# An Evaluation of Capay Valley Grown:
# Report on the Findings From a Partner and Consumer Survey

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## *Executive Summary*

The Capay Valley Grown (CVG) partnership is one of 15 regional agricultural branding initiatives active in California. It was born out of a community visioning process and action plan that aimed to address two major forces driving change in the Capay Valley of northwestern Yolo County: the rapid development of the region, and the market pressures that make it difficult for local agriculture to remain viable. CVG is in its third year of offering marketing assistance and materials to farmers and ranchers in the Capay Valley Region. As CVG continues its efforts to raise consumer awareness of the valley's agricultural products, and increase the profitability of the region's agriculture, it is important to take stock of how well the partnership is meeting its goals and objectives. In spring of 2006, both a producer and a consumer survey were carried out as part of an evaluation of CVG's strategies. Some of the key findings include the following:

### Producer Partner Marketing Venues

The CVG partnership is made up of a diverse mix of farmers and ranchers that vary widely in terms of their products and scales of operation. Partners also utilize a large number of marketing methods, but wholesale is the most important; 70 percent of respondents generate some portion of their revenues through wholesale, and 41 percent rely on wholesale for the majority of their income. Only 37 percent of respondents make over half their sales to buyers in Yolo County, but almost 90 percent of respondents would like to increase sales in Yolo. The most common barriers to doing so are competition and a lack of regional processing/distribution infrastructure.

### CVG Partnership Benefits

Over 50 percent of respondents believe that the CVG partnership has raised the visibility of their farm or business, but few partners agree that the CVG partnership has helped raise their sales, prices, access to markets, or how secure they feel about their farm income. On the other hand, over 80 percent believe that the CVG partnership has raised community awareness of locally grown food, and respondents were very positive about their experience in the partnership. The most common successes and benefits include unifying the valley, strengthening relationships among producers, increasing information sharing among partners, working together towards a common goal, and building community.

### Consumer Awareness

A baseline consumer survey shows higher CVG label recognition among farmers market customers in Esparto (82.4 percent) than in Davis (36.2 percent). The label is frequently associated with regional, local, or homegrown agricultural products, but many consumers also connect the CVG label with organic food and farming. T-shirts/hats/bags, farmers market signs, and farm signs are the most visible CVG marketing materials.

### Future ideas for CVG

The following recommendations summarize the suggestions made by respondents about how CVG could have more economic and community development impacts.

**Immediate actions:**

- Pursue inexpensive and creative approaches to advertise and attract food writers/media.
- Organize opportunities for partners to visit other farms and to talk with other growers.

- Strengthen connection and communication between CVG and the Esparto Farmers Market.
- Organize more opportunities for producers to spend time together, perhaps around a meal.

**Long-Term actions:**

- Tie into established events more, such as the Almond Festival and Hoes Down.
- Discuss ideas for additional regional events, workshops, and tours.
- Piggyback off of Casino marketing efforts and target Casino visitors with advertising.
- Look into a CVG mobile market, open-air market, or an Esparto storefront.
- Work on projects in sub-groups arranged by crop.
- Incorporate more agricultural education and CVG products into the local schools.
- Build more awareness and support among retail stores.
- Develop more collaborations to enhance CVG's educational outreach.
- Start a dialogue within the partnership and the wider community about land use issues.
- Consider partnering with Yolo Ag Land Trust to help farmers write conservation easements.
- Design a system to share farm equipment.
- Start a composting facility to handle local waste and provide a local source of compost.
- Start a bio-diesel operation to help farmers reduce fuel costs.
- Start a school for small farm management and/or agricultural education.

## Conclusions

It is not surprising that this point in CVG's development, the social benefits of the partnership are most important to its partners. According to the directors and members of other regional labeling and marketing programs, at least five years are required for members to start feeling the economic benefits of a branding initiative. In addition, the CVG marketing materials that are currently available are underused, both in terms of type and frequency, preventing the partnership to reach its full marketing potential**.** Still, one of CVG's goals is to increase the profitability of farming, and most partners expect to receive economic benefits from the marketing efforts.

Towards this end, the producer survey helped illuminate several ideas and areas of improvement. For example, while there was a positive response to expanding CVG's advertising and outreach activities, it could be more cost-effective to maximize the use of what is already offered, both in terms of the type and consistency of use. This may require simple steps such as verifying that everyone knows what tools are available to them, and how to use them. Overall, it seems important to re-emphasize the need for everyone to get the brand and message out, regardless of whether it seems to be making an immediate or direct impact on their business.

It may be worthwhile for the group to take the time to review its goals, and define some concrete and measurable objectives for the immediate and long-term future. It will also be important to continue monitoring partnership outcomes. Appendix A offers a tool to use for the collection and storage of indicators that can help measure progress towards the group's goals.

## *Introduction*

### Background

Regional agricultural branding and marketing programs are becoming more common strategies to increase the economic viability of farmers and their communities. At least 15 branding initiatives are active in the state of California. Their most basic goal is to increase consumer awareness and consumption of locally grown products.

Capay Valley Grown (CVG) began as a partnership among 23 farm and ranch charter partners who wanted to increase the marketability of their high quality products and maintain their way of life. It is one component of a broader community action plan that aims to preserve the valley's rural character, agriculture, history and natural environment, while supporting a vital local economy. The CVG label was officially launched in 2004, and is now entering its third year. At the time this report was written, membership had grown to 30 producer partners, and 10 business partners.

The goals of the partnership include:

- Increasing consumer awareness and access to superior and consistent freshness, flavor, quality and diversity of the region's seasonal and year-round agricultural products.
- Increasing profitability of farming and ranching in the Capay Valley to preserve and enhance the region's resources, rural character, and way of life.

### Purpose of Study

This work is part of UC SAREP's continuing participation in the multi-state research project *NE 1012*, *Sustaining Local Food Systems in a Globalizing Environment: Forces, Responses, Impacts*. A broad review of 12 different regional marketing programs in California was carried out in 2005 to better understand why they exist and how they are working. It became apparent that the impacts of the marketing efforts are not well known, largely because most programs lack the resources to carry out monitoring and evaluation activities.

The evaluation of CVG was therefore proposed for several reasons. First, it would serve as a more detailed case study of a regional marketing program, set within the framework of local food system responses and impacts. Second, the project offered an opportunity to develop and test different evaluation tools that could be adapted by other marketing groups. Finally, it would be a practical exercise for CVG, and allow partners to reflect on the organization's goals, determine what tools and strategies are working best, and identify ways to improve the partnership.

The findings presented in this report will serve as a baseline by which CVG can compare future evaluation results, and provide evidence for future potential partners and funders that the program is worth their investment. The information should also be helpful to other regional groups in California wishing to market their local agriculture, or to groups interested in evaluating the marketing efforts they have already initiated.

We wish to thank the Capay Valley Vision staff and Capay Valley Grown producer partners that graciously shared their time and ideas throughout the evaluation process. Their contributions

will make the information in this report useful not only to the CVG partnership, but to other marketing groups as well.

**Methods**

Evaluation activities were carried out during March and April of 2006. A producer partner survey was administered by phone, and a face-to-face consumer survey targeted customers of two regional farmers markets (see Appendix B).

The partner survey (see Appendix C) aimed to gather information about

1) the partners and the marketing methods they currently use;
2) the CVG services and marketing materials that are offered and utilized;
3) the outcomes and benefits of the partnership; and
4) how CVG can be improved to meet the needs of the partners.

The consumer survey (see Appendix D) measured label recognition and the meanings that consumers associate with the label, or the Capay Valley in general.

The results of both surveys are presented in this report, followed by a discussion of the themes that emerged, and some recommendations for action that include the continuation of monitoring efforts. An indicators matrix was developed for this purpose, and is provided in Appendix A.

*__Evaluation Results__*

__Partner Survey__

Twenty-eight of the 29 Capay Valley Grown (CVG) partners participated in the evaluation survey, equaling a 96.6 percent response rate. However, one of these 28 respondents is no longer utilizing their land for agricultural production, and now leases it to a local cattle producer. For this reason, many of the survey questions did not apply to that partner, and most results were analyzed based on a sample size of 27 (n=27). For many questions the response categories are not mutually exclusive, and the sum of response percentages is greater than 100.

**Participant Products and Sales**

Respondents were asked to describe what they produce, what product is most identified with their farm or business, and the methods they use to sell their products. They were also asked about the amount of marketing they do in Yolo County, and what barriers exist to selling more product locally.

