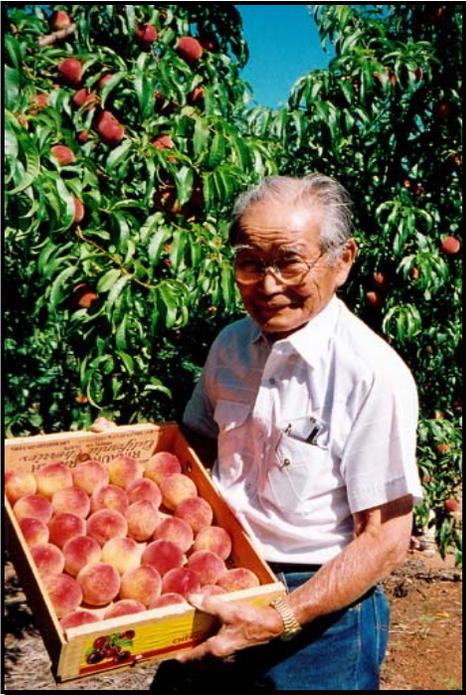


Agricultural Marketing Report

2001-2006



Placer County
Agriculture Department
June 2006



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INTRODUCTION



Placer County Agriculture Department MEMORANDUM

June 30, 2006

TO: Supervisor Bill Santucci, Chairman, District 1
Supervisor Robert Weygandt, District 2
Supervisor Jim Holmes, District 3
Supervisor Ted Gaines, District 4
Supervisor Bruce Kranz, District 5

FROM: Christine Turner, Agricultural Commissioner

SUBJECT: **Summary Placer County Agricultural Marketing Program Report:
2001 - 2006**

It is with great pleasure and pride that I present you with the Placer County Agricultural Marketing Program Report summary for 2001 – 2006. I also want to take the opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support of Placer County agriculture and the Marketing Program. The Agricultural Marketing Program has been administered by the Department of Agriculture, under contract with Joanne K. Neft Marketing. The accomplishments, tremendous media coverage of local agricultural events and stories, along with the many community partnerships that have developed around the program, are the most compelling testimony to a profoundly successful program. Farmers and ranchers have directly benefited from the marketing program's focus on increasing farm and ranch direct sales, exploring options for developing value-added items to their sales, increasing public awareness of the value of buying and eating locally grown produce and helping the citizens of Placer County make the connection with local family farms and ranches. None of this would have been possible without the direct support of the Board of Supervisors.

Thanks also to the Placer County Agricultural Commission for their support of the Agricultural Marketing Program and recognizing the program as an essential part of the effort to preserve local family farms and ranches. Members received monthly updates on what was happening in the program, current projects and future plans. The Agricultural Commission is a nine-member commission appointed by the Board of Supervisors and representing various commodity groups. They volunteer their time and expertise to provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on agriculturally related issues affecting farm families in Placer County. The Commission members are:

Tony Aguilar, Citrus Industry
Patricia Beard, Foothill Farm Industry
Jim Brenner, Fruit & Nut Farming
Paul Ferrari, Livestock Industry
Richard Johnson, Timber Industry

William Morebeck, Small Farm Industry
John Nitta, Nursery Industry
Jane Tahti, Agricultural Processing Industry
Wayne Vineyard, Chair, Rice Industry

Placer County is being held up as an example of local government supporting the effort to promote and protect the economic viability of local family farms and ranches. With my deepest appreciation, thank you for making it possible.

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Thank you!

For the past five years it has been my distinct privilege to serve the Placer County agricultural community. Over that period of time I have come to appreciate the commitment and everyday energy that goes into the hard work of farming. I am especially grateful that there are growers and producers who provide Placer County residents with some of the tastiest, freshest, healthiest, and most nutritional agricultural products in the State of California.

Also, I've learned that it takes a dedicated community to enable agriculture to thrive in Placer County. Each and every person who purchases local products is, in fact, contributing to the well being of the agricultural community as well as to our quality of life. All it takes is an early spring afternoon ride through the foothills to enjoy blooming orchards and fertile fields. We are truly blessed to live in Placer County.

They say "It takes a village" to make things happen. A single person can only accomplish goals, ideas, and visions with immense support and assistance of others. Thanks and appreciation must be given to the enlightened Placer County Board of Supervisors who fund the Agricultural Marketing Program, to members of the Placer County Agricultural Commission and the Agricultural Commissioner for their diligent efforts and encouragement, to each and every person who assisted in various events, festivals, meals, meetings, workshops, and conferences, to the throngs of Placer County residents who buy products from farmers, fruit stands, farmers' markets, produce markets, and grocery stores that carry PlacerGROWN goods, and, finally, to Jennifer Miller for spending endless hours mulling over and reviewing reports to develop this capsule of the last five years.

Joanne Neft

**Director, Placer County Agriculture Marketing Program
2001 -2006**

MARKETING

Marketing is the primary function of the Placer County Agricultural Marketing Director. There are a wide variety of services provided under this umbrella program from developing, publishing and distributing marketing materials, to fostering positive working relationships with local and regional media. The functions of marketing are significant and will be broken out into the following sub-categories:

- Media Relations
- Print and Promotional Media
- Product Marketing
- Web Development & Maintenance

Media Relations

Request

Placer County farmers and ranchers requested to local government officials for an effective liaison to the media to promote their products and events. The liaison is responsible for contacting staff media writers as well as drafting feature articles and arranging photo shoots at agricultural sites.

What Was Done

Newspaper and Magazine Media

The Agricultural Marketing Director developed and maintained positive relationships with newspaper reporters and editors including the Sacramento Bee, South Placer Sacramento Bee, Gold Country Media papers, Tahoe World, North Tahoe Truckee Weekly, Sacramento Business Journal, Comstock's, Edible Sacramento, Perspectives, Foothills, among others. The Director coordinated with media contacts for feature articles on real family farm stories and seasonal commodities (re-opening Fowler Nursery for retail sales, Ueki Olallie berries, Brenner Ranch blueberries, Eisley's poinsettias and "Mandarin country – Amazing oranges grow on these California hills" - THE FURROW, November 2005).

Visual Media

- The Director developed and maintained relationships with KVIE Channel 6, private TV stations and cookbook author Deborah Madison, *Local Flavors: Eating & Cooking from America's Farmers' Markets*.

Press Releases

- The Director provided timely press releases and feature articles, with supporting photographs, for magazine and newspaper publications (*Sierra Heritage, Sunset, VIA, Gardening, Gourmet, Consumer Reports, LA Times, San Francisco Chronicle, and Sacramento Bee, among others*).
- The Director provided input for Placer County Economic Development Newsletter, wrote articles for Placer Land Trust: *Land Lines* and the Placer County Farm Bureau Newsletter, as well as other local publications. During 2004/2005 season Placer County agriculture was featured in 150 articles.

Billboard

- Initiated and continued relationship with the City of Auburn to rent the community billboard whenever available to promote Placer County agriculture.
- Developed language, layout and colors, prepared paperwork, and paid Auburn Chamber of Commerce for the rental of the billboard.

