



AG IN THE GOOD HUMUS CLASSROOM



Western SARE

Phil Rasmussen, Coordinator
Utah State University
Agricultural Science Building
Room 305
4865 Old Main Hill
Logan, Utah 84322-4865
phone: (435) 797-2257
fax: (435) 797-3344

Professional Development Program

Morgan Doran
California PDP Coordinator
Livestock & Natural Resource Farm
Advisor
University of California Cooperative
Extension
501 Texas Street
Fairfield, CA 94533
707.784.1326
mpdorand@ucdavis.edu

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

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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
Good Humus Produce
12255 Road 84A
Capay, CA 95607
530.787.3187
www.goodhumus.com

Technical Advisors

Desmond Jolly, Director
Small Farm Center
University of California
One Shields Ave.
Davis, CA 96616-8699
540.752.8236
dajolly@ucdavis.edu
Gail Feenstra, Food Systems
Analyst
UC SAREP
One Shields Ave.
Davis, CA 95616-8716
530.752.8408
gwfeenstra@ucdavis.edu

Cooperators

Kerry Stevens, Community
Alliance for Family Farmers
Melanie Okamoto, Food Systems
Project
Gloria and Steven Decator,
Live Power Farm
Dru Rivers, Full Belly Farm
Carol Hillhouse, UC Davis
Student Farm
Crunch Lunch Salad Bar,
Davis Joint Unified School
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.

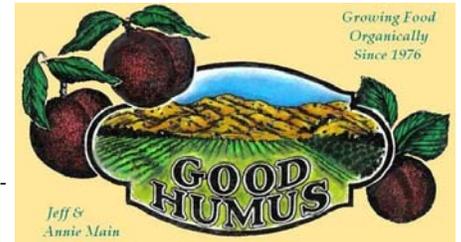
Good Humus envisioned
that hosting school visits
presented an opportunity
for both farmers and school
communities to benefit through
an organized, comprehensive,
and financially feasible edu-
cational farm visit program.

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-



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

Western SARE:
<http://wsare.usu.edu>

National SARE
www.sare.org

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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