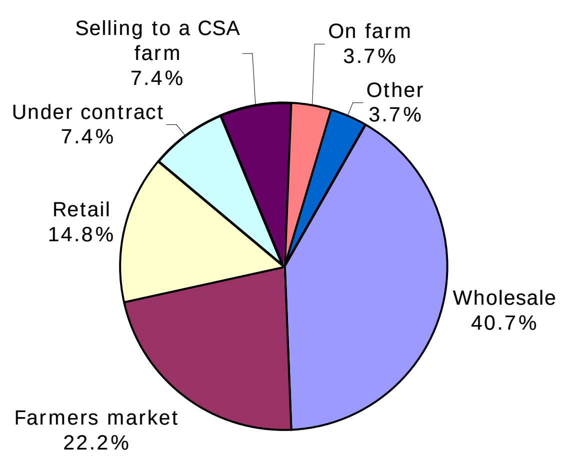
***Products***

The Capay Valley Grown label represents a diverse array of products. Fruit and nuts are the most commonly produced by respondents, followed by value-added products (olive oil, lotions and sprays, candies) and vegetables (see Diagram 1). Several CVG partners produce up to six categories of products, as well as a large variety of items within a category.

### *Sales and Marketing Methods*

Wholesale is the most frequently used method of sales (see Diagram 2). 70.4 percent of respondents generate some portion of their income through wholesale channels. Farmers markets and retail are the next most utilized categories. “Other” includes selling product directly to individuals through word of mouth and established relationships, and a local delivery service.

**Diagram 3: Sales and Marketing Methods: Percentage of partners that use category as primary method of sales (n=27)**




In terms of revenue, wholesale is also most frequently used as the primary method of sales. 40.7 percent of respondents rely on wholesale for the majority of their sales, while 22.2 percent rely on farmers markets (see Diagram 3).

*Gross Sales*

Information about each partner's gross farm sales in 2005 was gathered as an indication of the scale of operations represented by CVG partners. One partner declined to respond; of the remaining 26 respondents, 42.3 percent generated between $0 and $50,000 in gross sales; the same proportion fell between $51, 000 and $500,000; 15.4 percent generated $501 or above (see Diagram 4).

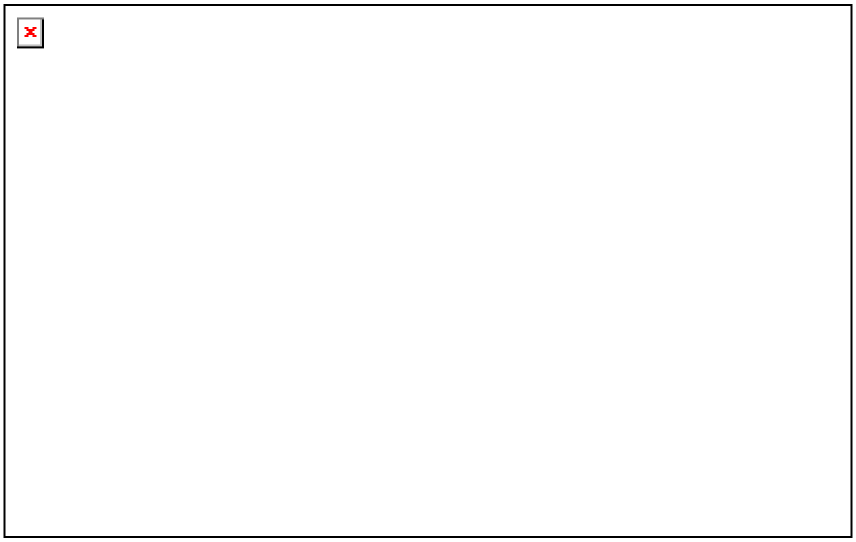
The size and scale of CVG's partners varies widely. At least two partners could be described as hobby farmers, and sell their products in small volumes. Other partners manage large acreage operations and sell in high volumes.

**Table 1: Partner's 2005 sales compared to 2004 (n=26*)***

| **Response** | **Number of Respondents (%)** |
|---|---|
| Higher | 15 (57.7%) |
| Lower | 5 (19.2%) |
| About the same | 6 (23.1%) |

Respondents were asked how their 2005 gross farm sales compared to 2004. Because one partner had been on a sabbatical from farming in 2004, n=26. Almost 58 percent of respondents said that their sales had increased, though several people made it clear that this trend was independent from CVG efforts; their sales have been on the rise for several years. Almost 20 percent of respondents saw a decrease from 2004 to 2005 (see Table 1).

*Local Sales*



Respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of their sales made to buyers in Yolo County. The majority of partners are concentrated at the low and high ends of the scale; eight partners (29.6 percent) make 0-5 percent of their total sales in the county, and eight partners fall into the range of 76-100 percent (see Diagram 5). Overall, 37 percent of respondents make over half of their sales in Yolo County.

**Table 2: Number of partners that would like to increase sales in Yolo County (n=27)**

| **Response** | **Number of Respondents (%)** |
|---|---|
| Yes | 24 (88.9%) |
| No | 3 (11.1%) |

Partners were also asked if they want to increase sales in Yolo County. The question was left open enough for the respondents to answer in terms of overall sales, or percentage of sales. Almost 90 percent of respondents said yes (see Table 2). Of the three partners that said no, one explained that business success depends upon sales to buyers outside of the state, making local sales less important. The second partner already sells a large proportion of product in the county, and would have to increase production to increase sales. The third person explained that farm product sales are not a significant source of their income, and they have no difficulty in selling the items they produce.

### *Local Sales and Marketing Obstacles*

**Table 3: Obstacles partners face in selling more product in Yolo County (n=27)**

| Response Category | Number of Respondents (%) |
|---|---|
| No obstacles, I can sell everything I produce | 6 (22.2%) |
| Competition in Yolo County | 6 (22.2%) |
| Infrastructural barriers, lack of processing options, lack of distribution network | 5 (18.5%) |
| Low prices | 3 (11.1%) |
| Regulations of farmers markets, value added production | 3 (11.1%) |
| Finding more customers, finding more CSA members | 3 (11.1%) |
| Fixed relationships between retail stores and distributors, wholesalers; retail is hard to crack | 3 (11.1%) |

When asked what they consider to be the obstacles to selling more product in Yolo County, 22.2 percent of the respondents said that there are none; they can sell everything that they produce (see Table 3). To increase their county sales, these partners would first have to increase production in order to have more product to sell.

The remaining respondents cited a wide range of challenges. 22.2 percent said that competition was an obstacle. Connected to competition are low prices; 11.1 percent of respondents explained that there is little economic incentive to sell their product locally.

18.5 percent of respondents mentioned infrastructural barriers such as a lack of processing facilities or a distribution network for their products. Restrictive regulations, finding new customers, and the difficulty of breaking into the retail sector were each mentioned by 11.1 percent of respondents.

Some less frequent responses included the shortage of time, labor, and personal challenges in the areas of organization and marketing.

Finally, one partner said that increasing access to local markets would require lowering production volume.

## The CVG Partnership

Respondents were asked which of the CVG's marketing tools and services they use, and how consistently.

### *Utilization of Service and Tools Provided*

**Table 4: Frequency of use of CVG marketing materials (n=27)**

| | Number of Respondents (%) | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Material** | **Never** | **Sometimes** | **Always** |
| CVG sign: farm | 10 (37.0%) | 2 (7.4%) | 15 (55.6%) |
| CVG brochure | 13 (48.1%) | 11 (40.7%) | 3 (11.1%) |
| Digital logo | 19 (70.4%) | 2 (7.4%) | 6 (22.2%) |
| 1" stickers | 19 (70.4%) | 4 (14.8%) | 4 (14.8%) |
| CVG sign: farmers market | 19 (70.4%) | 5 (18.5%) | 3 (11.1%) |
| CVG sign: store | 24 (88.9%) | 1 (3.7%) | 2 (7.4%) |
| CVH newsletter | 24 (88.9%) | 2 (7.4%) | 1 (3.7%) |
| CVG Web site | 26 (96.3%) | 0 | 1 (3.7%) |

It became apparent that CVG partners are not utilizing many of the partnership's marketing and outreach materials. Except for the CVG farm sign and the CVG brochure, the tools offered through the partnership are utilized by less than 30 percent of the respondents (see Table 4). Several partners are unsure about what is actually available to them, especially in terms of the farmers market sign and digital logo.

The farm sign is the most commonly used material, and four of the partners that have not put it up on their property yet said that they will be ordering and/or hanging the sign soon. Three of the respondents that do not use the farm sign explained that their location is off-road, and that nobody would see it.

Many partners use the CVG brochure on an inconsistent basis. Some of the ways it is distributed is when pursuing new business partners, in mail-outs or in CSA boxes, at farmers markets, at farm stands, on farm, and at events.

The eight respondents (29.6 percent) that are using the digital logo have incorporated it into their CSA newsletters, packing materials, printed materials distributed at the almond festival, trucks and equipment logos, and on personal store displays. The eight that are using the stickers are most commonly incorporating them into the packaging and presentation of value-added products.

The farmers market sign is also used sometimes or always by eight respondents (29.6 percent), representing over half of the 13 respondents that sell product at farmers markets. Three people brought up that they have no way to hang the sign effectively, and/or that the addition of another sign to their stall could make it look overcrowded.