Media Outreach

During the spring and summer growing seasons, in addition to the actions listed above, the Marketing Director shared PlacerGROWN fresh fruits and vegetables with media contacts. For example, over 20 cases of mandarins were shipped to local, regional and national media before the 2005 Christmas holiday.

Impact and Results

Articles appeared in:

- *Los Angeles Times Magazine*
October 30, 2005
“Massaging the Persimmon”
“Carefully peeling the Hachiya variety of persimmon before they ripened, the hoshigaki artisans would leave the stem on and tie them with a string so they could be hung up for drying. After the exposed skin dried a few days later, the villagers would then gently massage the fruit to break down the pulp... Hoshigaki arrived in Placer County with Japanese immigrants at the turn of the last century. Tosh Kuratomi and his wife, Chris, run Otow Orchard, a diverse 39 1/2-acre farm in Granite Bay that was started by her grandparents in about 1909.”– Page 28
By Kent Black
- THE FURROW
November 2005
“Mandarin country – Amazing oranges grow on these California hills”
“There’s a very select group of readers out there who know how to get their hands on what surely must be the best citrus fruit in the world – mountain grown mandarin oranges from Placer County, California. They buy direct from their favorite growers, in person or by phone or fax or Internet, which assures them the fruit came from these famous hills. Otherwise they might get fruit from...let’s just say from somewhere else.” - Page 7
By Dale McDonald
- *The Sacramento Bee, South Placer edition*
Thursday December 22, 2005
Front-page feature article – Eisley’s Nursery poinsettias
“Seasonal Plants Offer Local Color”
“...At Eisley’s, each poinsettia is a labor of love. The plants are grown from cuttings in clay pots housed in balmy 80-degree greenhouses, where each is hand watered and tended to throughout the day.”
By Niesha Lofing

- The Placer County Agricultural Marketing Program rented the billboard for two weeks in January (PlacerGROWN), June (opening of Farmers' Market), August (Peak of season) and November (Mountain Mandarin Festival).

During 2005, with 5 articles in Associated Press newspapers across the country, THE FURROW magazine in 21 countries and coverage on California Country and America's Heartland TV programs, Placer County Agriculture made more than **50 million media impressions** around the world.

Print and Promotional Media

Request

The farmers and ranches in Placer County produce agricultural products of superior quality. Local producers asked the Agricultural Marketing Director for assistance with creating promotional material to inform the general public about their products. The assistance included developing grower marketing materials for PlacerGROWN and individual events, distributing the marketing materials through fairs, festivals, newspaper inserts, chambers of commerce, cities, the local California Welcome Center, advertisers and directly by growers.

What was Done

Agriculture Guide

The annual Placer County Agricultural Guide serves as a reference for community members, and the general public, offering feature articles on Placer County growers, a commodity harvest index and a list of local growers. This publication is free to the public and 100,000 – 125,000 Ag Guides are distributed annually to the public to promote locally produced farm products. The Marketing Director is charged with the task of developing, publishing and distributing the Placer County Agricultural Guide. The Director compiles the harvest calendar, drafts the feature articles on local operations and coordinates and approves the artwork for the cover. Publishing the Ag Guide includes identifying supporters and soliciting advertising space to cover the costs of publication. Over \$25,000 in advertising revenue is generated each year to help cover the cost of printing.

Placer Farm & Barn Tour in partnership with the Placer County Arts Council AGROart Competition

The Farm & Barn Tour was patterned after events in other counties designed to introduce the public to local farmers and ranchers and their operations. This event is designed to allow the general public to explore working farms, ranches, a historic schoolhouse, wineries, produce markets and the AGROart competition.

The Marketing Director coordinated and supervised the artwork and layout for the Farm & Barn Tour posters; distributed posters to promote the event; wrote feature articles for local and regional publications to announce event details; and served as Chair of the Farm & Barn Tour Planning Committee. For additional information please view the website at: <http://www.placerfarmandbarntour.com>



Foothill Farmers' Market

The Foothill Farmers' Market includes 17 markets within the greater Placer County area. The markets provide local farmers and ranches with a direct sales outlet and the public with opportunities to buy fresh produce directly from the grower. While the Foothill Farmers Market is independently managed, the Placer County Agriculture Marketing Director assisted by coordinating and supervising the artwork and layout for posters and other promotional material. The Director also assisted in the distribution of promotional material. For additional information visit: <http://www.foothillfarmersmarket.com>.

Mountain Mandarin Festival and Mountain Mandarin Tour

The Mountain Mandarin Festival and the Mountain Mandarin Tour are both centered around the celebrated citrus grown in Placer County. The festival takes place the weekend before Thanksgiving in November and is a huge draw to tourists. The Mountain Mandarin Tour begins in late November and runs through the end of January. Of the local mandarin orchards, 18 participated by opening their sites on the weekends to visitors interested in buying directly from the source. Consumers have the opportunity to experience agriculture firsthand through the Mandarin Tour. The Marketing Director provides creative and financial support for promotional material for both events. For additional information on the Mountain Mandarin Festival visit <http://www.mandarinfestival.com> or for the Mountain Mandarin Tour visit <http://www.mountainmandarins.com>.

Farm Trails Map, Christmas Tree Map, Mandarin Orchard Map and Heritage Ride Brochures

The Farm Trails guide map, Christmas tree map, Mandarin Orchard map and Heritage Ride brochure, all created and published by the Placer County Agriculture Marketing Program, are intended to provide self-guided tours of local farms and ranches. The Placer County Agricultural Marketing Program provided the funds to pay for the publication of promotional material for the above-mentioned events and publications.

Hoshigaki Tri-fold Brochure

Throughout Placer County there are a number of persimmon growers and some of them produce hoshigaki. Hoshigaki is the ancient Japanese art of hand-drying persimmons. The Marketing Director helped to compile information, designed, edited and produced “Hoshigaki – The Art of Hand-Dried Persimmons” tri-fold brochure. This promotional pamphlet was produced to illustrate and market this value-added product produced in Placer County.

PlacerGROWN Promotional Products

PlacerGROWN is a non-profit organization formed to promote the bounty of local agricultural products. PlacerGROWN developed and currently uses their registered logo on all their promotional material. Members of PlacerGROWN receive metal signs (12” x 12” or 18” x 18”) to display on their farm site. In addition to signs, PlacerGROWN also has paper tote bags and post cards printed to promote locally grown commodities. Over 40,000 postcards, 2,500 posters, 20,000 hangtags, and 50,000 labels were printed and used to promote and identify PlacerGROWN products. During the last five years, the Placer County Agriculture Marketing Program has provided funds for the expense of these promotional products.

In July of 2003, over 60 dozen shirts were ordered with the PlacerGROWN logo. The t-shirts range in size from onesies to adult XL. T-shirts were sold through Foothills Farmers’ Markets, PlacerGROWN, hospital gift shops, nursery schools, and area businesses. The idea was to have 720 “walking billboards” promoting PlacerGROWN. For additional information visit: <http://www.placergrown.org>.

