

# Farmland Working Group

*Striving to protect food, families & farmland. Since 1999.*

## FARMERS' MARKETS IN CALIFORNIA

**History of Certified Farmers' Markets in California – The development of Certified Farmers' Markets in California began in 1977 as a response to the demand by urban dwellers for access to the fresh products of local farms.**



The State of California developed the *Direct Marketing Program* to allow for genuine farmers to sell their crops to the nearby community/neighbors free from the infiltration of resellers (vendors who purchase produce from other farmers and sell it as their own harvested crops) and/or those who brought produce from outside the state or the country. The state established the farmers' market certification program to build parameters to facilitate legitimate sales direct from farmer-to-consumer. The regulations allow certified producers (certified by their County

Agricultural Commissioner) to offer produce exempt from standard pack, standard container, labeling, sizing, and grading. Under state guidelines, a certified farmers' market can only be operated by a non-profit organization, a government agency or a certified producer so that no individual or entity is able to gain personally from the benefit derived from the deregulation of the certified producers' exemption from shipping regulations.

State, local and federal government agencies quickly rallied to provide workable parameters to host real farmers' markets in their public spaces: Caltrans, one of the first to act, entered into an intra-agency agreement with the California Department of Food & Agriculture to hold the Stockton and Sacramento Certified Farmers' Markets in the Caltrans Park 'N Ride lots. Each contract was \$1 per year fee to hold the certified farmers' market at the lot.

The public/community benefit derived by those who reside near the farmers' market is the ability to gain access to fresh fruits and vegetables direct from local farms.

Fast behind the Department of Transportation was the Civic Center in San Francisco, Cabrillo College (1980) and many other community colleges, State college campuses, city parks (Sonoma, et al.), county fairgrounds (eg. Marin), library parking lots, transit stations (BART, VTA, et al.), street closures in downtowns, Golden Gate Park, university parking lots, utility company parking lots, shopping centers and more. The history of certified farmers' markets in California reveals the extent to which providing fresh, local produce has remained a governmental priority for

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**Our Mission:** To preserve the agricultural foundation of our region and promote smart growth in our urban communities through education, outreach and action.



## WE ARE WATCHING...

### **City of Newman**

[www.cityofnewman.com/](http://www.cityofnewman.com/)

It is no wonder that Newman does not call itself the CON. Yet the CON, like nearly all of our cities, will wipe out prime farmland as it expands for a recent housing subdivision. It is unlikely that expansion of housing in Newman will follow a similar pattern of boom that occurred in Patterson in earlier decades. Patterson is closer to Interstate 5 and has previously lured many Bay Area workers to make commuting long distances a way of life for many of its citizens.

All of our communities continue to struggle with economic improvements. The collapse of the housing market in the first decade of this century has a lingering effect and perhaps somewhat of a learning moment for our elected leaders. FWG wants to assure our local leaders that we will continue to provide our readers with significant information about protecting "the most productive agricultural area the world has ever known!" We're Watching!

### **City of Modesto**

[www.modestogov.com](http://www.modestogov.com)

Measure I (Stamp Out Sprawl - Modesto) has yet to hear from the California Secretary of State regarding a voter complaint filed in November 2015. The COM is accused of omitting the text of the citizen measure in the voter pamphlet. Despite that three other measures on the ballot had text in the pamphlet, and voter elections code requires it, to date the COM has not informed the public the reason for the omission. Former Mayor Marsh and new Mayor Brandvold are fully aware of the omission, as is the City Council.

Is the public to be left only with speculation that the COM intentionally omitted the text or that it was a simple error of omission? Why doesn't the new Mayor and Council simply report in an open public meeting what happened and what they intend to do about it? With only 215 votes preventing the adoption of the citizens initiative, this issue needs to be addressed. One may ask why the Modesto Bee has not made that request or voiced any concern about the absence of the legally required text.

Since the Secretary of State is the authority or the presumed office of oversight, where is a timely response deserving of a citizens' legally followed effort to petition their local government?

It should be noted that the COM, per the LAFCO summary as of December 2015, has a Sphere of Influence (SOI) size of 40,512 acres, with 28,768 acres inside the city limits and a whopping 11,744 acres available for annexation request. Yet it wants more prime farmland north and west of the COM.