Only one respondent has linked their personal business Web site to the CVG Web site, even though many partners have their own sites. Several respondents commented that they intend to make a link, but have not had the time to do so.

**Table 5: Characteristics partners like most about materials they use (n=23)**

| Response Category | Number of Respondents (%) |
|---|---|
| Beautiful design, colorful, eye catching, conversation starter | 16 (69.6%) |
| Convenience, all responses | 9 (39.1%) |
| Convenience: stickers | 5 (21.7%) |
| Convenience: brochure | 3 (13.0%) |
| Good symbol of CVG, representation of regional identity | 4 (17.4%) |
| Quality, well made | 2 (8.7%) |
| Educational value | 1 (4.3%) |

The majority of respondents that use one or more materials said that the characteristics of the logo design are what they like best (see Table 5). The logo, especially in the format of a sign, is beautiful, eye-catching, and works well to attract customer interest. Convenience, mostly in terms of the stickers and the brochure, was also important to many respondents.

Cost was only mentioned to be prohibitive in the case of the stickers; three people said that they are too expensive.

***Types of services/tools likely to be used if offered***
Respondents were asked about their potential interest in a list of marketing tools and strategies that CVG could offer in the future.

**Table 6: Other marketing materials likely to be used if offered by CVG (n=27)**

| Type | Number of Respondents (%) |
|---|---|
| Newspaper ads | 16 (59.3%) |
| CVG partner map | 16 (59.3%) |
| Packing materials w/ logo | 12 (44.4%) |
| Radio ads | 9 (33.3%) |
| Additional signs | 9 (33.3%) |
| TV ads | 5 (18.5%) |
| Other: Internet | 4 (14.8%) |
| Other: TV shows- CA gold, Heartland | 2 (7.4%) |

Newspaper advertising and a CVG partner map are most likely to be used by respondents (See Table 6). Many partners noted that current advertising through the Capay Valley Harvest Newsletter, Edible Sacramento, and other local papers are having a positive impact. Several partners indicated that they would use the newsletter in the future, while others suggested that the partnership should take advantage of a larger number of regional newspapers and publications.

Over half the respondents said they would be interested in a CVG partner map. However, there is disagreement over how the map should be used. Two partners would like to develop more agri-tourism in the area, but six respondents made it clear that they are not interested in a farm-trails approach that encourages farm visits or tours. They would only support a map that indicates places where partner products could be purchased.

Still, there is a general agreement that the Capay Valley would benefit from more promotion. A publication that shows where the valley is situated includes more reference points, and highlights places of interest (wineries, hiking trails, etc.) could be beneficial.

Of the 12 partners (44.4 percent) that responded positively to the development of packing materials with the CVG logo, two are specifically interested in packing boxes, two in paper bags, and one in orange bags. One person thinks it might be effective to have as much uniform packaging among partners as possible.

Some ideas regarding CVG signs include offering a banner or canvas sign that would be easier to hang and transport, especially for use at farmers markets. Two partners also brought up the issue of crowding; they are already required to hang a number of signs at their farmers market stalls, making it unappealing to add the CVG sign to the mix. They would benefit from a way to combine multiple logos and signs into one.

Overall, partners expressed more interest in radio than television advertising, but both the target audience and the message would be important factors in deciding whether to use these strategies.

Internet advertising came up many times as an important marketing channel that partners would be interested in pursuing through CVG. Several partners rely on the Internet for sales and purchasing, and would like this area to be developed by the partnership.

Two respondents mentioned the possibility of attracting the attention of television programs such as “California Gold” that focus on agriculture.

Respondents cautioned that any additional marketing and advertising strategies would depend on the cost to the partner.

***Potential for a CVG storefront***

The idea of opening a CVG storefront was starting to be discussed at the time of the survey. For this reason, respondents were asked to indicate their interest and willingness to plan, invest in, and sell items through a store dedicated to CVG partner products.

**Table 7: Partner interest in a CVG storefront (n=27)**

| | **Number of Respondents (%)** | |
|---|---|---|
| **Question** | **Yes** | **Not sure** |
| Interested in selling product through the store | 21 (77.8%) | 2 (7.4%) |
| Willing/able to help plan a storefront | 16 (59.3%) | 3 (11.1%) |
| Willing/able to help organize | 15 (55.6%) | 3 (11.1%) |
| Willing/able to help with initial funding | 14 (51.9%) | 7 (25.9%) |

The overall response to a CVG storefront was positive, with over three quarters of the respondents saying they would be interested in selling product through the location (see Table 7). Over half said they would help with the planning, organizing, and initial investment required. Two of the respondents that did not commit to contributing an initial investment said they would help through in-kind services, such as electrical work and refrigeration. However, many of the responses were given with qualifying statements, such as:

- The respondents’ interest in selling product through a CVG storefront will depend on whether the store would be set up for their products, for example meat, hay, or vegetables.

- There are mixed opinions regarding whether the store should include perishables and/or non-perishable items.

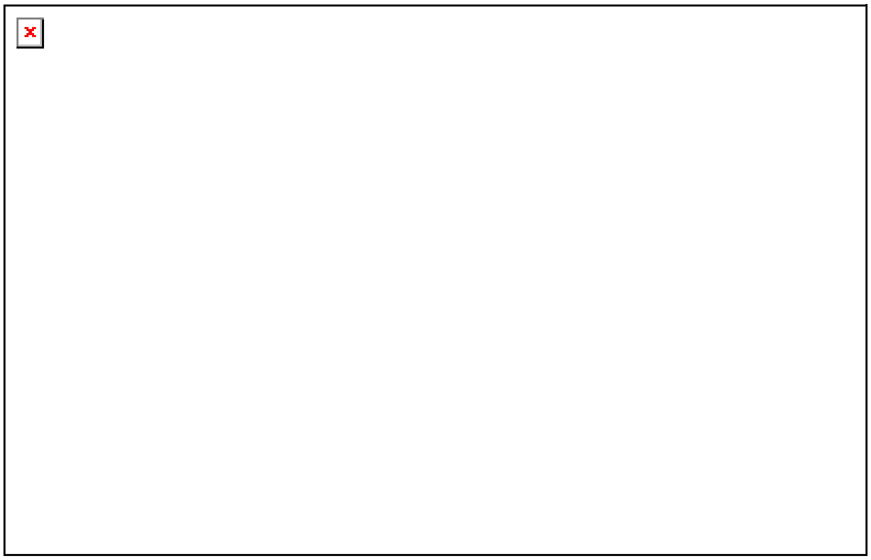
- There is a hesitance to commit without knowing more details about what a store might look like, and the financial and time commitment required.

- One other concern that was expressed is the potential competition that a local storefront may create with the Esparto Farmers Market and farm stands in the area.

The survey question made no reference to where a storefront might be situated, but at least five respondents specifically expressed interest in a *local* store, specifically in the Esparto region. It would provide CVG partners with an additional marketing venue, and local residents (including CVG partners) with a source of fresh produce.

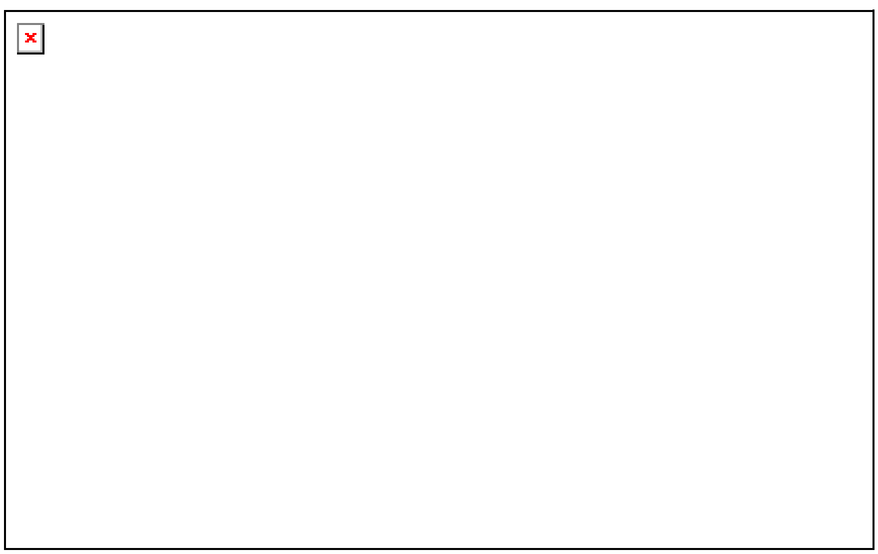
Some partners suggest that CVG pursue something smaller that requires less investment. One idea is to develop a mobile market in the form of an enclosed trailer that can be brought to events. Another idea is to establish an open-air market that takes advantage of Casino traffic.

**Outcomes and Impacts**
Respondents were asked to rate six statements about the partnership's economic and community impacts on a scale of one through five (strongly disagree through strongly agree). Some respondents believed that one or more of the statements did not apply to their farm or business, and declined to answer. Therefore, the number of respondents (n) varies by question.