“Be a Local Hero” Ad Campaign

This campaign involved printing brochures and bumper stickers stating, “Be a Local Hero – buy PlacerGROWN.” The campaign was the creation of the Marketing Director and was launched to spread the message to buy local agriculture products.

“Join Hands to Support Placer County Agriculture” Ad Campaign

The “Join Hands to Support Placer County Agriculture” was designed to keep the idea of purchasing PlacerGROWN products in the forefront of consumers’ minds. The promotional post card features three photo images of farmers’ hands harvesting PlacerGROWN products. This was the most recent in a long line of successful promotional campaigns created by the Agricultural Marketing Director.

Professional Photo Imaging

To capture the essence of local agricultural events such as Farm and Barn Tour and the Mountain Mandarin Festival, the Marketing Director subcontracted with professional photographer Wayne Carroll. The agricultural photo images capture multiple facets of agriculture in Placer County and are used on event websites, posters and for press releases to highlight event successes and to promote future events. The images include: farms, ranches, cattle, sheep, mandarins, vineyards, fruits and vegetables. This rich photo collection will be used to enhance the image of future marketing campaigns. To view Wayne Carroll’s work visit: <http://www.waydecarrollphotography.com>.

Impacts and Results

- Agriculture Guides - During the past five years the Agricultural Marketing Program, distributed over 600,000 Ag Guides. The Ag Guide featured grower profiles, local advertisements, and a calendar chart outlining each crop's harvest season. The publication is designed to bring together consumers and growers and to promote locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables. The Ag Guides were disseminated through many outlets including Gold Country media newspapers, chambers of commerce, local businesses, government agencies and directly by growers.

The Placer County Agriculture Marketing Program provides financial support for the farmers' markets by paying for the artwork and printing of promotion posters and signage. Prior to the promotional aid, the Foothills Farmers' Markets were in poor financial condition. As a result of the Marketing Director's efforts, local markets have enjoyed increased consumer turnout and revenues. In the height of the growing season, the Auburn market attracts 1,000 customers to the downtown business area each weekend. In addition to monetary assistance, the Marketing Director lends support to local markets through the creation of recipes to feature local products, coordinating product sampling and arranging specialty booths to be featured at the market, such as AGROart.

The support does not end there. The Marketing Director assists Farmers' Market growers by offering to develop marketing material, provide educational grower workshops, help growers identify market trends and select niche market crops for production. Key to the success of the Foothills Farmers' Market is the Marketing Director's willingness to go to any length to promote the fine products produced in Placer County.

***-Christina Abuelo,
Foothill Farmers' Market Manager***



Product Marketing

Request

Farmers and ranchers cited the need for additional help to effectively market their products and made a request to Placer County representatives for assistance with these services. One of the responsibilities of the Marketing Director is to aid in developing new marketing campaigns and to find new avenues to market PlacerGROWN products.

What Was Done

Just a few examples include the following:

In November 2001, Richard Ferreira, Side Hill Citrus, contacted the Marketing Director to help him sell a portion of his mandarin crop. The Marketing Director made contact with several Placer County departments as well as the Food Services Manager at Western Placer County Unified School District. Through the extra marketing efforts, Mr. Ferreira was able to sell an additional 2,000 pounds of mandarins to the school district and provide students with fresh seasonal fruit.

In September 2003, Bobbi Machado, Machado Orchard, contacted the Marketing Director to advise that they had an overabundance of late harvest peaches. The Marketing Director quickly contacted Terry Davis of the Sierra Club and asked him to let his members know about this overabundance of ripe peaches and give them a direct way to support local agriculture. In addition, the Auburn Journal was contacted to do a feature story. The following day, the Journal printed a front page, full color photo of Gary Machado picking peaches. The marketing outreach effort greatly aided Machado Orchards in selling their fresh ripe peaches.

To celebrate the seasonal persimmon crop, the Marketing Director baked persimmon cookies, bread and pudding to share with customers at the November 15, 2003 Auburn Farmers' Market. In addition to the baked goods, Hoshigaki (dried persimmons) purchased from Tosh Kuratomi of Otow Orchard, were served. The intent was to introduce market customers to the misunderstood and underappreciated persimmon that is available in abundance during the season.

The examples listed above only reflect a small sampling of the Product Marketing efforts of the Placer County Agricultural Marketing Director.

Results and Impacts

During the peach harvest of 2003, the orchard experienced a large overrun of product. The Placer County Agricultural Marketing Director was contacted to consult on liquidating the extra peaches. The next day the Auburn Journal arrived to write a feature story. With contacts that the Marketing Director made, the orchard sold the excess yield. In 2005, the Marketing Director created a grower brochure. The Machado family was very pleased with the finished product, citing that it was very well done. Every time the Marketing Director has been contacted for help with the orchard, the response has been timely and supportive with fruitful outcomes. The contacts that the Director makes are extremely beneficial in promoting Placer County agriculture; this program is a great service to the local growers.

- Bobbi Machado, Machado Orchards

Remember the days before the Placer County Agricultural Marketing Program? There was no Farm & Barn Tour, no Agriculture Guide, no Mountain Mandarin Tour; it was as if agriculture did not exist. The difference between then and now is that there now is exposure through feature articles in local and regional publications, promotional media campaigns, and publicity for agriculture through events and festivals. Consumers are now aware that agriculture is alive and well in Placer County. The current Director is a master at connecting people. In addition, the Marketing Director inspired me to reach out to other persimmon growers to aid them in perfecting the art of hoshigaki (Japanese tradition of hand drying persimmons). As a result, growers are now beginning to market their products together and are able to solicit a premium price. It is imperative to have a Placer County Agriculture Marketing Director that is a visionary with a very strong work ethic. The farmers and ranchers of Placer County need this program. The Director brings cohesion to the agriculture community that we cannot attain on our own.

-Tosh Kuratomi, Otow Orchard

Web Development & Maintenance

Request

With consumers online now more than ever, the Internet provides a perfect place to promote PlacerGROWN products and events. Community members wishing to promote local agricultural events requested the assistance of the Marketing Director to aid with website development.

What Was Done

Websites were created for Placer County events that feature PlacerGROWN commodities. The following sites were initiated and are maintained with funds from the Placer County Agricultural Marketing Program budget. The Marketing Director provided much of the content and images for the sites basic framework and provides updates. The sites include:

Farm & Barn Tour: <http://www.placerfarmandbarntour.com>

Mountain Mandarin Tour: <http://www.mountainmandarins.com>

Impact and Results

- Since July 2004 the Farm and Barn Tour website has hosted over 11,000 visitors.
- PlacerGROWN, Farmer's Market, Placer Wine & Grape Association, Farm and Barn Tour, Mountain Mandarin Festival and Mountain Mandarins sites are all linked together. This increases the chance of cross promotion to interested parties.

