

CALIFORNIA FARMFUTURES

The newsletter of **California FarmLink**, a non-profit organization working to promote family farming and preserve farmland through facilitating farm transfers

Celebrating
11 YEARS
of building family farming



California FarmLink announces new status as Independent Lender with USDA FSA guarantee

California FarmLink has passed an important milestone this year and achieved a long-standing goal of becoming an independent, approved USDA guaranteed lender. This will help us loan more capital to serve more farmers. From 2007 to 2010, our loan program was done in partnership with Cal Coastal Rural Development Corporation based in Salinas, an experienced non-profit FSA-guaranteed farm lender. During that time we loaned out \$705,500 to 27 farmers and ranchers for an average loan size of \$26,000. Cal Coastal helped FarmLink develop its own lending capacity. We will specialize in serving beginning, direct market, minority and low-income producers with operating and infrastructure loans.

To accomplish this goal, we adopted loan policies and established a partnership with the Santa Cruz Community Credit Union. They will document, close, and service FarmLink loans. The Credit Union is a nonprofit, member-owned community financial cooperative promoting economic justice, and we're excited about how we can mutually benefit small farmers. During the transition, we cut back on lending but we are now ready and open for business!

If you are a farmer or rancher interested in a farm loan, or in evaluating whether or not you are ready for a loan, please contact your nearest FarmLink office in Modesto, Davis, Santa Rosa or Santa Cruz. We can discuss your options for



Sheep rancher Becky King, with her dad, Dwayne Martin (CFL), and loan officer signing papers for her newest loan

financing and help you decide whether or not the FarmLink loan program is a good fit. We can also help you evaluate your financial situation to determine whether a loan makes sense for your business at this time.

FarmLink has developed relationships with skilled consultants who will help with financial planning, accounting, payroll, bookkeeping, record keeping, taxes and financial statements. As part of our technical assistance program we can offer low-income clients up to \$500 worth of consulting services, as our financial resources permit. Make your business more profitable by letting us evaluate and suggest options for your operation's financial health!

Contact Reggie Knox - Director of Field Operations, for more information: reggie@cafarmlink.org or 831/425-0303.

WANTED! Loan Program Manager to manage FarmLink's farm finance & equity building programs

California FarmLink has an immediate opening for a highly motivated individual to manage its farm finance and equity building programs. The Loan Program Manager is a full-time position that will operate out of FarmLink's Central Coast Office in Santa Cruz, and coordinate lending activities for the organization statewide.

Candidates for the position must have at least three years experience in small business financial analysis and working knowledge of lending practices and protocols. A Bachelor's degree is required, with a major in finance, economics, or business highly desirable. Familiarity with California agriculture and agricultural lending are not required, but merit additional consideration. For a complete job announcement, please visit FarmLink's website: www.californiafarmlink.org.

FarmLink is an approved USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Guaranteed Lender and is licensed by the California Department of Corporations. Since 2006, FarmLink has

provided loans totaling more than \$700,000, to 26 beginning farmers and ranchers.

Over the next two to three years, the Loan Program Manager will be instrumental in helping FarmLink to obtain Community Development Finance Institution status, and to grow FarmLink's \$1 million loan fund to \$3-5 Million.

The Loan Program Manager will also oversee the Individual Development Account Program (IDA), which offers limited resource farmers and ranchers an opportunity to have their IDA savings matched 3 to 1 through donor contributions. These funds are intended for the purchase of farm equipment, infrastructure, or to help with land purchases.

Individuals interested in applying for the position should submit a cover letter and resume, no later than July 11, 2011. Interviews will be held in Santa Cruz and will be scheduled for the week of July 18, 2011.

Please email cover letters and resumes to: Bruce Shimizu, Chief Operations Officer, bruce@cafarmlink.org.

EDITOR'S NOTES



Summer has finally arrived, at least in our neck of the vineyards...and FarmLink is going full speed with value added production workshops around the state and Hawaii; mentoring (from on-line opportunities to one on one), land linking, and now, 'ready to go' with our lending program – all of which you'll read about in this Summer issue of *California Farm Futures*.

