus to support food bank-sponsored pantries
 - Those that serve at least 50 households
 - Those that are open at least once weekly at the same time each week
 - Food bank delivers to site
 - There are over 40 food bank agencies in Bayview/Hunters Point, 17 in Visitation Valley, and 15 in Potrero Hill
 - Food Bank distributes produce, USDA commodities, and dry grocery goods
 - Weekly pantries usually operate during business hours, so there is a problem of accessibility for working families
 - (Barbara Brown) Hunters Point Multi-Service Drop In Center is open five days/week and serves 1500 families per month – so many clients that they have to give a specific date to come back
- Good Neighbor Project
 - Project of Literacy for Environmental Justice, Youth Envision – a group of 7 high school youth
 - Youth Envision group found that only 2% of space in 11 corner stores surveyed is used for selling produce
 - Group is encouraging local merchants in the area to dedicate a certain percentage of store space for selling healthy foods like produce
 - Found resistance initially within the merchant community because produce is not necessarily profitable
 - Partnering with Sam in local Super Save as a pilot store – youth helped stock produce last week and produce is one of the biggest selling items right now
 - Marketing campaign planned as well (e.g. in bus shelters)

Presentation by Larry Bain: Cooking Classes

- The story behind kohlrabi (!)
- Beyond getting produce into a neighborhood, we also need to focus on getting produce out of stores and into people's kitchens, using education, cooking classes, marketing
- Next Course is a new project which provides cooking classes to women in the San Francisco County Jail
- Most of the women are part of a recovery program called SISTERS (Sister in Sober Treatment Empowered in Recovery), which includes math and English classes in the charter school run inside the jail
- Will offer these classes through the school term, which ends in May
- Next Course is also planning to offer nutrition and cooking classes to youth in Bayview Hunters Point.
- (Vinita Jacinto) CHEFS program (Conquering Homelessness through Education in Food Service) in San Francisco consists of a 6 month classroom training program and a 3 month internship; Produce comes from farmers' market every week

Follow-up discussion:

Due to time restraints, we were unable to open up for discussion after all of the presentations. The group decided to think about the material presented at the meeting, considering areas where there seemed to be overlap between different food systems issues. The group agreed to start the discussion / reaction to these presentations via email and then have another meeting in January.

Announcements:

- LEJ is hosting its launch of the Youth Envision project on Friday, showing how Super Save has committed to stock healthy food for the community of Bayview Hunters Point.

Where: Super Save (4517 Third Street)

When: December 19, 2003, 4-6 PM

Contact: LEJ Youth Envision, 415-508-0575, youthenvision@lejyouth.org

- San Francisco Food Systems would like to convene a working group to further develop the organizational document for the SF Food Alliance including the group's membership, ground rules, decision making processes, mission, etc. If you would like to participate in this process, please let Leah Rimkus know.

Next meeting:

- The next meeting of the SF Food Alliance will be on **Wednesday, January 28.**
- Identify project(s) that SF Food Alliance chooses to focus on
- Discuss the SF Food Alliance's capacity to address the different local food systems issues (individually, collectively, programmatically, politically, etc.)
- Discuss the potential for fundraising
- Update on ground rules and organizational issues