Response average = 3.4, Mode = 4

Over half the respondents (51.8 percent) agree or strongly agree that the partnership has helped raise the visibility of their farm or business (see Diagram 6). Interestingly, the single partner that strongly disagrees uses farmers markets as a primary sales venue; one of the two that strongly agrees sells under contract.



Response average = 2.9, Mode= 3

61.5 percent of respondents are neutral about whether the partnership has helped increase their sales (see Diagram 7). 19.2 percent disagree or strongly disagree that it has helped, and 19.2 percent agree.

Response average = 2.2, Mode = 3

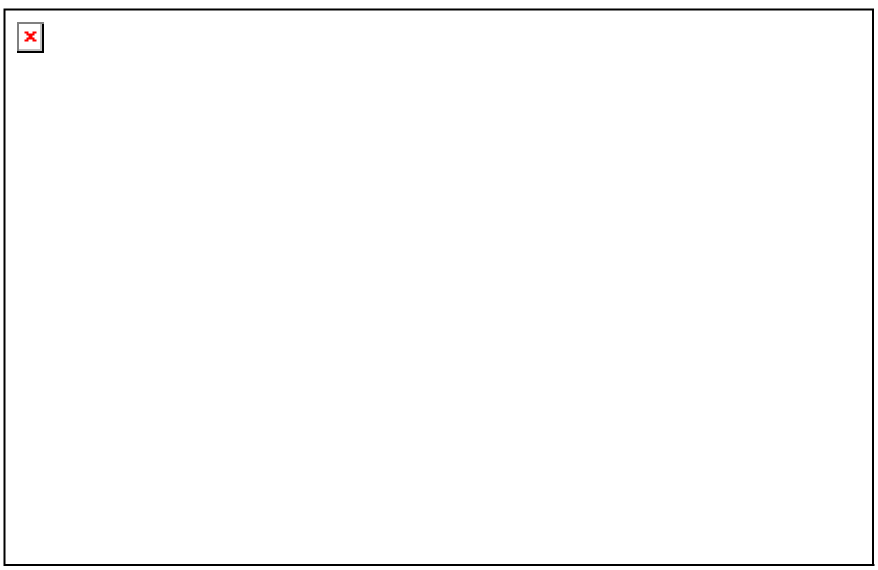
Only one person agrees that CVG has helped raise the prices that they receive (see Diagram 8). 36.0 percent of respondents strongly disagree, and 8.0 percent disagree.

Response average = 2.5, Mode = 3

42.3 percent of respondents strongly disagree or disagree that the partnership has helped them access new markets (see Diagram 9). 46.2 percent are neutral.

Response average = 2.3, Mode = 3

Again, few survey participants agree that the partnership has made them feel more secure about their farm or business income. 46.1 percent disagree or strongly disagree, and 38.5 percent are neutral (see Diagram 10).



Response average = 4.3, Mode = 5

A much larger percentage of partners believe that CVG has created greater community awareness of locally grown food; 82.5 percent said they agree or strongly agree (see Diagram 11).

**Qualitative Questions**
Respondents were asked six open-ended questions about their experience in CVG, the partnership's benefits and successes, and how the partnership can improve.

**Table 8: Successes of Capay Valley Grown (n=28)**

| Response | Number of Respondents (%) |
|---|---|
| Increase in visibility, recognition of valley | 12 (42.9%) |
| Organizational aspects- staff, fundraising, level of organization, accessibility, commitment | 7 (25.0%) |
| The logo | 6 (21.4%) |
| Unifying the valley, bringing people together, building community, community pride | 6 (21.4%) |
| CVG's existence, perseverance | 6 (21.4%) |
| Increase in awareness among consumers | 5 (17.9%) |
| Everything | 4 (14.3%) |
| Outreach and advertising: Valley Voice, CVH newsletter, Web site, ads | 4 (14.3%) |
| The Esparto Farmers Market | 3 (10.7%) |
| Increase in dialogue among partners, information sharing, access to information | 3 (10.7%) |
| The relationships, camaraderie, social aspects | 3 (10.7%) |
| Opening markets | 2 (7.1%) |
| Increase in membership | 2 (7.1%) |
| Other | 2 (7.1%) |

Respondents offered many examples of CVG success. The most frequent response, given by 42.9 percent of respondents, was that CVG has increased the visibility and name recognition of the valley (see Table 8). The logo, specific outreach and advertising strategies, an increase in consumer awareness, and opening markets were other responses relating to the marketing goals of CVG.

Respondents also placed much emphasis on the social impacts of CVG, including the success of CVG in unifying the valley and generating community pride, increasing communication and information sharing among partners, and the relationships and camaraderie that have developed through the partnership.

*Partner perspective: There is better consumer awareness, you can see the difference. CVG is helping to open up markets for growers. Most important, CVG has been pivotal in getting people together, to work together on problems.*

One quarter of the respondents consider the strengths and commitment of CVG leaders and staff a success. 21.4 percent said that the fact of CVG's existence, or the partnership's perseverance, is a success in itself, while 14.3 percent said that everything that CVG has done is a success.

**Table 9: Suggestions to improve CVG marketing/outreach efforts in 2006 (n=28)**

| Response | Number of Respondents (%) |
|---|---|
| Increase advertising: total responses | 8 (28.6%) |
| TV, media | 3 (14.3%) |
| Internet | 2 (7.1%) |
| General | 2 (7.1%) |
| Newspaper, magazine | 1(3.6%) |
| More events, workshops, tours | 7 (25.0%) |
| Not sure, no suggestions, keep up the good work | 7 (25.0%) |
| Improve Farmers Market | 5 (17.9%) |
| Pursue a local store, storefront | 4 (14.3%) |
| Creative outreach and promotion- banner on Main Street, outreach through CSA newsletters, outreach to food writers | 3 (14.3%) |
| Co-marketing, collaborative marketing and distribution, working together by crop category | 2 (7.1%) |
| Increase retail participation, get more stores involved | 2 (7.1%) |
| Partner and collaborate with other organizations, government | 2 (7.1%) |
| Get partners together to talk, brainstorm, eat together | 1 (3.6%) |

The most common suggestion for improving CVG's marketing and outreach efforts is to increase it's advertising. Of the eight respondents (28.6 percent) that believe advertising could be expanded, six were specific about doing so through TV/media, Internet, or newspapers and magazines (see Table 9).

One quarter of the respondents think that CVG should organize more events, workshops, and tours. An equal number have no suggestions, and are happy with what the partnership is doing.

*Partner perspective: Special events are much more effective, like Taste of Capay, the County Fair, or Hoes Down. They identify the valley as a location for quality produce and ag products. Major events are a positive goal, 3-4 per year.*

17.9 percent of respondents think the Esparto Farmers Market is an important area of focus to improve the visibility and impacts of CVG. Several people said the market needs a boost in energy and more grower participation. One person believes the communication and collaboration between CVG and the market can be improved. 14.3 percent support the idea to start a CVG storefront.

Other suggestions for improvement include simple ways to raise the visibility of the area, increase collaboration among other local groups organizations, foster more collaboration among growers, and facilitate more opportunities for partners to get together. A few partners see opportunity in learning from the successes and failures of other similar groups. Many of these approaches would be less costly than the expansion of advertising and events.

*Partner perspective: Don't put more money into advertisements. The typical route is not very hands-on. Think about getting CVG farmers together, get them to sit at the table together at least once a year, brainstorm, meet each other. The Field Day is good, but it is not specifically to meet each other. Meet eye-to-eye, talk about what has happened, what other things have come up. If you sit down all the growers, things would come out.*

*Partner perspective: Facilitate like growers working together, by category, for example nut growers. Figure out how to better distribute, draw on each other's products, and fill contracts together. Work together by category, and look for opportunities to co-market, cross-market.*

**Table 10: Steps necessary to improve partner's overall experience in CVG (n=28)**

| Response | Number of Respondents (%) |
|---|---|
| None, don't know, it is going fine | 14 (50.0%) |
| I need to increase my participation, involvement, put in more time | 6 (21.4%) |
| More promotion, get more out there, more action, get more people excited | 4 (14.3%) |
| Reduce the e-mail/information load | 1 (3.6%) |
| More opportunity to meet | 1 (3.6%) |
| More partners, break down fear barriers, tendencies toward independence | 1 (3.6%) |
| More participation by current partners | 1 (3.6%) |
| Work more as a cooperative, develop working networks | 1 (3.6%) |

Half of the respondents can think of no ways to improve their overall experience as a CVG partner (see Table 10). Many partners recognize that the quality of their experience in CVG depends more on their contribution to the partnership, rather than characteristics of the partnership itself. 21.4 percent of respondents said they need to participate more, and put in more time. However, several pointed out that they have little time to devote to the efforts.

These sentiments were echoed by one of the actively involved partners, saying that it would be helpful if CVG had a bigger representation of growers (more partners), but also more participation by current partners.