We've been increasing our presence on Facebook (check us out, and become a "friend"), and will be upgrading our website to be much more user friendly (especially for our farmers and ranchers) in the not too distant future.

Media attention is increasing as more and more people become aware of the need to support farmers, with potential

cameos in a couple of documentaries as well as various articles. We've added regional sections to the newsletter, hoping this makes finding relevant information easier.

Having outgrown our Sebastopol headquarters, we've moved to the big city – Santa Rosa! We're close to downtown, County headquarters, and right off Highway 101. Please join us on July 15th from 4:30 pm - 6:30 pm for our Open House at 2360 Professional Drive, Suite C, in Santa Rosa. We will send you a reminder email.

Please feel free to contact us with questions or suggestions, and don't forget to check out the two regional blogs on our website – North & Central Coast, for up to date regional goings on!

– Linda Peterson

REGIONAL NEWS

~ CENTRAL VALLEY ~

MARY JUNQUEIRO & LIYA SCHWARTZMAN

Grand Opening of Modesto Office & New Independent Lending Status



USDA FSA CA State Director Val Dolcini speaks at Modesto Open House

In April, California FarmLink hosted the Grand Opening of its newest office, located in the Stanislaus County Agricultural Center in Modesto. We share the center with the USDA FSA, County Ag Commissioner, UCCE, Department of Food & Agriculture, Milk Advisory, and the Department of Environmental Resources, offering access to resources and partners.

Mary Junqueiro, our Regional Coordinator in the Central Valley, is local, and well connected with the agricultural community through her work with the Farm Bureau and its Leadership Program.

At the Opening, we announced our new status as an Independent Lender with USDA FSA guarantee. Val Dolcini, California's State Executive Director, USDA Farm Service Agency and Dee Dee D'Adamo of Congressmen Cardoza's office spoke about the important work done by FarmLink to help the next generation of farmers succeed.

Congressman Cardoza has been instrumental through his position as Chair of the Ag Subcommittee on Horticulture and Organic Agriculture in supporting beginning, small farmers. State Director Dolcini has been a strong supporter of FarmLink's efforts to complete the lengthy process of becoming an independent lender.

Reporter John Holland of the Modesto Bee covered the Grand Opening, speaking with farmers and luminaries in mid May, prompting a flood of calls to the Central Valley office.

Good things are happening in the valley!

On-line Mentoring for beginning farmers and ranchers in Sierra Foothills

An exciting learning opportunity awaits you if you're a beginning farmer or rancher. Under the auspices of UCCE's Foothill Farming program, the farmer led Sierra Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training (CRAFT) has created an online listserv for producers in the Sierra foothills. http://ucanr.org/sites/placervevadasmallfarms/SierraCRAFT/Networking_with_Local_Farmers/

California FarmLink is collaborating with Sierra CRAFT on this project and invites its beginning farmers and ranchers to join.

Several experienced farmers and ranchers from the foothill region (including Alan Haight, Dan Macon, Allen Edwards,

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Jim Muck, Gary Romano, and Steve Bird) will field questions and lend their expertise.

If you're farming in Sierra, Plumas, Yuba, Placer, Nevada, Eldorado, Amador or Sutter counties you can contribute to this online farmer forum designed to address region specific questions about production, marketing, pest control, soil management, business planning, and more. Please sign up at: <http://ucanr.org/sites/placervevadasmallfarms/SierraCRAFT/Listserv/>

The more participation we have, the more beneficial this forum will become.

To maintain a high quality and value of content, access to the listserv is limited to commercial farmers, ranchers, farm and ranch employees and interns within this eight county region in the Sierra Mountains.

.....
~ **NORTH COAST** ~
MOLLY BLOOM

Matched Savings Program Reaches Arcata

In April North Coast Regional Coordinator, Molly Bloom drove to up the coast of California to distant Arcata to meet with UCCE Farm Advisor Deborah Giraud and her small group of farmers participating in a Farmer Individual Development Account Program (matched savings) created last fall. Giraud had learned about California FarmLink's IDA program, and decided the savings program would be good for farmers in her region as well. She approached the Arcata Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) for help; having managed their own IDA programs, they agreed to administer this one for UCCE.



