



#### Western SARE

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#### Western SARE Grant Categories

- Research & Education
- Professional Development
- Farmer/Rancher
- Professional + Producer
- Graduate Student
- Sustainable Farm Tours

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## AG IN THE GOOD HUMUS CLASSROOM

### Situation

Good Humus Produce is a 20-acre organic family farm that grows and markets vege-

#### Farmer/Rancher Grant

**Title:** Good Humus Produce  
Farm to School Project  
**Project Number:** FW00-299

**Principal Investigator**  
Annie Main

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District  
Environment Traveling Com-  
panions  
Community Food Security  
Coalition  
**SARE Grant: \$5,300**

tables, fruit, herbs,  
and flowers in the  
Capay Valley of Yolo  
County. For many  
years, Good Humus  
had fielded queries  
for farm visits from  
schools whose stu-  
dents have little op-  
portunity to experi-  
ence food production  
and the farm environ-  
ment.

In 2000, Good  
Humus realized the  
growing demand was  
likely to continue as  
schools integrated  
gardening into curricu-  
lum and connected  
farming communities  
to school activities.

Good Humus envisioned  
that hosting school visits  
presented an opportunity  
for both farmers and school  
communities to benefit through  
an organized, comprehensive,  
and financially feasible edu-  
cation farm visit program.

### Objectives

1. Develop guidelines for an educational, attractive, and affordable farm-visit program, providing activities that fit into day-to-day farm production schedules



Annie Main of Good Humus Produce.



2. Develop an educational farm visit program that can be integrated into school curricula, using farm rhythms, to provide children and teachers with a comprehensive knowledge of food systems, nutrition, and sustainable agriculture
3. Establish children's educational programs with public schools to increase and diversify the source of farm income
4. Host two school visits per month for six months of the year and be compensated managing the program
5. Increase the community supported agriculture program with the families of school children that visit the farm
6. Provide a written experiential program for farm-



*SARE's mission is to advance—to the whole of American agriculture—innovations that improve profitability, stewardship, and quality of life by investing in groundbreaking research and education.*

*The Western Region, one of four SARE regions nationwide, is administered through Utah State University.*

**Western SARE:**  
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[www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org)

## AG IN THE GOOD HUMUS CLASSROOM

ers that need information about running a farm-to-school program

### Actions

Good Humus developed a school program with a theme of compost to showcase for students:

- Cycles of growth, decay, and fertilization on the farm
- Creation of input for the farm from within the farm
- How each aspect is part of the whole
- Connection between soil fertility, plant health, and farmer health
- Concept of teamwork – sun, soil, water, insects, and humans

The farm developed a fee structure for daytime and overnight visits that provided compensation sufficient for economic sustainability. It began with two school visits a month to test the idea. And it engaged support from the California Alliance for Family Farmers and the Davis Unified School District



### Results

The Good Humus Farm to School Project hosts daytime school visits during nine months of the year and overnight farm stays on request.

An example of a programmed daytime visit for April:



Jeff Main of Good Humus Produce and his wife, Annie, have farmed organically since 1976.

### Turning the Compost Pile

#### Things to see and eat

- Flowers
- Young seedlings
- Lettuces
- Carrots
- Greens
- Dried fruit

#### Presentations

- What's happening in the decomposition process
- How are we so dependent on decomposition and how is it connected to so many living creatures
- Why is the temperature of soil so important to the seeds
- How are soils different

#### Activities

Using pitchforks, water and shovels, turn the compost pile made in March. Emphasize the importance of water. Add the biodynamic preparation.

#### Schedule

- 9:30-10 – Welcome and introduction game; circle with presentation of farm rules and the day's activities



- 10-10:15 – Farm Fresh Snack (dried fruit or other fresh available ingredients)
- 10:15-11:30 – Tour with Treasure Hunt Farm Tour
- 11:30-12 – Lunch
- 12-1 – Action: Kids engage in project designed to let them experience real farm activities

### Potential Benefits/Impacts

Few visiting parents and children have ever set foot on a farm, so the visits enable these families to identify faces and place with the food they eat. They also are able to connect how food is grown and the difference between local and long-distance distribution.

Good Humus Produce learned valuable lessons about integrating farm visits into busy production schedules:

1. Develop a theme concept, which makes the program manageable and efficient
2. Engage a committed, enthusiastic long-term member of the farm team, supported by other key members
3. Create focused, bounded spaces and settings
4. Provide opportunities for physical connections to the farm and food – feeding animals, pulling carrots, digging, etc.
5. Realistically assess human resources
6. Set a fee to validate the economic sustainability of the program
7. Plan a year-round curriculum and schedule