14.3 percent see a need for more action and to keep moving forward. One respondent has a problem with the ag task force meeting date, and said that changing it to any day but Thursday would allow him to participate more.

**Table 11: Most beneficial thing about being a CVG partner (n=28)**

| Response | Number of Respondents (%) |
|---|---|
| Working together, collaborating, supporting each other, collective action | 12 (42.9%) |
| Sense of community, being part of a group of like minded people | 8 (28.6%) |
| Meeting other farmers, knowing people, friendships | 6 (21.4%) |
| Access to information, learning opportunity | 6 (21.4%) |
| The marketing, benefits to my business | 5 (17.9%) |
| Knowing the marketing efforts are helping the other partners, though not necessary helping me | 4 (14.3%) |
| Creating, building, and supporting the community, pride | 3 (10.7%) |
| The diversity of partners, crops | 3 (10.7%) |
| It is a forum for the discussion of ag issues | 2 (7.1%) |
| Promoting the region, increasing awareness of local area, local food | 2 (7.1%) |
| Other | 1 (3.6%) |

Similar to what respondents believe are the successes of CVG, the most beneficial aspects of being a partner are spread among marketing and social benefits. There is even greater emphasis placed on social aspects, however, especially in terms of fostering collaboration and mutual support among partners, building a sense of community and facilitating access to like-minded people, and providing opportunities to meet other farmers and build friendships (see Table 11).

CVG is also important to partners as a learning opportunity and space for information sharing, as well as a forum for the discussion of issues facing local agriculture. In general, CVG is allowing for more interaction, discussion, and networking opportunities than what existed in the past.

Marketing and personal business benefits are most important to 17.9 percent of respondents. By contrast, 14.3 percent said they don't expect CVG marketing efforts to help their business, and the most beneficial aspect of being a partner is that CVG is helping other producers and the Capay Valley overall.

**Table 12: Ways for CVG to achieve its goal to preserve local farms and ag land (n=28)**

| **Response** | **Number of Respondents (%)** |
|---|---|
| Raise awareness, educate public about land issues, make ag visible, build community support | 10 (35.7%) |
| Be politically active, talk to and lobby the board of supervisors about ag issues, development | 8 (28.6%) |
| Help improve the bottom line for ag, increase farmer income, help make farming viable | 5 (17.9%) |
| Partner with YALT, work with land trusts, educate farmers and help them with easements | 5 (17.9%) |
| Be a watchdog, monitor development, be an advocate for farmland | 4 (14.3%) |
| Be a forum for discussion, build better understanding about the issues, possible solutions | 3 (10.7%) |
| Change consumer buying habits, get them more interested in locally grown food | 3 (10.7%) |
| If you don't own the land, you can't dictate what others do with it | 3 (10.7%) |
| No comment | 3 (10.7%) |

Capay Valley Grown's website states that the partnership is "committed to preserving the land of the Capay Valley as a part of rural America and maintaining its renewable resources into the future," and that "the destiny of the Capay Valley lies in the lands of the farmers and residents who have worked so diligently to preserve its rich heritage and fertile soil." To better understand how CVG partners view the role of the partnership in shaping the future of the region's agriculture, respondents were asked in what ways CVG can achieve its goal to preserve local farms and ag land.

Most of the respondents consider education and/or political participation to be the most effective strategies (see Table 12). The importance of lobbying local government, especially the board of supervisors, was mentioned many times. Several partners think that CVG should partner with more organizations working with land trusts and easements, and increase the level of understanding about how easements can work.

Many respondents believe the partnership's role is largely economic; to help make agriculture more viable, and provide the economic (and political) incentives to keep land in farming.

*Partner perspective: If we can improve the economic viability of ag with a brand that helps sell our products, with the quality that people are interested in getting- then we will have something vibrant and colorful going on here that city folk can look at and see that something good is going on, something that's valuable. We can say hey, we're doing this, it has these values for local area, and for the county as a whole. Supervisors talk about preserving ag in the county, but they have no idea what that means, how to do it, or on what basis. Yolo ag has survived in spite of all the lip service of city folks. If we can thrive, maybe we can convince city people that it is important.*

A few partners say that it is out of the CVG's hands. They believe that property owners are the only people that can dictate what is done to their land, and these decisions are affected mostly by economics.

**Partner Recommendations**

A summary of the recommendations that partners gave for the improvement of CVG's economic and community development efforts is provided below. They do not correspond to a specific interview question, but are pulled from comments and responses that partners made throughout the entire length of the interviews. They are divided into actions that can be taken in the immediate future, and those that will take more time and planning.

***Immediate***

- Take some time to review the partnership's goals. Discuss whether the group is happy with the current mission statement, bylaws, criteria for partnership etc. Set 3-4 concrete and realistic objectives for the year.
- Pursue inexpensive and creative approaches to attract food writers and media attention.
- Ask partners with CSA operations to talk about CVG in their CSA newsletters. Ask all partners which publications their customers may read and that CVG could tap into.
- Follow up on the interest expressed in expanding the advertising efforts of CVG. Newspaper ads were most likely to be used if offered. Internet advertising seems like an important area of opportunity.
- Organize more opportunities for producers to spend time together, perhaps around a meal. A harvest party was one possibility mentioned.
- Before committing a large amount of time and money to a large storefront project, discuss other ideas (in addition or alternatively to the Nut Tree) such as a mobile market, open-air market, or an Esparto storefront.
- Strengthen the connection and communication between CVG and the farmers market. Encourage more partner participation; check in again with partners that did not express interest in the beginning.
- Help raise awareness of the market; make sure the day and time are consistent. Removable banners for market day are a way to make it more visible to people passing through Esparto.

***Long-term***

- Organize farm visits and opportunities to talk with other growers. These types of exchanges provide an educational experience and build community.

- Consider putting up a banner on Main Street that highlights CVG, the Farmers Market, and has the Web site address on it.
- Tie into established events more, such as the Almond Festival and Hoes Down.
- Discuss ideas for additional regional events, workshops, and tours that would attract people to the area. Several partners suggested having small, half-day events that could be advertised through local newspapers and farmers markets. Taber Ranch provides a great opportunity to develop these activities.
- Tailor some CVG events to coincide with the Farmers Market to increase the market's visibility and customer base.
- Look into ways to piggyback off of Casino marketing efforts.
- Target Casino visitors with outreach and advertising.
- Look for ways to cross-market and co-market products.
- Work in sub-groups arranged by crop. This may be a practical way to approach collaborative marketing and distribution.
- Incorporate more agricultural education and CVG products into the local schools.
- Build more awareness and support among retail stores.
- Develop more partnerships and collaborations to enhance CVG's outreach and educational power. Yolo Ag Land Trust (YALT), the Davis Farmers Market, UC Davis, and county or state programs focused on sustainable agriculture were some suggestions.
- Not all partners believe CVG should have a direct role in land preservation, but many said that the partnership could try to increase public awareness of farmland loss, as well as partner understanding of land trusts and easements.
- Open up a dialogue within the partnership and the wider community about imminent domain, conservation easements, and land use issues.
- Partner with the Yolo Agricultural Land Trust to help farmers write conservation easements.
- Support and publicize the efforts of Good Humus.
- Design a system to share farm equipment.
- Organize a regional conference that encompasses the agricultural activities of the valley.
- Start a composting project/facility to address local waste issues and provide farmers with a local source of compost.
- Start a bio-diesel operation to help farmers reduce fuel costs. The restaurants in the casino are good potential sources of used vegetable oil.
- Start a school for small farm management and/or agricultural education similar to the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center.

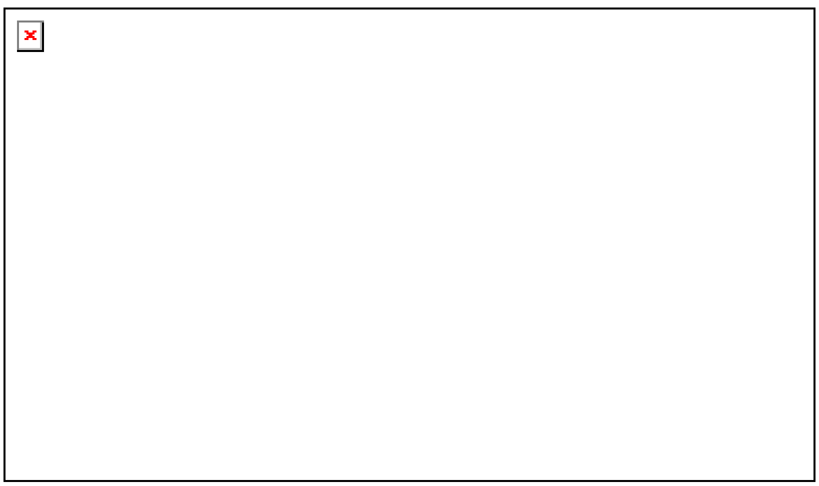
## Consumer Survey

### Survey background information

Two consumer surveys were conducted as rough measures of CVG label recognition. The first survey took place at the Davis Farmers Market on the morning of Saturday, March 25. The weekend coincided with the UC Davis Spring Break, reducing the proportion of respondents that would normally be students. The second survey took place at the season's first Esparto Farmers Market on Saturday, April 1.