### **Stanislaus County**

[www.co.stanislaus.ca.us](http://www.co.stanislaus.ca.us)

Stanislaus Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) provides accurate information regarding city limits and spheres of influence of each city in Stanislaus County. Annual City Annexation Summaries are view-able at: <http://www.stanislaus-lafco.org/info/info.htm>

### **City of Riverbank**

[www.riverbank.org/](http://www.riverbank.org/)

The COR has the least amount of acreage available for annexation outside its city limit and inside its sphere. The COR's latest planning efforts indicate that its intention is an effort to urbanize west, and over some of the best prime farmland in Stanislaus County. The city wants to expand retail across the street from its sales-tax lucrative Crossroads Shopping Center. Yet this first phase of urbanization is a piece meal step to expand all the way to Coffee Road to include more housing.

Farmland, like real estate, is all about location, location, location. The reason agriculture is our county's number one industry is due to our multiple rivers. The San Joaquin, Tuolumne, and Stanislaus Rivers have for millions of years (before damming) flooded and receded, which distributed the finest top soils along their banks. Riverbank, like many of our cities, has a responsibility to avoid the best quality farmland when considering yet another "shopping experience." The COR is "banking" on sales tax dollars from Modesto by beating its' big-brother-of-the-south to retail expansion.

# FARMERS MARKET INDUSTRY LEADER CALLS CITY OF TURLOCK ACTIONS 'DISGRACEFUL'



Gail Hayden has been a part of the Certified Farmers Market Program in California since its inception in 1977.

As part of a CFMP management team, she helped develop 170 markets in communities across the state. Over the years, she has also developed 35 other markets and today she is the director of the nonprofit California Farmers Markets Association and operates 16 markets in communities across the Bay Area.

As a farmers market industry leader, Hayden attended Tuesday's Turlock City Council meeting to see firsthand what all the brouhaha regarding the City's Requests for Proposals process to run a downtown farmers market was all about.

Hayden said what she witnessed on Tuesday was "disgraceful."

"It was one of the saddest days in my 37-year career, and an example of the furthest thing of why the program was created," she said.

The Turlock Certified Farmers Market, the nonprofit organization which has operated a downtown market for the past six years, and the Golden State Farmers Market Association, a for profit business ran by local

grower Peter Cipponeri, went before the City Council on Tuesday as part of a Request for Proposals process the Council adopted in December to run a downtown farmers market.

After five hours of discussion, the Council postponed choosing a market operator, instead asking each organization to answer questions raised during the meeting and to try and work together to come up with a single proposal — with the help of Hayden — by next Tuesday, when the Council is set to meet again on the topic.

TCFM Board President Elizabeth Claes responded to Mayor Gary Soiseth's motion to come back before the Council by saying TCFM was withdrawing its proposal.

The Certified Farmers Market legislation was created to exempt farmers from packing, sizing and labeling requirements so that they could sell their products without the expenses of commercial preparation.

"Farmers markets are mutual benefit corporations, farmers so they can sell their crops and the second group is the consumer, who can get products they cannot regularly get, like a ripe peach right off the tree, corn right off the stalk and strawberries just picked," said Hayden.

She said it was unusual for one grower to operate a farmers market.

"The government regulations were built so no one would profit from that," Hayden said. "It's rare and odd that a certified producer would want to operate a market.

"Farmers markets are about farmers, not a farmer."

Hayden also found the City's Request for Proposals process unusual. She said that all of the many RFPs she's been involved with over the decades, the cities were seeking to start a farmers market or to find a replacement market operator once one leaves.



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She said that the cities she's worked with have all promoted the farmers market with banners around town, marketing efforts and by waiving permit fees.

"Farmers markets are recognized by most towns as a value of life," said Hayden.

"RFPs are used to award grant funds usually, in this situation the City of Turlock was searching for money, which is the exact opposite. The City was looking to build its infrastructure on the backs of farmers. It's not a cell phone tower...it's bok choy and green onions."

She said in her experience, cities have acknowledged the benefits of having a farmers market as an economic tool because it keeps local money local.

"This city would not acknowledge the investment this market made for the past six years in getting their paperwork in," said Hayden referring to the Turlock Certified Farmers Market, which has been running the downtown market for the past six years until the Golden State Farmers Market Association submitted street closure request for the exact same time, dates and location as the TCFM, leading to the City Council deciding to settle the matter by instating a RFP process.

"I can't imagine one of the towns we work with allowing this to happen," she said.



According to Hayden, the City's RFP was not only unusual, it was an affront to the standards of the California farmers market industry.

"They sent it out to the industry and the industry rejected it. None of the other associations responded because it's immoral and unethical. It's not done in our industry," said Hayden of seeking proposals from other organizations to run a farmers market in a town that already has a successful market. "Our industry is one of respect; we respect each others' territory."

