

13. North Coast Food System Network



Lead Organization: North Coast Growers' Association

Key Collaborators: Aquilli Metzli Masa Cooperative, Del Norte and Tribal Lands Community Food Council, Bear River Rancheria, Blue Lake Rancheria, Karuk Tribe, Klamath/Trinity Resource Conservation District/Hoopa Tribe, Tolowa dee-ni' Nation, Yurok Tribe, Humboldt Farm Bureau, Scheer Associates, Ruf Collective, uxo architecture, Ironside Metal Works, Noyo Harbor, Crescent City Harbor

More Information: bit.ly/North-Coast-Food

Sector: Working Lands and Blue Economy

Project Description

The North Coast Food System Network is an initiative led by the North Coast Growers' Association to increase connectivity and collaboration across the North Coast region through investments into infrastructure and capacity building.

The Network is designed to fill gaps in critical food infrastructure, workforce development, and connection to resources of the North Coast region's agriculture and fishing industries. The focus of this investment is on community and Tribally-owned and operated food system projects. Project partners met quarterly throughout the grant term to share information and resources.

Intended Outcomes

- Create and retain agricultural and food systems jobs
- Support producers with expanded market access
- Increase regional cold storage and processing capacity
- Strengthen food sovereignty initiatives

Progress Update: Challenges & Achievements to Date

Aquilli Metzli Masa Cooperative: Established a Cooperative ownership structure, piloted the cultivation of various heirloom maize varieties in microclimates around Humboldt, and purchased a nixtamal grinder to offer locally grown and made masa.

Commercial Kitchen: The architectural plans and permitting are near completion for this future infrastructure expansion that will allow Humboldt farmers and the Harvest Hub to expand the seasonal availability and types of locally grown foods that are offered.

DNATL Gather and Grow Resilience Hub: Engaging in pre-permitting and architectural designs for a new facility that will house DNATL offices, learning kitchen space, and aggregation/storage space for a food and emergency response hub.

Humboldt County Ag Day: A K-4th grade hands-on experiential learning day that brings together Working Lands and Blue Economy businesses and organizations to teach students about our sector economy and job opportunities.

Humboldt Dockside Market and Blue Economy

Support: Launched a new, seasonal fish market that currently supports 8 fishing vessels, their families, and crew. The Humboldt Dockside Market runs every Saturday through the summer on Madaket Plaza. Additionally, this project allowed NCGA to partner with CA Sea Grant to support a regional Seafood Extension Fellow, who will further Blue Economy Sector goals like supportive infrastructure and marketing/traceability initiatives across the RISE Region.

Microgrants for Farmers: Provided funding for on-farm equipment and infrastructure to help farm businesses grow. Projects include shared use chicken processing equipment, dairy chiller for goat milk, harvest and transplant equipment.

North Coast Meat Collaborative: Studying the gaps and assets within the regional meat economy to determine opportunities for investment into infrastructure and resources to support meat production and processing.

Resilience Nodes: Piloting solar-powered cooler nodes located in remote communities to increase cold storage and distribution infrastructure for daily use, while including plans for emergency feeding and storage transition during disaster events.

Tribal Food Sovereignty: Provides connections to resources and direct investment into food sovereignty programs to address service and infrastructure gaps. Projects include infrastructure investment and capacity building for gardens and farms.

Storytelling: Contracted with a videographer to produce 5 short films documenting the work of NCGA and its many partners in building our local food system. The culmination of this project is an NCGA Film Premier highlighting the North Coast Food System Network projects on September 24th at The Eagle House in Eureka.

Ways to Engage and Support the Project

- **Join us for Rooted in Place:** Stories from the North Coast Food System, our film premiere and fundraising event on September 24 at the Eagle House in Eureka. bit.ly/45ulknh
- **Invest in a stronger local food system** by becoming a supporter, sponsoring a farmers' market, or exploring philanthropic partnership opportunities with NCGA. bit.ly/45vbSBe
- **Bring the conversation to your community.** Invite our team to present on the North Coast Food System Network, Harvest Hub, local food access, or other NCGA initiatives at your next meeting or event. megan@northcoastgrowers.org
- **Volunteer** at an NCGA event, farmers' market or community initiative. bit.ly/3RycKln
- **Partner with us.** We're always looking to collaborate with organizations, businesses, schools, Tribes, and agencies that share our vision for a thriving regional food system.
- **Stay connected.** Sign up for our newsletter and follow along to see how these projects grow and the impact they have across the North Coast. bit.ly/4bgiGGo