Participants were first asked where they live. Their responses were categorized as outside of Yolo County, in Yolo County but outside of the Capay Valley, or in the Capay Valley. They were then asked if they recognized the CVG label. If yes, they were asked where they have seen it and what it means to them. If participants did not recognize the label, they were asked if they had heard of the Capay Valley, and if yes, what it means to them. Where response categories are not mutually exclusive, the total percentage of responses is greater than 100.

### Label recognition



***Davis Farmers Market**:*

Seventy people agreed to participate in the survey; 85.5 percent live in Yolo County, but none of the participants live in the Capay Valley. The responses of one survey participant were discarded because the person was confusing the CVG label with Capay Valley Organic Fruits and Vegetables.

- 36.2 percent of the participants said they recognize the CVG label (see Diagram 12). Of these, 96 percent live in Yolo County.
- 60.9 percent of the participants said they do not recognize the label. Of these, 78.6 percent live in Yolo County.
- 2.9 percent of the participants said they are unsure if they recognize the label or not. Of these, 100 percent live in Yolo County.

***Esparto Farmers Market:***
Although a similar amount of time was devoted to administering each survey, the number of customers at the Esparto Market was much lower, and only 34 responses were collected. 70.6 percent of the participants live in the Capay Valley Region.

- 82.4 percent of the participants said they recognize the label (see Diagram 12). Of these, 82.1 percent live in the Capay Valley region, and 17.9 percent live in another part of Yolo County.
- 17.6 percent of respondents said they do not recognize the label. Of these, 33.3 percent live in the Capay Valley region, 16.7 percent live in another part of Yolo County, and 50.0 percent live outside Yolo County.

**Label visibility**
If survey participants recognized the CVG label, they were asked where they had seen it.

**Table 13: Places where consumers report seeing the CVG label**

| | Number of Respondents (%) | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Place** | **Davis (n=25)** | **Esparto (n=28)** | **Total (n=53)** |
| Shirt, hat, bag | 5 (20.0%) | 8 (28.6%) | 13 (24.5%) |
| Highway 16 | 1 (4.0%) | 12 (42.9%) | 13 (24.5%) |
| Davis Farmers Market | 10 (40.0%) | 0 | 10 (18.9%) |
| Stores, Co-Ops | 8 (32.0%) | 2 (7.1%) | 10 (18.9%) |
| Written materials, ads, brochures | 4 (16.0%) | 4 (14.3%) | 8 (15.1%) |
| Everywhere | 0 | 4 (14.3%) | 4 (7.5%) |
| CVV office | 0 | 3 (10.7%) | 3 (5.7%) |
| Sustainable ag event, ag conference | 2 (8.0%) | 0 | 2 (3.8%) |
| County task force, CVV | 2 (8.0%) | 0 | 2 (3.8%) |
| Almond Festival | 0 | 2 (7.1%) | 2 (3.8%) |
| County Fair | 1 (4.0%) | 0 | 1 (1.9%) |
| CSA box | 1 (4.0%) | 0 | 1 (1.9%) |
| Web site | 0 | 1 (3.6%) | 1 (1.9%) |

***Davis Farmers Market:***
Participants most frequently recalled seeing the CVG label at the farmers market itself, and in local stores and Co-Ops (see Table 13). Shirts/bags/hats and written materials also seem to be effective.

***Esparto Farmers Market:***
It is clear that the farm signs posted along Highway 16 and other roads are the most visible materials to the Esparto survey participants. This is not surprising, since the majority of them live in the region. Shirts/hats/bags are the next most common places, followed by written materials. 14.3 percent said that they see the label everywhere, an indication of the visibility that it has in the region.

**Label meaning**
People who recognized the label were asked what it means to them.

**Table 14: Meanings and associations that consumers connect to the CVG label**

| | Number of Respondents (%) | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Response Category** | **Davis (n=25)** | **Esparto (n=28)** | **Total (n=53)** |
| Regional, locally grown, homegrown | 11 (44.0%) | 10 (35.7%) | 21 (39.6%) |
| Organic | 7 (28.0%) | 5 (17.9%) | 12 (22.6%) |
| Quality food, fresh produce | 3 (12.0%) | 6 (21.4%) | 9 (17.0%) |
| Marketing efforts, the partnership, the strategy | 4 (16.0%) | 4 (14.3%) | 8 (15.1%) |
| A beautiful place | 3 (12.0%) | 4 (14.3%) | 7 (13.2%) |
| Local and characteristics of quality | 2 (8.0%) | 3 (10.7%) | 5 (9.4%) |
| The valley | 0 | 4 (14.3%) | 4 (7.5%) |
| Capay Valley farmers | 3 (12.0%) | 1 (3.6%) | 4 (7.5%) |
| Farming, keeping the valley in farming, supporting a lifestyle | 1 (4.0%) | 3 (10.7%) | 4 (7.5%) |
| Local and organic | 1 (4.0%) | 3 (10.7%) | 4 (7.5%) |
| Community pride, respect for valley | 0 | 3 (10.7%) | 3 (5.7%) |
| Wine, vineyard | 0 | 2 (7.1%) | 2 (3.8%) |

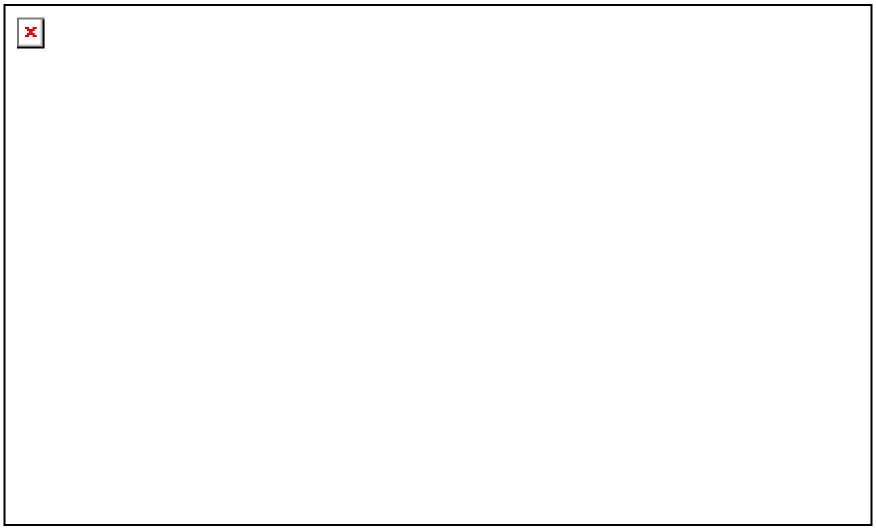
***Davis Farmers Market:***
The Davis survey participants most frequently associate the CVG label with regional, local, or homegrown produce (see Table 14). 28.0 percent connect the label to organic food or farming. Only 12.0 percent associate the label with qualities such as flavor and freshness.

***Esparto Farmers Market****:*
Local or homegrown is also the most common meaning for Esparto survey participants. 17.9 percent connect the label to organic food or farming, while 21.4 percent associate it with high

quality or fresh food. Two people thought the label was from a winery, most likely because of the sign posted outside the gate of Capay Valley Vineyards.

**Capay Valley recognition**

If respondents did not recognize the CVG label, they were asked if they have heard of the Capay Valley.



***Davis Farmers Market:***

Of the 42 participants that did not recognize the CVG label, 76.2 percent had heard of the Capay Valley (see Diagram 13). Of these, 87.5 percent live in Yolo County. Of the 24.8 percent that had not heard of the Capay Valley, 50.0 percent live in Yolo County, and 50.0 percent outside of Yolo County.

***Esparto Farmers Market:***

Of the six participants that did not recognize the label, four (66.6 percent) had heard of the Capay Valley. Of these four, one lives outside Yolo County, one lives in Yolo County, and two live in the Capay Valley. Both participants that had not heard of the Capay Valley live outside of the Capay Valley Region.

**Meaning of the Capay Valley**

The respondents that did recognize the label, but had heard of the Capay Valley, were also asked what the valley means to them.