EVENTS

Placer County Agricultural Marketing Program promotes the fresh, wholesome goodness of seasonal PlacerGROWN products by offering a diverse range of interactive events for the public. The mission is to bring together local growers and consumers to form mutually beneficial relationships. Consumers will enjoy the benefits of eating local, in season products, while growers expand their markets and enhance their economic viability. There are two categories represented under this section:

- Events
- Events – Meetings

Request

Placer County farmers and ranchers made a request to the Agriculture Department for assistance in finding or creating additional outlets where they can promote their products. The Marketing Program provided marketing material, media promotion, funding and manpower for events showcasing Placer County agriculture products.

What Was Done

Placer Farm & Barn Tour and in partnership with the Placer County Arts Council AGROart Competition

The Farm & Barn Tour was patterned after events in other counties designed to introduce the public to local farmers and ranchers and their operations. This event is designed to allow the general public to explore working farms, ranches, a historic schoolhouse, wineries, produce markets and the AGROart competition. The Agricultural Marketing Director established a planning committee and served as Chair for two years.

PlacerGROWN Farm Conference

The University of California Cooperative Extension office serving Placer and Nevada Counties hosts the annual PlacerGROWN Farm Conference each year. This conference is designed as an educational outreach to local farmers and ranchers. The conference forum is used to discuss pertinent issues facing agriculture and to disseminate information on such issues as: equipment maintenance, invasive pest management and marketing. The Marketing Director has assisted with securing and hosting key-note speakers, preparing luncheons and assisting the UC Cooperative Extension office in organizing the event. In addition, the Director has attended the event as a representative of the County Agricultural Commissioner and the Marketing Program in order to educate and inform growers on the marketing program's many services.

Mountain Mandarin Festival

The Marketing Director has assisted with the development and distribution of promotional material for the event, as well as attending the event to promote PlacerGROWN and the Placer County Agricultural Marketing Program.

Mountain Mandarin Tour

This self-guided tour was developed by the Marketing Director in cooperation with the mandarin growers and provides the public with the chance to visit a mandarin orchard during harvest. Tour participants can purchase mandarins directly from the source in baskets, boxes or bags. The Marketing Director works diligently to promote the tour by funding tour maps, arranging media coverage and securing funding for promotional signage.

Gold Country Fair – Food and Wine Event

For three years, during the Gold Country Fair, the Marketing Director coordinated a dinner event and wine tasting. Responsibilities for these events included, but were not limited to, acquiring the wine, planning the menu, purchasing food and preparing the meal.

Agriculture Marketing and Merchandising Workshop

The Marketing Director assisted in developing and presenting a 3-hour workshop on agricultural marketing and merchandising in conjunction with the Foothills Farmers' Market Association and the UC Cooperative Extension in March 2003.

Lincoln Showcase

The Lincoln Showcase is an annual wine and food festival showcasing the best of Lincoln and surrounding areas. The Lincoln Showcase organizers have looked to the Agricultural Marketing Director to help coordinate that PlacerGROWN products would be featured in meals, site decorations and given as sponsor gift baskets. For additional information visit: <http://www.lincolinchamber.com>.

Sierra Business Council Conference

“The Sierra Business Council (SBC) is a nonprofit association of more than five hundred businesses, agencies, and individuals working to secure the social, environmental and financial health of the Sierra Nevada region for this and future generations”. The SBC convenes for an annual conference to discuss regional issues and for the last five years the Marketing Director has provided interactive and informative workshops at the conference. For more information visit: <http://www.sbcouncil.org>.

Regional Council of Rural Counties (RCRC) Conference

"The Regional Council of Rural Counties is dedicated to representing the collective unique interests of its membership, providing legislative and regulatory representation at the State and Federal levels, and providing responsible services to its members which will enhance and protect the quality of life in rural California counties." In October 2002, the Marketing Director attended, arranged for PlacerGROWN products for a dinner event and presented a session on Placer County's agricultural marketing efforts at the RCRC conference. For more information visit: <http://www.rcrcnet.org>.

UC Davis "Agricultural Direct Marketing Strategies for Successful Businesses and Communities"

In March 2002, the Marketing Director was a speaker at the UC Davis for an all day conference on direct marketing.

California Small Farm Conference

In 2003 and 2005, the California Small Farm Conference organizers invited the Agricultural Marketing Director to host sessions outlining Placer County's Agricultural Marketing Program, how it is organized, funded and run. For more information visit: <http://www.californiafarmconference.com>.

National Farm Conference

In November 2002, the National Farm Conference organizers invited, and paid for, the Agricultural Marketing Director to give a talk outlining Placer County's Agricultural Marketing Program, how it is organized, funded and run.

Kellogg Foundation's Food and Society Networking Conference

In April 2003, the Agricultural Marketing Director received and accepted an invitation to the Kellogg Foundation's Food and Society Networking Conference: "What Would It Take?" in Houston, Texas. The Kellogg Foundation paid for the expenses.

North American Farmer Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA)/California Small Farm Conference

In 2004, the NAFDMA and California Small Farm Conference joined forces to host their conferences in conjunction. The Marketing Director assisted in the planning process for the conference and provided a PlacerGROWN dinner for 400 at Placer County Fairgrounds. For more information visit: <http://www.nafdma.com>.

Impact and Results

- **Farm Conference Attendance**
 - 2002 – Marketing Director conducted informational sessions in addition to promoting the Placer County Agricultural Marketing Program at the conference booth
 - 2003 – Marketing Director coordinated a 4-hour marketing strand with approximately 145 participants in the session
 - 2004 – National Small Farm Conference held in Sacramento and therefore no Local Farm Conference in 2004
 - 2005 – Marketing Director presented sessions on niche marketing and "Telling Your Farm Story"

- **Gold Country Fair – Food and Wine Event**
 2001 – 250 people dined at the event and 300 people tasted wine
 2003 – 400 guests tasted wine and dined at the event
 2004 – 350 guests wine tasted and dined at event

- **Sierra Business Council Conference**
 2001 to 2005 – Marketing Director made presentations on farmers’ markets, agriculture festivals, agriculture’s place in cultural tourism to conference attendees

- **Lincoln Showcase**
 2002 – Marketing Director arranged for PlacerGROWN products to be served at the dinner event with over 500 people were in attendance
 2003 – Coordinated effort of Lincoln Showcase committee to make sponsor’s gift baskets containing all PlacerGROWN value-added products
 2004 & 2005 – Assisted with gift baskets and coordinating PlacerGROWN products for the event meal.

- **Kellogg Foundations Food and Society Networking Conference**
 In April 2003, 360 participants from throughout the country attended the Networking Conference. Participants included Professors, USDA representatives, Vice Presidents of General Mills, non-profit directors and consultants including the Placer County Agricultural Marketing Director. The focus of the forum was the future of agriculture as well as the health of American citizens and the environment.

