



## Health in All Policies Task Force 2012-2015 Action Report: Farm to Fork

Presented to the Strategic Growth Council October 15, 2015

This Action Report has been created by the California Health in All Policies (HiAP) Task Force to share tangible outcomes accomplished through the 2012-2014 Implementation Plan on “Farm to Fork.” This plan was created by the California HiAP Task Force and was endorsed by the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) on January 24, 2012. The Task Force is facilitated by the California Department of Public Health and current staffing is provided through a partnership with the Public Health Institute, with funding from multiple sources including The California Endowment and Kaiser Permanente Community Benefit. The plan’s actions support the following recommendation:

- Encourage and expand the availability of affordable and locally grown produce through “farm-to-fork” policies and programs [1].

### Outcomes of Action Steps in the Implementation Plan

**Objective 1. Establish an interagency California Farm-to-fork office with joint staffing by the California Department of Education (CDE), the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH).**

- In 2012 CDFA, CDPH Nutrition Education Obesity Prevention Branch (NEOP), and CDE signed an interagency agreement to establish a California Office of Farm to Fork with staff positions and funding for two years (July 2012 - June 2014). Many of the objectives from the Health in All Policies Implementation Plan on Farm to Fork were incorporated into the initial interagency agreement scope of work, which prioritized efforts to promote farm to school programs. Both CDE and CDPH NEOP contributed funds to this initiative, and continue to partner with the Office of Farm to Fork. Staff was hired in April 2013 by CDFA to lead the Office of Farm to Fork.
- In 2014, Governor Brown signed AB 2413, which establishes the Office of Farm to Fork in statute at CDFA, and creates a new Farm to Fork Account in the CDFA Fund.
- The Office of Farm to Fork launched a website for the public: <http://www.cafarmtofork.com/>.
- Many of the items below were carried out by the Office of Farm to Fork.

**Objective 2. Strengthen the ability of schools to safely grow, purchase, and serve fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables.**

- CDE, CDPH, and the California Department of Social Services formed an informal working group to identify and address barriers that schools face in complying with twice-yearly food facilities inspection requirements. As a result, CDPH Food and Drug Branch staff conducted outreach to local environmental health directors and in partnership with CDE developed a system to ensure that environmental health departments receive updated information about school facilities to increase communication at the local level. CDE records reflect a 7% increase in inspections from School Year 2012-13 to 2013-14.
- The Office of Farm to Fork developed “Farm to School Food Safety Guidelines: How to Safely Handle Fresh Produce from Farm to Fork,” a toolkit for schools and farmers to use in supporting farm to school programs. The toolkit reflects best practices developed by CDFA, Iowa State University Extension, and the National Food Service Management Institute. The toolkit is available at: <http://cafarmtofork.com/files/FarmToSchoolFoodSafetyToolkit.pdf>.



**Objective 3. Promote workforce development and increase the amount of fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables available to child nutrition programs and other institutions through agriculture and food service and culinary arts career technical education programs.**

- The Office of Farm to Fork researched and produced “Agriculture and Culinary Arts Career Technical Education (CTE): ‘Best Practices,’” a report outlining best practices among Career Technical Education (CTE) programs relating to agriculture and food services/culinary arts. The report is based on interviews with CTE Program administrators and CDE officials. The report is available at: <http://cafarmtofork.com/files/Ag&CulinaryCTEBestPracticesReport.pdf>.

**Objective 4. Increase the ability of California farmers to sell food to large institutions by supporting the creation of regional food hubs.**

- The Office of Farm to Fork summarized best practices for local procurement among K-12 school districts and California colleges and universities and made recommendations for how to expand and sustain such programs. These are shared in “California Schools and Universities: Procurement of Locally Grown Produce.” The report is available at: <http://cafarmtofork.com/files/CASchoolProduceProcurement.pdf>.

**Objective 5. Promote land use approaches that support increased community access to healthy food.**

- Staff from CDPH and the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) reviewed food-related findings in the results of the 2011 OPR Annual Planning Survey to identify opportunities to expand healthy food access and local food production through land use policy.
- OPR developed case studies regarding ways that communities have expanded the availability of affordable, locally grown produce through land use planning. The document has not been shared publicly, but is being used internally to identify opportunities for future work.

## Related Outcomes

Beyond carrying out the items detailed in the Implementation Plan itself, Task Force members also identified and pursued a variety of other opportunities to build relationships and promote the availability and affordability of locally grown produce that arose over the last three years. These bullets describe additional outcomes that were not initially expected.

- Given the success of the interagency agreement between CDFA, CDPH, and CDE, the three departments have continued to work together and develop new agreements moving forward. The Office is currently working to support farm-to-school activities and address issues of food insecurity.
- The Office of Farm to Fork was awarded a Specialty Crop Block Grant to create an interactive “California Farmer Marketplace,” a comprehensive database of specialty crop (fruit and vegetable) growers. This database will contain a variety of information that will allow farmers, food service institutions, and consumers to forge new partnerships and will continue to expand in the future. The California Department of Education further supported the California Farmer Marketplace database by providing funding to CDFA to expand the database to include grains, dairy products, and animal protein. These enhancements will connect growers and ranchers to schools, and provide procurement resources for schools interested in serving locally grown foods.
- In order to share information about the Office of Farm to Fork and about the work the state is doing, HiAP staff presented about the Task Force’s Farm-to-Fork activities to the California Food Policy Council (November 2012) and the Food Access Nutrition Education and Outreach (FANOut) Committee (March 2013). In addition, Office of Farm to Fork staff collaborated with key stakeholders and participated in CDPH NEOP forums and webinars to provide technical assistance and support to local health departments.
- To support farm to school activities, the Office of Farm to Fork staff attended Farm to School Network meetings and participated in their strategic planning process.



## Value Added

Implementing robust evaluation is a growing area of interest for future HiAP work. As documented by a 2012 evaluation conducted by Harder + Company, this work has fostered stronger relationships, greater collaboration, and a clearer understanding of the health co-benefits of many government decisions. Below are comments from some of the involved state entities on the value of this implementation plan.

- “Stakeholders greatly appreciate the cross-agency/cross silo relationships that allow us to create innovative solutions...implementation of the plan has really given us a strong foundation to move forward with various stakeholders – inside and outside of State government...[g]oing forward we feel that we are ready to “move the needle” with our efforts and projects. We look forward to continuing a strong partnership with HiAP.” – California Office of Farm to Fork, CDFA
- “In 2012, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch (NEOP) embarked upon a partnership with CDFA and CDE to support the creation of the Office of Farm to Fork within CDFA. This partnership has allowed NEOP to expand efforts with the Farm to Fork movement and supports one of NEOP’s overarching goals: to increase access to healthy foods for low-income Californians. NEOP and CDFA plan to continue the partnership and its collaborative work to improve healthy food access into the future.” – CDPH, Nutrition Education Obesity Prevention Branch

## Next Steps

The HiAP Task Force remains committed to supporting farm-to-fork as a strategy to promote health, equity, and environmental sustainability. Staff will plan meetings with external stakeholders and Task Force members to create an Action Plan on healthy food, of which farm-to-fork will be a vital component.

1. Rudolph, L., et al., Health in All Policies Report to the Strategic Growth Council. 2010, California Department of Public Health and University of California, San Francisco.