**Table 15: Meanings and associations consumers connect to the Capay Valley**

| | Number of Respondents (%) | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Response Category** | **Davis (n=32)** | **Esparto (n=4)** | **Total (n=36)** |
| Agriculture: all respondents that mentioned agriculture, farming, farms, farmers, crops | 15 (46.9%) | 2 (50.0%) | 17 (47.2%) |
| Ag: Organic farms, farmers, food | 6 (18.8%) | | |
| Ag: Almonds, almond festival | 3 (9.4%) | | |
| Ag: Fruit, vegetables | 3 (9.4%) | | |
| Ag: Wine, wineries | 3 (9.4%) | | |
| Ag: Farmers | 2 (6.3%) | | |
| Beautiful, nature, greenery, blossoms, hiking, Cache Creek | 8 (25.0%) | 3 (75.0%) | 11 (30.6%) |
| Casino: all respondents that mentioned casino | 10 (31.3%) | | |
| Casino: change, negative impacts | 6 (18.8%) | 0 | 10 (27.8%) |
| Proximity, it is nearby | 3 (9.4%) | 0 | 3 (8.3%) |
| It's a valley | 2 (6.3%) | 0 | 2 (5.6%) |
| Distance, far away | 1 (3.1%) | 0 | 1 (2.8%) |

***Davis Farmers Market:***

Despite not recognizing the CVG label, the 32 Davis survey participants that had heard of the Capay Valley largely associate the region with some aspect of agriculture. 18.8 percent connect it specifically to organic food or farming. 31.3 percent associate the valley with the Cache Creek Casino in general; 18.8 percent think of negative changes and impacts such as traffic and development. 25.0 percent of participants relate the valley to natural beauty, outdoor activities, and the Cache Creek.

***Esparto Farmers Market*:**

The four respondents that did not recognize the label, but had heard of the Capay Valley, associate the region with agriculture and natural beauty.

## *Discussion and Conclusions*

**<u>Discussion</u>**

Considering that CVG is still a young organization, it is not surprising that most respondents have yet to observe many direct economic benefits from the partnership. At this point, the most important direct outcome of CVG's marketing efforts is an increase in visibility of the partners and of the valley in general. It should also be noted that a regional brand does not seem to be the optimal marketing strategy for everybody. The current marketing practices of many partners reduce the brand's potential to connect a product with the qualities and values that the Capay Valley represents. For example, some partners have very little contact with the end user of their products, and the majority of respondents generate less than half their sales in Yolo County. Furthermore, wholesale is the most common marketing and sales method utilized overall, and several partners sell under contract arrangements. Both of these venues tend to remove any name association between a farm and its product once it leaves the farmer's hands.

It is also interesting that many CVG partners already have high name recognition within Yolo County and the Bay Area because of the relationships they have made with customers through direct marketing activities. It is doubtful that the CVG brand will raise the marketability of these well-known partners, at least not in the short term. On the other hand, partners that are not as well established may benefit greatly from sharing the Capay Valley brand and being associated with the more recognized farms. This seems to be acknowledged by the CVG partners; at least four respondents said that they benefit from the partnership by knowing that CVG is helping the other people involved, and not necessarily themselves.

Nevertheless, given that one of the partnership's goals is to make farming more profitable, most respondents expect to receive economic benefits from CVG. The partners made many suggestions about additional activities and areas of improvement. There are also a number of ways CVG could take better advantage of what they are already doing.

For example, while there was a positive response to expanding CVG's advertising and outreach activities, it may be more cost-effective to maximize the use of what is already offered, both in terms of the types of services offered, and the consistency of use. In some cases this may require simple steps such as verifying that everyone knows what tools are available to them, and how to use them. One potentially effective activity could be to hold a workshop to show partners how to incorporate the digital logo into their own material and Web sites, and link themselves to the CVG Web site. It may be important to re-emphasize the need for everyone to get the brand and message out, regardless of whether it seems to be making an immediate or direct impact on their business.

The social outcomes of the partnership cannot be overstated. Some of the beneficial aspects of being a partner most commonly reported include working together, collaborating, being part of a group of like-minded people, and meeting other farmers. At the same time, partners frequently said that their experience could only be improved by participating more. For these reasons, it seems that the partnership could benefit from still more interaction among partners, in both work and social contexts. Two partners even made a direct suggestion to provide more opportunities for the group to get together outside of the normal meetings and activities.

Partners also placed a large emphasis on the sense of community being created through the partnership. A broad mix of old-timers and newcomers, organic and conventional, small-scale and large, farmers and ranchers, are working together to direct the future of agriculture in the Capay Valley region. CVG is considered a unifying force that provides a positive focus around which people can organize themselves.

Finally, the role of CVG in leading to other, more synergistic outcomes should not be underestimated. Although there is some ambiguity where the outcomes of the Agriculture Task Force end and those of CVG begin, there is no question that the partnership is influencing the development of projects that have great potential to impact the region's agricultural economy. For example, group interactions have already facilitated business deals and cross-marketing arrangements among partners. In addition, CVG partners are heading up the planning and implementation of a cut and wrap facility for the direct marketing of meat, and a CVG storefront for the marketing of CVG products. Partners are also involved with the establishment of a certified community kitchen, and the development of local olive oil production and marketing.

## Conclusions

Capay Valley Grown is an excellent case study of how a diverse group of farmers and ranchers can join together to develop solutions for the challenges they face in agriculture. The evaluation process revealed that social impacts are most beneficial to CVG partners at this point, and that the partnership is a unifying force helping to build a strong sense of community among Capay Valley producers. In this way, the partnership is certainly succeeding within the larger community development objectives of Capay Valley Vision and the Community Action Plan.

The process also revealed the importance of using social science research methods to gather feedback about the partnership. Although it required a large amount of time, the survey brought out many interesting points regarding partner experiences and perceptions that would have been difficult to reveal without a systematic approach. CVG can now address and act upon the numerous ideas and suggestions to strengthen its efforts.

Nevertheless, this evaluation should only be considered a source of baseline data about CVG partners, services, and outcomes. In order to maximize the usefulness of the information in this report, it will be important to carry out similar monitoring and evaluation activities in the future, so that comparisons can be made over time. Depending on resource constraints, CVG will need to choose which areas to continue monitoring, and how often to collect data. Appendix A offers a tool that can be used in a systematic approach to future monitoring, and includes many suggestions regarding the types of outcomes and indicators that can be tracked over time.

## Appendix A: Indicators

A series of tables are provided in the following pages to demonstrate one way that CVG and other marketing programs can approach future data collection and organization. Each table lists a number of outcomes and indicators that can be tracked to document progress towards reaching the partnership's goals. For each indicator, there are spaces in the table to document the baseline level, target value, source of data, and ease of collection. Some of the indicators are pulled directly from the partner and consumer survey results presented in this report, and their baseline levels are documented. Others need be compiled from partnership records, or would require additional research. An example is provided below.

| **Goal:** To increase producer and community participation, collaboration | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Outcome** | **Indicator** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Source of data** | **Ease of collection, comments** |
| Increased producer participation, strength of CVG | Number of CVG producer partners | 2004: 23<br>2005: 27<br>2006: | | Partnership records | Easy, already being collected |

Many potential indicators are listed, and CVG could undoubtedly identify many more. However, to make the idea of future monitoring less overwhelming, it would be helpful to prioritize the outcomes and indicators, and choose a smaller subset to work with. Some of the criteria to consider when making those choices include the ease of collection, and how well the indicator reflects progress toward the partnership's goals.

**Appendix A: Indicators**

| **Goal:** To increase producer and community participation, collaboration | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Outcome** | **Indicator** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Source of data** | **Ease of collection, comments** |
| Increased producer participation, strength of CVG, | Number of CVG producer partners | 2004: 23<br>2005: 27<br>2006: 31 | | Partnership records | Easy, already being collected |
| Increased business participation, strength of CVG, | Number CVG business partners | 2006: 10 | | Partnership records | Easy |
| Increased strength of CVG, community support | Number of individual supporters | | | Partnership records | Easy |
| Increased collaboration, project opportunities | Number of collaborating organizations | | | Partnership records | Easy |
| Increased information sharing, more networking | Partner attendance at Ag Task Force meetings (number, consistency) | | | Meeting notes | Easy |
| Increased collaboration, communication, project opportunities | Attendance by representatives of other organizations at Ag Task Force Meetings (NRCS, YALT, CAFF etc.) | | | Meeting notes | Easy |

| **Goal:** To increase outreach and marketing effectiveness, visibility of CVG | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Outcome** | **Indicator** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Source of data** | **Ease of collection, comments** |
| Increased visibility of partners | Percent of partners that agree CVG has helped increase the visibility of their farm | 2006: 51.8% | | Producer survey | Easy |
| Increased visibility of CVG, partner connectivity | Number of partners that link to CVG Web site with their own | 2006: 1 | | Partner survey | Easy |
| Increased visibility of partners and CVG, community pride | Percent of partners that use farm sign | 2006: 63% | | Producer survey | Easy |
| Increased visibility of CVG | Percent of partners that use _____? | | | Producer survey | Easy |
| Increased visibility of CVG | Number of annual CVG events, field days, etc. | | | Partnership records | Easy |
| Increased visibility, community pride | Sales of collateral items | | | Partnership records | Easy, already tracked |
| Increased visibility of partners and CVG | Percent of partners that have been featured in CVH newsletter | | | Partnership records | Easy, already tracked |
| Increased visibility of partners and CVG | CVH circulation | | | Partnership records | Easy |