"We have a good, cohesive working relationship up and down the state...one of us has a problem, we work to help each other."

Hayden said while she is available to help TCFM and GSFMA work together, she doesn't know how a farmers market is going to succeed in Turlock with what's happened.

"I know all of these growers, and everybody's upset about it. You can't have a farmers market without farmers, you can't have it with a farmer."

by Kristina Hacker  
Turlock Journal  
March 17, 2016

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*Gail Hayden is Executive Director, California Farmers Market Association. Gail oversees administration of the non profit corporation. She excels in food marketing and is in charge of getting the consumers to the markets.*

*Doug Hayden is president of the Board and Director of Operations. He reserves 49,000 stalls per year, coordinates all host and vendor permits, compliance or rules, safety, product mix, etc.*

*Doug gets the Farmers to market! Gail and Doug feed an average of 26,000 families a week and have sold over \$1.2 million stalls in 30+ years.*



## MARGARET RODGERS: RECALLING MODESTO'S FIRST CERTIFIED FARMERS MARKET

Re  
“Down-  
town  
farmers  
market  
opens  
season  
with new

vendors” (Page 1B, March 27): Reading of the Modesto Certified Farmers Market opening recalled memories of its birth in early 1979. Two MJC ag instructors, a local farmer and wives envisioned a community market where produce went directly from grower to buyer. Working with helpful city officials we found a site, the block between the new county library and First Methodist Church, which could be closed to traffic each Saturday from 6:30 to 11 a.m. during harvest season. To be certified growers, meaning no middleman, meant involving the county ag commissioner’s office and providing insurance,

approved scales, an on-site toilet, barricades, etc.

The barricades were sawhorses and volunteers provided insurance and a manager until vendor fees covered them. The toilet problem was solved by parking a pickup camper by the sawhorses. Thankfully no one asked to use it.

Opening day, the first Saturday in July, we held our breath. Would we have vendors or buyers? By 6:30 a.m., my son Peter had parked a trailer of freshly picked sweet corn at the curb, the Taros had early peaches and Bernie Alves had figs. Other growers appeared and Modesto residents cleaned us out long before 11. We were a success!

Margaret Rodgers, Hughson  
The Modesto Bee

Letters to the editor - March 31, 2016

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many types of governmental agencies.

Today, there are over 800 certified farmers’ markets in California with about half of them being held weekly in public spaces. Most receive use of some facility services ranging from providing restrooms, security staff, consumer parking, waste disposal, etc. As many Main Street and Broadway businesses in Turlock have attested, markets provide significant economic benefits when they are held in or near a central business district.

The public/community benefit derived by those who reside near the farmers’ market is the ability to gain access to fresh fruits and vegetables direct from local farms. The “mutual” benefit as described by the franchise tax board, in their classification of a non-profit organization, is that the consumers derive benefit from being able

to purchase directly from growers, while farmers benefit from being able to sell their fresh crop to nearby communities. The shortened time from harvest to sale allows for produce to experience less stress in shipping, be allowed to ripen on the tree/vine, and for the farmer to use less fuel and packing supplies.

The consumers benefit by having access to fresh products that contain increased nutritional value in addition to being able to purchase produce not often available in supermarkets with national suppliers.

#### **Additional articles:**

<http://www.modbee.com/opinion/editorials/article61150527.html>

<http://www.modbee.com/opinion/editorials/article66965977.html>

<http://www.turlockjournal.com/section/27/article/31646/>

A donation has been made

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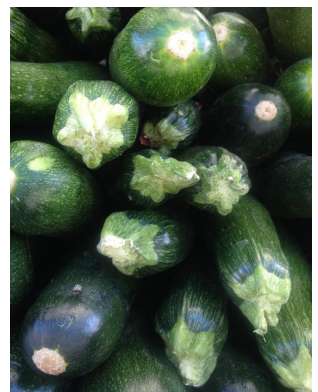
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# Farmland Working Group

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 [www.farmlandworkinggroup.org](http://www.farmlandworkinggroup.org)



Update... After extensive searching, Turlock Certified Farmers Market is excited to announce its move to the Stanislaus County Fairgrounds. The fairgrounds offers amenities and opportunities unlike any other location in Turlock. A huge thank you to Stanislaus County Fair for welcoming us, as well as to all our loyal supporters who reached out with many wonderful suggestions. We will be located in one of the Ag Pavilions on the west side of the grounds near Soderquist where there is plenty of shade, grass and parking. Opening day will be Saturday, May 7th, 8 am to 1 pm. More details to come.

Here's to new beginnings.