- **North American Farmer Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA)/California Small Farm Conference**
 In February 2004, the Director prepared and presented sessions on Farm Stays, and AGROart as an agricultural tourism event and 400 guests tasted Placer County wine and the conference dinner event highlighted local produce.

- **Mountain Mandarin Tour**
 The Placer County Marketing Director contacted six of the eighteen participating mandarin growers to obtain estimates of their visitor counts during the November and December 2004 Mandarin Tour. The six growers provided the following counts:

Number of customers:	10,900
Number of children:	2,520
Traveled over 2 hours:	535

After an analytical review, the Marketing Director came to two conclusions:

1. Market mandarins to children – they’re asking their parents for them.
2. Market mandarins to consumers from out of the area as they are willing to travel to visit the orchards and purchase the product.

The broad based vision of the Agricultural Marketing Director has been able to transcend the entire Sierra Nevada region. With the precedent set high the Placer County Marketing Program shows other counties and communities the intrinsic importance of agriculture from economic development to open space benefits. The Marketing Director serves as a main planning partner to Sierra Business Council in regards to their annual conference and the Cultural and Heritage Tourism Strategy for the Sierra Nevada. The current director brings key ideas and people to the process with the power to effect change. Effective marketing efforts highlight Placer County as the standard by which others will be measured.

**-David Polivy,
Sierra Business Council**

Events – Meetings

Request

Throughout Placer County there are a multitude of business and special interest organizations. A representative of the agricultural community was asked to attend local meetings in order to inform organizations of events and program highlights. The Marketing Director needs to be in close contact with the constituents in this area in order to meet their needs. The Marketing Director meets with the county's agricultural, business and special interest organizations, which include:

American River College Culinary Department
Auburn Chamber of Commerce*
Auburn Meddlers meeting*
Auburn Rotary Club*
Auburn 49er Lions Club*
Bright Beginnings
Foothill Farmers' Market Association
Fruitvale School Association
Lincoln Chamber of Commerce
Lincoln Hills Garden Club*
Lincoln Rotary Club*
Loomis Chamber of Commerce*
Placer County Agricultural Commission
Placer County Association of Realtors*
Placer County Board of Supervisors
Placer County Farm Bureau
Placer County Municipal Advisory Council

Placer County Resource Conservation District
Placer County Wine and Grape Association
PlacerGROWN Board of Directors
Placer County Mandarin Growers
Placer Valley Tourism
Rocklin Chamber of Commerce
Roseville Soroptimist*
Sierra Business Council
Sierra College Agriculture Department
Soroptimist International of Historic Auburn*
Sun City Community Association*
Sun City Travel Group*
Tahoe Cattlemen's Association*
University of California, Davis Design Center
University of California, Davis SAREP
University of California, Davis Small Farm Center
USDA Resource & Conservation District

* The Marketing Director meets annually with these organizations to update them on the agricultural marketing efforts in Placer County.

What Was Done

The Marketing Director attended community meetings in order to inform organization members about upcoming events in the agriculture community, to spread the word about new program highlights and to keep the concept of PlacerGROWN in the forefront of people's minds. The Director attended grower meetings to inform growers of new programs, product promotions and to offer marketing and networking expertise.

Impact and Results

- The Marketing Director regularly attended the Placer County Wine and Grape Association meetings and helped the group with the conception of a logo and the organization of the Auburn Wine Festival.
- In addition, meetings with the above mentioned organizations and Marketing Director resulted in organization of special agriculturally related events, creation of marketing material and the formation of partnerships. Additional results for the Events - Meeting section can be reviewed in the Events, Marketing and Grower Outreach sections.



PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

Vitally important to the Placer County Agricultural Marketing Program are the partnerships and collaborations that have been formed. Many entities have sought the assistance of the Marketing Director to promote agricultural marketing countywide.

Request

There are many different avenues to market agricultural products. There are also many different alliances and organizations that aid in channeling agricultural products to the end consumer. In a county as diverse as Placer County, the Marketing Director is called upon to assist various organizations with their marketing efforts.

What Was Done

Mountain Mandarin Growers

The Marketing Director participated in numerous meetings with the Mandarin growers in order to unify their marketing efforts to create a niche market for mountain grown citrus of superior quality. The growers have pulled together to purchase bags and boxes in bulk at less cost and developed a Mountain Mandarin logo.

Cultural and Heritage Tourism Strategy for the Sierra Nevada

The Sierra Business Council in cooperation with regional business and community leaders, including the Placer County Agricultural Marketing Director, pooled resources to create a Cultural and Heritage Tourism Strategy for the Sierra Nevada. This strategy entails highlighting the sophistication of the arts, the beauty of the open land and the bounty of regional farmers as a marketing point for regional tourism.

Placer Valley Tourism

With cultural tourism on the increase, the Placer County Agricultural Marketing Program has joined forces with the Placer Valley Tourism in an effort to market Placer County's unique blend of urban sophistication and rural charm. The Marketing Director meets on a regular basis with Placer Valley Tourism in order to keep them informed of events going on in the agricultural community. Many of the festivals and agricultural events draw tourists to this region. For additional information visit: <http://www.placertourism.com>.

USDA High Sierra Beef Project

The High Sierra Beef vision: "High Sierra Beef is a producer-controlled business that markets beef products of consistent quality in order to sustain family ranches." The High Sierra Resource Conservation and Development Council (High Sierra RC&DC) and the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) have developed a business plan for local beef producers aimed at marketing the high-end product through direct marketing. Specifically, this project will assist local ranchers in marketing premium beef products to consumers through various retail outlets. The Agricultural Marketing Director assists High Sierra Beef by coordinating press releases and helping prepare High Sierra beef for sampling at special events. For additional information visit: <http://www.highsierrabeef.com>.

University of California, Davis, Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SAREP) Program

In 2005, the Placer County Agricultural Marketing Director and students in the UC Davis Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program worked together to produce a marketing report for Placer County mandarins. The report is titled, "*Assessing the Local Marketing Potential for Mandarin Growers in Placer County.*" The Marketing Director lent both knowledge and expertise of the area and industry to the students' efforts.

University of California, Davis, International Agriculture Program

In 2004, a small group of UC Davis graduate students wrote a report on hoshigaki for as part of a class project. Along with the report, the students created a brochure featuring the Japanese art of hand-dried persimmons, hoshigaki. The graduate students worked with the Placer County Agriculture Marketing Director to connect them with local hoshigaki producers and serve as a resource. For the complete Hoshigaki report visit:

<http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/cdpp/foodsystems/hoshigaki.pdf>

University of California, Davis, Design Department's Educational Outreach on AGROart

“AGROart competitions feature artists, culinary experts and people of all ages creating sculptures and images using only fresh, preferably locally grown, vegetables and fruits. Using tooth picks and more elaborate forms as the base to build from, the produce is cut, shaped, assembled and arranged on site then judged while the produce is still fresh. A free play area is commonly included for spectators to become involved in the creative process.” UC Davis Design Department students held an informative session to educate other people who may be interested in their own AGROart events.