Lots of eggs – just not all in one basket, photo courtesy of Melissa Baggett

In addition to saving \$100 each month during the 18-month program, participants attend business workshops put on by the local Small Business Development Center, as well as a four-session consumer credit class on personal finance.

Meeting at Redwood Roots Farm, a beautiful CSA tucked into a valley near Arcata, they started with a tour. Farmer Janet Czarnecki had prepared a pot of tasty chili. Bowls were filled before heading into the on-farm classroom, then the clouds burst, and rain came down for the next 12 hours. While savoring the hot chili, farmers shared their progress in the IDA program. Bloom explained FarmLink's programs, focusing on mentorship opportunities.

Bloom learned how these farmers are growing their businesses, about existing mentors like Janet, and the farmers learned about FarmLink's offerings. She'll be back in the fall, when farming slows down.

Bloom continues her travels to distant lands

As a statewide organization, we get calls from everywhere, some towns are familiar and some not, ... "Hayfork?" Bloom puzzled, searching Google Maps to pinpoint where the caller was from. "Ah, Trinity County" she exclaimed triumphantly, after finding his hometown on the map, "I've never been there".

Louis Ruud, the kind gentleman on phone, was calling about the Hayfork Growers' Alliance (HGA), a fledgling organization already making great strides in its community promoting local agriculture. Ruud invited Bloom to journey to Hayfork to explain FarmLink's programs and services and how our organization might help them reach their goals.

The HGA has an optimistic and achievable mission: the HGA "intends to restore, re-energize, and redevelop the agricultural base of the Hayfork Valley by providing educational advice and instruction, marketing assistance and business models for individuals interested in reviving agriculture by enhancing local food production." HGA members and Bloom met at the Hayfork Community Center, and talked about the various directions the HGA could go. Full of ideas, they're currently pursuing 501(c) 3 status and hoping to develop or revive a community kitchen, as well as cold storage, meat processing, and a small dairy/creamery. With some excellent ideas on how to market and help each other, Bloom hopes to help them secure funding to create their food distribution center.

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New Mentorship program in North Coast

Scott Mathieson, former owner/operator of Laguna Farm in Sebastopol, and Wayne James, owner/operator of Tierra Vegetables in Santa Rosa - both long time successful CSA farmers, have begun meeting with young farmers in Sonoma County to kick-start this year's mentorship season. FarmLink is using a two-pronged approach to mentoring - individual in-person mentorships are going strong (Mathieson and James each have two young farmers they are mentoring), and we've added an online component, the North Coast Farmer Network.

The network launched May 23rd and promises to be a great forum for farmers from this region to ask questions, and share concerns, problems, and triumphs with other beginning farmers. Experienced farmers are on hand for guidance when needed (Mathieson moderates the conversation, and James will participate as well). It's open to California FarmLink members in the North Coast region who are currently farming.

If the demand is there, we may start a listserv for soon-to-be farmers to allow them a platform to ask questions as well. Contact Molly Bloom at molly@cafarmlink.org if interested in joining the North Coast Farmer Network.

~ CENTRAL COAST ~
ERIC WINDERS & REGGIE KNOX

Connecting farmers and ranchers with financiers at spring Farm Finance Expo

To assist Monterey Bay area farmers seeking financing, California FarmLink held a Farm Finance Expo at the Corralitos Grange Hall this spring. Representatives from local banks, lending institutions and financial professionals were on hand to describe current lending programs, discuss alternative financing options, provide financial literacy trainings, and answer questions. Local farmers were able to meet representatives from RaboBank, American Ag Credit, Santa Cruz County Bank, California Coastal Rural Development Corporation, California FarmLink, the Santa Cruz Community Credit Union and USDA Farm Service Agency.

Over 70 farmers attended the workshop from various types of farming operations, from a well-established vineyard to a start-up goat dairy and an urban farm. The Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District translated the workshop into Spanish.

