Urban Growers' Collaborative Project

Phase 1 Report Convening

November 17th, 2017

Www.ucsdcommunityhealth.org
Intros

1. Your Name & Farm Name

2. One Crop You Are Harvesting or Planting Now
Agenda Overview

1. Review Project Background
2. Goal & Questions of Phase 1 Research
3. What Did We Learn?
4. What Comes Next?
5. Q & A
6. Upcoming Training Workshop Reminders
Project Goals

Understand barriers & opportunities for collaboration among small urban farmers to improve viability and entry into new local markets

1.) Support viability of small urban farms
2.) Increase fresh food access for limited-resource urban residents
Project Phases

One
- Review research on urban ag viability
- Assess product supply of growers' group
- Identify opportunities for TA
- Understand interest/potential for collaboration

Two
- Assess local demand
- Determine recommendations for collaborative action/project/product
- Provide TA to access local markets

Three
- Study the feasibility of the determined collaborative action from Phase 2
Phase One Objectives

- Product Supply
- Needs Assessment

Research Questions

- Who are the urban growers?
- What are they growing?
- What do they need for farm viability?
- Are they interested in collaborating?
Key Findings
Farmer Demographics

Who is growing in urban San Diego County?

Of 9 growers participating in the project:

- 5 women, 4 men
- Avg age of 36
- 8 of 9 are white, 1 Latina
- 2 veterans
- Farming experience = 10 yrs avg, 5 yrs median
Farm Operations

- 4.5 yrs = avg age of farms in operation
- .86 acres = avg area of production
- 56% organic practices but not certified, 22% certified organic, 22% soil grown, 22% regenerative, etc.
- 4 for-profit farms, 5 non-profit orgs
Vegetables:
amaranth, carrots, chard, cucumbers, eggplant, herbs, kale, potatoes, salad mix, salanova lettuce, summer squash, tomatillos, tomatoes

Fruits:
apples, figs, lemons, mulberries

Grains/Legumes:
hominy, corn for flour (masa)

Other:
honey, ornamentals, seeds
Sales Outlets

- 5 sell via **CSA shares**, avg 63% of total sales
- 5 sell via **FM or farm stand**, avg 41% of total sales
- 4 sell **direct to restaurants**, avg 46% of total sales
- 1 sells to wholesale distributor

*See pgs. 11-12 of report for benefits & challenges of these outlets*
# Product Supply Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6. Summary of Urban Farm Supply*</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Average area in production per farm</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total area in production across all farms</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total sales</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Average sales per farm</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Average sales per acre</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Top products/crops</strong></td>
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| **Top market outlets** | 1. Farm stands or Farmers’ Markets  
2. CSA Program  
3. Restaurants |

*Using 2016 sales and production data*
Expanding Production

- 8 of 9 said they have capacity to expand if profitable markets can be accessed
- 2 said they can't expand overall production but willing to shift crops & try different markets
- Top 3 barriers to expanding production: labor availability, production equipment, access to grants, credit/financing
New Crops/Products to Consider

- **Veggies:** arugula, salanova lettuce, carrots, onions, lettuce mix, tomatoes, Asian cucumbers, okra, basil, kale, chard, specialty veg, microgreens

- **Fruits:** tropical, figs, pomegranate, guava, dragonfruit, passionfruit, kiwana melons

- **Grains/Legumes:** dry beans, heritage grains

- **Other:** Hispanic and African American culturally relevant foods, high value rare food crops
Urban Farm Viability
Top 3 Barriers

- Marketing
- Business planning
- Access to capital, credit, and/or grants

Benefits/Opps Unique to Urban Farming

- Proximity to markets
- Proximity to other employment
- Camaraderie with other growers
- Connection to community/community support
- Opportunities for community building, reconnecting people to where food comes from
- Access to communities in need
- Access to large population centers
- Opportunities for collaboration
- Ability to address issues related to health, support underserved & minority communities
- Access to diverse markets & diverse communities

*See pg. 14 of report for details on critical components of traditional & urban farm viability*
Potential for Collaboration
Collaboration Overview

- 6 growers currently work with other farms
- 2 previously had a joint CSA
- Top criteria in deciding where collective sales should be: *participation in local community, minimize time spent on sales*
- All 9 saw potential to collaborate to impact food access for low-income pop.
- 6 of 8 growers said preserving farm identity was essential to their marketing goals; *100% would consider jointly marketing products to access markets*
- 6 growers said they have physical assets they'd consider contributing to a multi-farm project

*See pgs. 16-18 of report for more details on collaboration*
Technical Assistance Needs
Top Technical Assistance Needs

- **Business planning & coaching, 11/30**
- **Marketing training, 12/14 & 12/15**
- **Accessing capital or credit**
- **Non-profit fundraising**
- **Production assistance**

*See pgs. 19-21 for more details on technical assistance*
What's Next?

• Assess local demand (e.g. restaurants, target potential CSA consumers?)
• Continued training & TA for individual farm viability
• Specific collaborative project TA
QUESTIONS?

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