University of California, Davis, Small Farm Center

Over the course of the last five years the Marketing Director formed a working relationship with the many UC Davis programs that benefit agriculture. The Director presented agricultural tourism workshops for the Small Farm Center each year.

Results and Impacts

Mountain Mandarin Growers

The unification of the mandarin growers has enabled the growers to market their product cooperatively develop a seasonal mandarin tour patterned after the success of Apple Hill. To aid the mandarin growers with the tour, the Marketing Director created a website, tour brochures and secured funding for signage. Initially, the signs (directional arrows) were funded by the marketing program and later by the Placer County Association of Realtors.

Cultural and Heritage Tourism Strategy for the Sierra Nevada

The Sierra Business Council's Cultural and Heritage Tourism Strategy for the Sierra Nevada was largely built upon initial ideas from the Placer County Agricultural Marketing Director. David Polivy, Program Officer, stated that the “connects people” and has been an invaluable asset in this process.

High Sierra Beef Project

The High Sierra Beef project enjoyed very positive press in 2005 and 2006. The Marketing Director participated in producer outreach meetings held in July 2005 at which High Sierra Beef product was sampled. The 2005 Gold Country Fair's opening night Home Winemakers event featured High Sierra Beef hamburgers.

University of California, Davis, Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program

The collaborative effort between the Marketing Director and graduate students resulted in an extensive working resource for mandarin growers that discussed supply, demand, marketing channels, barriers to marketing and marketing strategies in detail. The Document is entitled: “Assessing the Local Marketing Potential for Mandarin Growers in Placer County,” compiled by: Heather Ricks, Graduate Research Assistant, Erin Derden-Little, Graduate Research Assistant and Gail Feenstra, Food System Analyst with an acknowledgement of the Marketing Director and the Placer County Agricultural Marketing Program. . For the complete Mandarin report visit: <http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/cdpp/foodsystems/mandarin.pdf>

University California, Davis, Design Department’s Educational Outreach on AGROart

The informative and fun session gave individuals interested in the competition an idea of what AGROart is and the fundamentals of creating an AGROart sculpture. The outreach helped bolster the success of the AGROart festival that is held in conjunction with the Farm and Barn Tour. For more information on AGROart visit: <http://artsofauburn.com/agroart.html>

University of California, Davis, Small Farm Center

This particular partnership directly affected farmers and ranchers in a positive way by illustrating the option of diversifying their operations by tapping into agri-tourism dollars. There are different ways an operation can accomplish this; 1) opening the farm to on-site visitations by consumers, or 2) opening their homes for Farm Stays or Bed and Breakfast operations. These are just two of the many suggestions the Marketing Director offered to producers that attend the informative sessions. For producers that are interested, the Marketing Director offered to aid them in the research and implementation process.

The current Placer County Agriculture Marketing Director does more to promote agriculture than anyone else in the county. The media attention received through the Directors contacts highlight every aspect of agriculture here in Placer County. The success of the Placer County Agriculture Marketing Program has set the precedence by which all other programs will be measured. Promotional efforts have elevated consumer awareness of Placer County agricultural products to a regional, state, national and even international level. The promotion of local agriculture products not only brings in additional revenue to farmers, but also offers other local proprietors the opportunity to boost sales. For example local events such as the Farm & Barn Tour attract people from out of the area; this increases the tourism revenue through higher demand for hotel accommodations, restaurant reservations and local shopping. The county revenue that is expended for the program costs is earned back several times over through local taxes collected from businesses.

*- Wayne Vineyard,
Chairman of the Placer County Agricultural Commission
and member of the Placer County Farm Bureau, Board of Directors*

Placer Valley Tourism identified cultural tourism as the fastest growing segment of tourism in California. Encompassed in cultural tourism is Agri-tourism, which offers tourists the opportunity to visit local farms, ranches and wineries, as well as participate in festivals and events centered around the harvest season or individual commodities. Together, these entities have attended educational seminars to gain more knowledge on cultural tourism and avenues to market it. In researching cultural tourism they have looked to the success of ventures such as Apple Hill in El Dorado County in order to glean information and find a blueprint for the Mountain Mandarin Tour. Placer Valley tourism would not be involved in the promotion of agri-tourism events if it were not for the efforts of the Placer County Agriculture Marketing Director. As a representative of the agriculture community, the marketing director has worked closely with Placer Valley Tourism to highlight Placer County's unique heritage fruits (the persimmon and mandarin) as well as market agricultural festivals to perspective tourists. This partnership is mutually beneficial; not only does the Marketing Director assist with promotion of tourism; Placer Valley is now involved with the Placer Farm Conference as a sponsor and attends to promote their message. The agri-tourism events that are co-promoted include: the Eggplant Festival, the Farm & Barn Tour, the Mountain Mandarin Festival, the Mountain Mandarin Tour, Placer County Fair, Placer Hills Winery Tour, and the Strawberry Festival.

***-Jonelle Norton,
Placer Valley Tourism***

GROWER OUTREACH

Grower outreach includes a multitude of services. The Placer County Agricultural Marketing Director works closely with grower organizations and individual growers in order to tailor marketing efforts to specific markets.

Request

Placer County growers made a request for assistance with various marketing efforts, in order to distinguish their product from others.

What Was Done

Grower Brochures and Product Development

The Marketing Director developed brochures for growers who requested assistance. Examples included the Brenner and Nakae Ranches in Newcastle, Machado Orchards in Auburn, and Otow Orchard in Granite Bay. The brochures were designed to market the unique products that each grower offers and can be displayed on or off-site to encourage customers to visit their specific locations.

Product Branding

The Placer County Wine and Grape Association, formed in 2001, pooled together the resources of local grape growers in the county. The Marketing Director became involved in the process of marketing the association's logo and handled the arrangements for developing the logo artwork.

Assisted with Drafting Marketing and Strategic Plans

The Marketing Director assisted PlacerGROWN and the Wine and Grape Association with the creation or revision of their marketing and/or strategic plans.

Recipe Development

Along with local chefs, the Marketing Director has worked to develop recipes that feature PlacerGROWN commodities. The recipes are used on brochures and handouts to entice consumers to purchase and prepare PlacerGROWN products. In 2005-2006 a number of recipes were developed by Nancyjo Riekse to create value-added products. The effort was funded by the Agricultural Marketing Program.

PlacerGROWN Bags

The Agricultural Marketing Program currently pays for the printing of PlacerGROWN promotional paper tote bags and has distributed over 75,000 to date. Each grower who is listed in the Ag Guide is given 100 bags, and can purchase additional bags from PlacerGROWN.

PlacerGROWN Signs

Along with the PlacerGROWN bags, the Agricultural Marketing Program has paid for the printing of PlacerGROWN signs. There are two sign sizes; 12" x 12" and 18" x 18". The smaller signs are given to PlacerGROWN members upon payment of their membership dues. The larger 18" x 18" signs are offered for sale to farmers and consumers at farmers markets and local events where PlacerGROWN is represented. These signs are a very effective way of spreading the message to support PlacerGROWN.