The afternoon was broken up into training sessions, meet and greet time, and lender program descriptions. Poppy Davis, CPA & Eco-Farm Executive Director presented on farm taxes; Danny Braga of the Central Coast Small Business Development Center spoke of the importance of quality business plans; Marc Franco, American Ag Credit, explained the 5 Cs of credit; Elizabeth U of Finance for Food discussed alternative financing sources, and Irma Ronzuglia of the Credit Union shared ways to build, maintain and repair credit. One participant commented, "That was the best presentation I've ever seen on farm taxes."

This event was co-sponsored by the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau, the Small Business Development Center, and the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County.

FARMLINK PROGRAMS

- Linking beginning farmers and ranchers to landowners and retiring farmers
- Farm Opportunities Loan Program – infrastructure, equipment, land purchase
- Technical Assistance – including business planning and finance, land tenure, farm transition/succession.
- Workshops and conferences on above topics

For current information, go to our website:
<http://www.californiafarmlink.org>

Adding value for farmer and rancher products

An effective way to limit risk and grow your farm business is to diversify into value-added production. An increasing number of small farms are exploring this and FarmLink is hosting seven value-added producer workshops this year throughout California and Hawaii.



Pie Ranch – Value added workshop, photo courtesy of Adam Ducharme

On May third, FarmLink co-hosted Adding Value and Profit to Your Farm Operation with Pie Ranch and Local FATT in San Mateo County. Pie Ranch is a working farm, hosting youth from regional high schools to participate in farm-based programs and activities. Local FATT (Food Awareness Through Teaching) is a multi-purpose certified kitchen where citizens, culinary professionals, and farmers come together to teach, innovate and network to build a better local food system.

Participants heard from FarmLink staff regarding the basics of value-added production and USDA's Value-Added Producer Grant program. Michele Bilodeau of San Mateo County Environmental Health, farmers Jered Lawson of Pie Ranch and Ken Kimes of New Natives, as well as Erin Lampel of Companion Bakers, shared their experiences with value-added production.

After lunch catered by Local Fatt Chef Kevin Koebel, 50 participants headed north along the coast to Harley Farms Goat Dairy to tour the milking parlor, cheese making facility and retail cheese shop and hear owner Dee Harley talk about her 20+ years in operation. After sampling fantastic goat cheeses, we headed to Half Moon Bay to see the Local FATT kitchen in action. Chef Koebel explained his exciting new business to the group: local farmers can use this certified kitchen free of charge in exchange for co-branding product from the kitchen, as part of Local FATT's outreach and educational mission.

FarmLink has been working with USDA Rural Development staff to help farmers apply for Value-Added Producer Grants. These grants are one of the few federal grants that

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go directly to farmers. The program provides grants for both planning and working capital, to help farmers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of farm products. Eligibility requirements for producers and products are fairly broad and many small producers qualify. Because there were no awards in California for the 2010 round, there will be more money available for 2011.

FarmLink staff can assist clients interested in applying for Value-Added Producer Grants, or provide referrals to consultants who can help. For more information, please visit: http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_VAPG_Grants.html or contact your local California FarmLink Coordinator.



Harley Farms – goat farm & cheese producer, photo courtesy of Adam Ducharme

Mentorship Tips for Farmers

As a new or beginning farmer, regular access to an experienced mentor-farmer can be a huge help. Farmers generally agree that the most useful information comes from other farmers. This year FarmLink has been helping new farmers to structure peer-to-peer mentorships that include sharing of information on business aspects of farming such as financial planning, farm financing, land tenure, and crop insurance.

FarmLink's role in setting up mentorships is to facilitate an initial meeting between a beginning farmer and a prospective mentor farmer to discuss mentorship structures, topics, learning and teaching styles and a mentorship contract.

A typical FarmLink mentorship involves a new grower who is already farming independently, and a more experienced grower nearby. The mentorship would likely involve a quarterly on-farm meeting to troubleshoot issues the new farmer is facing and phone time in between. FarmLink is also creating and collaborating with other organizations on regional electronic mentorship networks in each of our three regions where new growers can ask questions and exchange information with experienced and beginning local growers on-line.



Farmer from France learning from Ned Conwell of Blue House Farm & CFL staffer Eric Winders

Here are some tips for both farmer mentors and new farmer mentees:

- Are you ready to mentor or be mentored? Decide if this is the right time for you, if your schedule permits, and if you are ready for the commitment.
- Determine whether you can work together. Make sure your values; time constraints, and work styles align in ways that make you comfortable working side-by-side.
- Establish expectations & ground rules: What do you want to gain from this experience? How much time should be devoted? When will that time be? Can the mentee call anytime? What topics do you need assistance with? How much detail will be shared? Is that information confidential?
- Create a Work Plan- Is a contract needed? How will things be taught? What's the best way to harness the mentor's teaching skills? How often will you meet - quarterly or more/less often? Will there be phone consultations? When will the mentor be available? Set up times and try to stick to them, but be flexible.
- Put yourself in each other's shoes. Mentors may forget what's it's like to be starting out and new farmers may not realize the effort their mentors are putting in to help out. Remember that as the Mentorship evolves your relationship will change.
- Be patient and trusting. No matter how much you plan, things may not work out the way you thought. Take it slow and keep lines of communication open.
- What happens if problems arise? Set up an agreement to work through problems.

Other organizations that help to facilitate internships, mentorships and apprenticeships include California Certified Organic Farmers, Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA), Multi-National Exchange for Sustainable Agriculture (MESA), the North American Biodynamic Apprenticeship Program, and Sierra CRAFT.

LATEST LAND OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS THE STATE

Got Land? Know Someone Who Does?

California FarmLink is seeking landowners who are interested in leasing or selling land to aspiring farmers. No piece of land is too small or too large, so please contact us today to see if we can connect you with a farmer interested in raising food on your land! Contact the appropriate Regional Coordinator with your land opportunity!

~ CENTRAL VALLEY ~

MARY@CAFARMLINK.ORG, LIYA@CAFARMLINK.ORG

Merced County ID #1267:

15 acres in Atwater available for lease/purchase. Directly off Highway 140, this property was a dairy farm 20 years ago: no pesticides applied for the past 18 years. Organic almond orchard across the street. Presently no housing but has all hookups. Existing well; pump is 5 years old. Land is flat & fully fenced. Black Rascal, a seasonal creek runs through property. Owners interested in sale, lease to buy, or crop-share.

Fresno County ID #1268:

Amazing vineyard mentorship opportunity in Caruthers.

Owner of this fully functioning 160-acre vineyard wants to mentor someone possessing the qualities and potential to run an ag business. Housing possible during this long-term arrangement. Not a lease opportunity; owner looking for capable individual to train in all aspects of running and operating vineyard with intention of eventually turning over the business to the right individual.

Placer County ID #1304:

Three acres for lease on a seven-acre farm in Foresthill.

This forested farm, sits in a sun belt at 3000 ft. elevation, with unique marketing opportunities and events that take place in this small town within the Tahoe National Forest. Owners interested in finding someone to farm independently on the 3 ac and potentially assist with their 4 ac of fruit trees (peaches, pluots, plums, fig, apples), vegetables, medicinal roots, California native herbs, and chickens and Nigerian goats, in exchange for decreased housing costs. Separate housing available with some shared facilities/outbuilding. The 3 ac. has excellent soil with high water table, but no existing irrigation. Currently the 3ac have wild blackberries, raspberries, and native plants growing.

Yolo County ID #1292:

20 acres for lease in Capay Valley. Vacant land available for fruit, vegetables or livestock. No infrastructure, or buildings but perimeter is fenced. Crops have been grown on the land in the past. Negotiable lease rate. A clean canvas for beginning farmer or rancher to create a masterpiece.