Impact and Results

- In December 2001 the Marketing Director arranged a meeting with Dave Wagner, Crooked Vine Winery, and an artist concerning the winery's logo.
- Assisted Nancy Fowler-Johnson of Fowler Nursery with media outreach for their January 2002 bare root fruit tree and nut tree nursery stock sale.
- Met with Paul Burns, Gold Blossom Winery, Chili Hill, regarding marketing for those locations.
- In December 2002, met with Jeff Rieger, new owner of the Itow Orchard, to discuss feasibility of marketing the produce from his farm in Penryn.

- January 2003, met with Renee Charleston of Colfax who is putting in a lavender farm. Assisted Renee with preliminary marketing plans.
- In September 2003 toured Apple Hill, El Dorado County, with several mandarin growers and staff members from Placer County. The purpose of this tour was to learn, in detail, about the success of Apple Hill as well as gain insight into any problems or concerns.



- **PlacerGROWN bags**
Over the course of this program, 75,000 bags have been purchased and disseminated to growers and local markets. This has been a highly effective way to advocate the benefits of eating locally grown foods to the general public.
- **PlacerGROWN Signs**
There are currently 142 PlacerGROWN members. To date, PlacerGROWN and the Ag Marketing Program have distributed about 200 metal or vinyl signs and banners. The signs with their bold and vivid image remind the community that it is easy to obtain PlacerGROWN products through local farmers' markets, retail establishments and directly from local farms and ranches.

The Placer County Agriculture Marketing Director has put Placer County agriculture back on the map. Placer County has a rich agricultural history, but due to the surge of growth over the last decade it has been overshadowed. It took the vision and initiative of the Marketing Director to highlight the wonderful and unique products of Placer County. The foothills have always yielded produce that is more colorful, flavorful and has a longer shelf life. These are attributes upon which the Marketing Director may market local products. The Placer County Agricultural Marketing Program benefits growers countywide through the continuous promotion of PlacerGROWN products to the public.

**- Howard Nakae,
Twin Peaks Farm**

Teena's first interaction with the Placer County Agriculture Marketing Director came at a Placer County Wine and Grape Grower Association (PCW&GA) meeting. The Association was fairly new at the time and the Marketing Director had some great ideas for the organization. Together, they developed the brand logo for the association and worked on various promotional events including Placer Hills Wine tour and the Auburn Wine Festival. Through the collaboration, Placer County Wine and Grape Association discovered things that were successful and things that were not. Most importantly the Marketing Director connected people, which led to increased press and in turn higher revenue for local growers.

Vina Castellano's feature in the Agricultural Guide brought more response than all the other avenues of advertising attempted previously. The Marketing Director truly brings people together and ensures that there are no event conflicts between organizations, which is key to the success of local agriculture events. For example one year the Placer County Wine and Grape Association planned their main annual fundraiser for the same weekend as the Farm & Barn Tour. This could have been disastrous for both events since they have the same resource and interest base. It was more advantageous for PCW&GA to reschedule their event and talk to the Farm & Barn Tour committee to discuss the participation of local wineries in that event. The current Marketing Director has a good feel for agriculture, marketing and consumer demand. The visions of the Marketing Director have turned into successful events, ad campaigns and press coverage. Once the idea is formed for an event or outreach and the concept is off the ground the Agriculture Marketing Director turns over the reins to community members or grower organizations. It is a testimony to the success of this program that other counties are patterning their Agriculture Marketing Program after that of Placer County.

**-Teena Wilkins,
Vina Castellano Winery**

"Quality fruits and vegetables are grown in Placer County. Placer County offers diverse and interesting agriculture related festivals and events. Agri-tourism is a potential economic gold mine for Placer County due to the quality crops, activities, beautiful scenery and available facilities. Placer County is quickly becoming known as a source of good wine. How in the WORLD will local folk and potential visitors know about these things UNLESS THEY ARE TOLD! That's MARKETING! Obviously, we have folk who are good at farming; good at grape growing and wine making; good at recognizing potential sources to create interesting festivals. What Placer County cannot do without, is someone good at TELLING THE LOCALS AND THE POTENTIAL VISITORS about these commodities, while also serving as a resource to the local farmers in the area of marketing. The current Marketing Director has been the generating and creative factor in establishing area festivals, farmers' markets, agriculture related organizations and associations. All of these activities are supportive to the growth of sustainable agriculture, and the

enhancement and education of local and visiting consumers. Specifically related to local Mandarin growers, there is now a group of growers that meet monthly to support each other in the areas of education, marketing, fruit production, selling and promotion of the citrus crop. Thanks to the Mountain Mandarin Festival, and follow-up guidance, Placer County is now ON THE MAP in regard to Mandarins and mountain grown citrus. Will this group continue to grow? Yes, but the majority of these individuals are REAL GOOD FARMERS...who have a great product to sell, BUT NEED ASSISTANCE IN MARKETING THEIR PRODUCT. The Director has also been very supportive to individuals who have added extended value to their farm-raised crops by adding artisan gourmet products for sale. Through her marketing expertise, she works to promote this extension of the crops to encourage additional economic realization to the farmer. Will this activity continue to grow? Yes, but not at the present momentum if there is not a marketing individual to assist the producer AND tell the consumer!”

**– Ralene Snow,
Snow’s Citrus Court**

The program is a breath of fresh air for the agricultural community. The exposure that Horton’s Farm received through a listing and feature article in the Agriculture Guide doubled the number of on farm visits in one year alone and they continue to note sizeable growth each year. Mr. Horton said, “I truly see the value in the program”. The Horton Family has taken marketing to another level by creating an on farm artist studio. This allows them to invite local artists to showcase their creations. It helps provide farm visitors with a unique experience that highlights the link between art and agriculture. Due to their affiliation with the Marketing Program, the Hortons attended the Sierra Business Council’s annual conference this last year in Murphys. There they discussed further developing the relationship between agriculture and the arts through cultural tourism. The Hortons believe that it is this sort of “cross-pollination” of ventures that will provide the future for agriculture in this community. The support of the Placer County Agriculture Marketing Director makes it possible for farmers and ranches to continue in agriculture by taking on the marketing responsibilities and coordinating press and special events.

**-Ed Horton,
Horton Farm Iris Garden**

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EDUCATION

Community outreach is vital in promoting all that is PlacerGROWN. It is a significant responsibility of the Marketing Director to act as a liaison between growers and end consumers.

Request

The agriculture community requested a marketing representative with an understanding of agriculture, a background in marketing, and strong contacts in the community to assist with Placer County product promotion.

What Was Done

PlacerGROWN Baskets

The Marketing Director is called upon throughout the year to create PlacerGROWN gift baskets. These baskets have been distributed as raffle prizes, thank you gifts and as a promotion for Placer County agriculture. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger was a recipient of a PlacerGROWN gift basket during the signing ceremony of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy legislation.