~ NORTH COAST ~

MOLLY@CAFARMLINK.ORG

Sonoma County ID#57:

12+ Acres of Land Available near Asti. Easy access to Hwy 101. No fencing or infrastructure, though landowners have overhead irrigation pipes available for use. No fencing currently in place. Good soil, and the lower field is in a flood plain. Owners interested in leases or other options.



ID # 1288

Sonoma County ID#1288:

Retiring farmer is interested in sub-leasing 16 acres of certified organic land near Petaluma and selling an established farm business (farm stand and some wholesale). Fencing in place on two sides. No housing available. Farmer farmed the land for many years and has farm equipment and infrastructure that is included in the business purchase.

Sonoma County #1283:

7+acres of land available for farming opportunity in the Alexander Valley, Healdsburg. IDEAL FOR SHORT TERM CROPS. Full sun, prime, flat land with area that is slightly

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sloping. Well on property with irrigation infrastructure in place. No fencing and no housing at this time. Easily accessible. Crop share or cash rent/lease or partnership opportunity will be considered.

~ **CENTRAL COAST** ~
ERIC@CAFARMLINK.ORG

Monterey County #1302:

4+ acre lease on Elkhorn Road near Prunedale. Gently sloped south facing property with agricultural well and good soil. There are 400 amps of 3-phase power (440v) running to the property. There are a few buildings on site - a rental unit may be available as well as access to outdoor kitchen & bathrooms; plenty of storage. This is a historical farm site from the early 1900s, unused for farming for the last 30 years. The owner will consider capitalizing farm and/or land improvements. Long term or short term leases both available.

Monterey County ID # 1024:

62 acres for lease, Salinas. Has been in organic strawberries the last 3 years and prior to that, artichokes, carrots, lettuce, spinach and other vegetable row crops. There is a large artichoke-packing shed available for equipment and tractor storage. Surrounded by strawberries. Good water supply from Monterey County reclaimed water project. Lease rate -\$1,650/ac.

Santa Cruz County ID#1013:

Farming and Business opportunity. Farm is an organic vineyard and farm. Organic practices since 1999. 8ac. farm has several different microclimates that allow a variety of crops. There is large greenhouse, garden area; orchard with a variety of fruit trees, citrus, blueberry area and vineyard. There are hedgerows, plus owl and bat boxes. Operators have been selling vegetables and fruits to markets, stores and restaurants for several years and developed firm relationships. This is an opportunity for farmer looking to commit to a long-term joint venture, someone to take the growing and business to another level. Looking for responses from interested farmers with desire, experience and commitment.

**CALIFORNIA FARMLINK
WORKSHOP SCHEDULE**

Central Valley:

June 30th Workshop and Farm Tour in Modesto – *Adding Value & Profit to Your Farm Operation* – from 9:30am 3:30pm at Harvest Hall, 3800 Cornucopia Way, Modesto. Contact Mary Junqueiro: 209/525-4720, or Mary@cafarmlink.org to RSVP by June 27th

Central Coast:

- *Adding Value and Profit to your farm operation* – San Luis Obispo County – August – specific date/ location TBA
- *Farm Succession Conference* in September, date/ location TBA

**CALIFORNIA FARMLINK
& CLIENTS IN THE NEWS**

The Modesto Bee, May 16, 2011 – John Holland:
“Nonprofit connects young farmers with land, leases”

Mentions:

Grist Magazine, Feb. 2, 2011 – Lindsey Lusher Shute:
“How the next farm bill could plant a new crop of farmers”

The Record Searchlight/Redding.com

Mar. 7, 2011 – Tim Holt:
“Young adults learn farming skills in WWOOFERS program”

Santa Rosa Press Democrat, Apr. 25, 2011 - Brett Wilkison:
“Budget squeeze could slow open space deals”

DONATE – How you can help.

As a small non-profit organization, we welcome your support. Your contribution, no matter how small, makes a difference!

**You can now donate on line through PayPal or by mailing your check to us at
2360 Professional Drive, Suite C, Santa Rosa, CA 95403**



CALIFORNIA

FARMLINK

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Harley Farms storefront - photo courtesy of Melissa Baggett