PlacerGROWN Product Coordination

There are numerous fundraising and promotional events that take place in Placer County over the course of a year. Event coordinators often turned to the Marketing Director to find ways to incorporate PlacerGROWN products into their event menu. The Marketing Director helped coordinate the use of PlacerGROWN food for events such as Healthy Communities, Women's Wellness, Placer Land Trust, Lincoln Showcase, Placer County Board of Realtors, Sierra College and the Plumas County BBQ. Also, many of these dinner events have used PlacerGROWN products and bags as centerpieces. These attractive, edible centerpieces are designed so that the attendees may take them home.

The Marketing Director introduced local chefs to the idea of using locally grown products in their dishes. Not only were chefs introduced to the product, but also to the growers and producers which helped cultivate lasting working relationships. One chef, Janette Nuss, was so impressed with her visit to Twin Peaks Ranch she returned to the ranch two weeks later with her students.

PlacerGROWN Fruit Outreach

In addition to coordinating the acquisition of PlacerGROWN products for meals, the Marketing Director has distributed single commodities at special events. For example, mountain mandarins are a popular PlacerGROWN product that has been handed out at the Nevada County Christmas Faire (25,000), the Lincoln Hills Kilaga Springs grand opening (10,000), Tahoe City Christmas event (5000) and the Auburn Fun Run (5 lugs of cherries). Other entities, and/or events, that received fruit outreach include, but are not limited to: Placer County Facility Services, Placer County Administrative Services, Placer County Board of Supervisors, Placer County Water Agency, Sun City Ag Event, Auburn ARTS event, Auburn Marketplace meeting, Auburn Rotary meeting, Auburn Meddlers meeting, Placer County Planning Department, PlacerGROWN board meeting, Newcastle Business Association, Sierra Business Council, Hanfords restaurant, Lincoln Chamber, Placer County Realtors Association and Food Security Baskets.

Coordination of Direct Sales

Local proprietors contacted the Marketing Director to assist them in contacting growers who would like to sell directly to the businesses. Restaurants, produce markets and retail establishments are becoming increasingly interested in featuring locally grown foods.

Informative Talks

Organizations throughout the community called upon the Marketing Director to attend their meetings in order to update their members on the progress of the Agricultural Marketing Program. This was a great way to let community members know about upcoming agricultural events.

Community Project Assistance

Community members asked the Marketing Director to assist with various projects that dealt with agriculture in one form or another. In March of 2003, Molly Johnson requested assistance on the Leaf Project, which is a school lunch program that features locally grown produce.

Grant Writing and Assistance

At the request of community members, UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE) staff, local business organizations and schools the Marketing Director assisted in writing and/or lending support to various grant requests aimed at supporting local agriculture. Assisted with the following grants:

- Produce and Meal Distribution Program Grant – UCCE
- Various Resource Conservation District grant proposals
- PlacerGROWN
- Sierra Business Council
- High Sierra Beef - USDA
- Lincoln High School – High Technology Propane Equipment grant

Placer County Agricultural Marketing Program Displays

The Marketing Director organized promotional displays to be viewed at County offices, businesses, fairs and community events. The booths often included promotional material for Foothill Farmers' Market, "Be a Local Hero" outreach, Ag Guides, PlacerGROWN bumper-stickers and signage. Additionally, in season fresh fruit was distributed and people encouraged to visit their local farmers' market or a farm to buy produce directly from those who grew it.

Placer County State Fair Display Booth

During the planning stages of the 2004 Placer County State Fair Booth, the Marketing Director contacted the committee to make a few creative suggestions. The idea of patterning the booth after a fruit shed appealed to the people involved. Along with initiating the concept, the Marketing Director worked with the committee to capture and display the essence of Placer County agriculture.

Impact and Results

Whether it was creating PlacerGROWN gift baskets or giving an informative talk to a local organization, communication and outreach to the community has been vital to the success of the Agricultural Marketing Program. The fruit and gift basket outreach has been a wonderful way to expose consumers to the freshness of locally grown products. This outreach is a great promotional tool and often makes new customers for County producers. Events where PlacerGROWN products were distributed include:

- Nevada County Christmas Faire
- Lincoln Hills Kilaga Spring opening
- Tahoe City Christmas event
- Auburn Fun Run (3 years)
- Fathers' Day Healthy Run
- Lincoln Showcase (3 years)
- Loomis Celebrity Chefs

As a result of community involvement outside the scope of the Agricultural Marketing Program the Program Director generated interest from Raley's and Bel Air grocers to attempt to provide floor space for local fruits and vegetables. This is currently in the research stages.

Coordination of Direct Sales

The Food Manager of Thunder Valley Casino, Jim White, expressed interest in featuring PlacerGROWN products at the casino's restaurants. The Marketing Director met with Jim to discuss the possibilities and give him further information.

Community Project Assistance – Gold Country Fair Grounds Wine Pavilion

The Placer County Wine and Grape Association approached the Marketing Director with the vision of building a wine pavilion on the Gold Country Fairgrounds. The Marketing Director contacted the fair manager to set up a meeting. Subsequently, the Marketing Director requested funding from the Placer County Board of Supervisors to subsidize the construction cost of a wine pavilion and secured \$10,000 in matching funds. The Placer County Agriculture Marketing Program paid for the mural featured on the side of the pavilion, which depicts vineyard and mandarin production in Placer County.

Placer County Agriculture Marketing Program Displays

The Marketing Director designed an agricultural display at the Placer County Water Agency that was up for two years.

Placer County State Fair Display Booth

In 2004, the Placer County State Fair Display Booth received the "Best of Show" award and a Gold Medal. The display highlighted Placer County agriculture and was enjoyed by millions of visitors attending the California State Fair.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Once the word began to spread, as a result of all the marketing and promotional activity, that Placer County funded an Agricultural Marketing Program and hired an Agricultural Marketing Director, questions started coming in from interested consumers, prospective growers, retail establishments, current producers and news media people.

Request

The Marketing Director answered hundreds of phone calls, emails, and letters requesting more Ag Guides, information on the program and promotional materials, when and where consumers could buy certain products, how growers could get press coverage about the upcoming harvest or an event, how to improve the marketing of specific commodities, where was a suitable farm site for news media pictures, what is the next agricultural event, and how to develop a farm stay.

What Was Done

On an average day the Marketing Director received 20 phone calls and 10-15 emails requesting information and/or materials and personally made sure that all materials and commodities requested are shipped to the requesting party. The Marketing Director ensured that people got answers to their questions in a timely manner.

REPORTS

In addition to all the functions and services outlined above, the Placer County Agriculture Marketing Director is required to keep detailed financial and activity records. Each month the Marketing Director submitted a list of the cost associated with the program's activities and a copy of the original receipts. The Marketing Director tracked and recorded the time spent on each project or activity. These reports are submitted monthly to the Agriculture Commissioner. At the conclusion of each fiscal year, a Program Summary is prepared and submitted for review at a meeting of the Placer County Board of Supervisors.