| **Goal:** To raise public interest (some overlap with visibility) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Outcome** | **Indicator** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Source of data** | **Ease of collection, comments** |
| Increased interest in CVG efforts, local agriculture and food | Number of articles written about CVG in regional publications | | | Partnership records | Medium, requires some research |
| Increased interest in CVG efforts, local agriculture and food | Number of Web site hits | | | Track on Web site | Medium, requires a Website hit counter |
| Increased interest in CVG efforts, local agriculture and food | Attendance at Taste of Capay | | | Partnership records | Easy |

| **Goal:** To increase consumer awareness of local agriculture and food | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Outcome** | **Indicator** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Source of data** | **Ease of collection, comments** |
| Increased awareness of CVG label and products, outside Capay Valley region | Label recognition, Davis Farmers Market | 2006: 36.2% | | Consumer survey | Medium |
| Increased awareness of CVG label and products, inside Capay Valley region | Label recognition: Esparto Farmers Market | 2006: 82.4% | | Consumer survey | Medium |
| Increased understanding of CVG objectives, outside the Capay Valley region | Meaning of label according to consumer: Davis Farmers Market | 2006:<br>44% local, homegrown; 12% quality, fresh | | | Medium |
| Increased understanding of CVG objectives, inside Capay Valley region | Meaning of label according to consumers: Esparto Farmers market | 2006:<br>35.7% local, homegrown; 21.4% quality, fresh | | | Medium |
| Increased awareness within the region of local food and agriculture | Number of partners that agree CVG has helped increase community awareness of locally grown food | 2006: 82.5% | | Producer survey | Easy |

| **Goal:** To increase demand for local ag products | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Outcome** | **Indicator** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Source of data** | **Ease of collection, comments** |
| Increased demand for CVG products in Yolo County | Percent of partners that make over 10/25/50 percent of sales to Yolo County buyers | 2006: 55.6/48.1/37.0 | | Producer survey | Easy |
| Increased demand for CVG products in Yolo County, increased retail interest | Number of (retail) locations selling CVG products | | | Partnership records | Easy, already tracked |
| Increased demand for CVG products in Yolo County, increased retail interest | Retail purchasing of local and CVG products made by retailers | | | Producer sales logs, retail purchase orders | Hard, requires producer and retailer cooperation |

| **Goal:** To increase the profitability of farming | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Outcome** | **Indicator** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Source of data** | **Ease of collection, comments** |
| Increased economic viability of partners | Percent of partners maintaining or increasing gross annual sales | 2006: 80.8% | | Producer survey | Easy |
| Increased access to markets | Percent of partners that agree CVG has helped increase their market access | 2006: 11.5% | | Producer survey | Easy |
| Increased sales | Percent of partners that agree CVG has helped increase their sales | 2006: 19.2% | | Producer survey | Easy |
| Increased prices | Percent of partners that agree CVG has helped increase the prices they receive | 2006: 4.0% | | Producer survey | Easy |

| **Goal:** To strengthen local infrastructure, foster ag-based community development | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Outcome** | **Indicators** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Source of data** | **Ease of collection, comments** |
| Increased strength in local agricultural economy, infrastructure for ag | Number of ag supply and service businesses in region | | | Partnership records | Medium, requires some research |
| Increased community support of agriculture, partner commitment to community | Number of CVG partners selling at EFM | | | EFM manager | Easy, requires market manager cooperation |
| Increased community support of agriculture, strength in local ag economy | Number of local outlets featuring CVG | | | Partnership records | Easy, already tracked |

| **Goal:** To preserve local farms and ag land | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Outcome** | **Indicators** | **Baseline** | **Target** | **Source of data** | **Ease of collection, comments** |
| Increased viability of local agriculture, confidence to stay in farming | Percent of partners that agree CVG has made them feel more secure about their farm/business income | 2006: 15.4% | | Producer survey | Easy |
| Cultivation of new farmers | Number of partners' interns and employees that have gone on to farm on their own (in and out of the CV) | 2006: 42 (8 in CV) | | Producer survey | Easy |
| Preservation of farming | Number of farms in the Capay Valley | | | Census data? | Medium to hard, depends on availability of data, may require research |
| Preservation of ag land | Acreage in farming | | | Census data? | Medium to hard, depends on availability of data, may require research |

**Appendix B: Evaluation Methods**

The evaluation plan and tools were developed during March of 2006 in collaboration with Capay Valley Vision staff, Capay Valley Grown partners, and Gail Feenstra of UC SAREP. Many of the questions in the producer survey were adapted from an evaluation toolkit published by the regional branding and marketing program in Western Massachusetts called Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA)[1]. Additional questions were designed to gather information specific to CVG.

A draft of the survey was presented at the Capay Valley Ag Task Force meeting on March 2, and modified according to the feedback from those in attendance. The survey was then tested in a dry run and further revised before sending it out to the rest of the partners by e-mail on March 10. The e-mail message explained the purpose of the evaluation, requested that the partners read over the questions before being called for the actual data collection, and made it clear that all respondents would remain anonymous. Interviews were conducted by telephone between March 14 and March 30.

The consumer survey was conducted at the Davis Farmers Market on March 25, and at the Esparto Farmers Market on April 1. These locations were chosen based on the assumption that customers of regional farmers markets are most likely to recognize the label. In other words, the survey was not intended to indicate the awareness of the average Yolo County consumer, but rather the effectiveness of CVG materials where the label is most active. If label recognition is low at the Davis Farmers Market, it is likely to be even lower among customers that frequent large retail grocery stores.

The survey was conducted for two hours from a fixed location in each farmers market. All of the customers passing by were asked if they would be willing to answer some questions about a label. Those that stopped were shown the CVG label, and responses to the questions were recorded into the survey form.

Microsoft Excel was used to create a simple database for the management and analysis of data from both surveys. Quantitative data were entered directly into the spreadsheets; qualitative responses were coded and categorized before being entered. Analysis consisted of basic statistical calculations including frequencies and means.

[1] http://buylocalfood.com/Local%20Hero.htm

**Appendix C: Partner Survey**

Name: Date:

Farm/business name: Year joined CVG:

**1. Why did you become a partner of CVG?**

**2. Please list the items you produced in 2005:**

**3. What single product would consumers most readily associate with your farm/business?**

**4. Where/how do you sell your products?**

| **Method** | **% of total sales** | **Method** | **% of total sales** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wholesale | ______% | CSA | ______% |
| Farmers market | ______% | Internet | ______% |
| On farm | ______% | Roadside stand | ______% |
| Mail order | ______% | Under contract | ______% |
| Restaurant | ______% | Other __________ | ______% |
| Retail | ______% | | |

**5. Est. total gross farm sales in 2005 (please round to the nearest thousand):**

a) $0-10k c) $26-50k e) $101-250k g) $501k+

b) $11-25k d) $51-100k f) $251-500k

**6. How does this compare with your sales in 2004?**

Higher Lower About the same Don't know

**7. Approximately what percent of your 2005 sales were made to buyers in Yolo County?**

**8. Would you like to increase your sales in Yolo County? Yes No**

**9. If yes, what are the obstacles to selling more products in Yolo County?**

**10. How many of your past employees/interns have gone on to farm on their own?**

**a) Of these, how many have gone on to farm in the Capay Valley?**

**11. Please indicate how often you use the following CVG marketing materials (for the last three materials listed, please also describe briefly how you use them):**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| CVG sign: on farm | Never | Sometimes | Always |
| CVG sign: at farmers market | Never | Sometimes | Always |
| CVG sign: in store | Never | Sometimes | Always |
| 1" stickers on product | Never | Sometimes | Always |
| Capay Valley Harvest newsletter | Never | Sometimes | Always |
| Digital logo: ______________________ | Never | Sometimes | Always |
| CVG Web site: ___________________ | Never | Sometimes | Always |
| CVG brochure: ___________________ | Never | Sometimes | Always |

**12. What do you like about the CVG marketing tools you use most?**

**13. If CVG offered additional marketing materials, which would you be likely to use?**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Television ads | Different types of signs | Other: ____________ |
| Radio ads | Packing materials with logo | |
| Newspaper ads | CVG partner map | |

**14. The idea of opening a CVG storefront has come up in recent discussion. The storefront would provide a centralized location for the sale and promotion of CVG products.**

**a) Would you be interested in selling your products through a CVG storefront?** Y/N

**b) Would you be willing to help with any of the following to open a storefront?**

Planning Organizing Initial funding

**15. Please rate the following statements on a scale of one (1) to five (5):**

1- Strongly disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree, 5- Strongly agree

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The CVG partnership has helped raise the visibility of my farm/business. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The CVG partnership has helped increase sales of my products. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The CVG partnership has helped raise the prices I receive. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The CVG partnership has helped me access new markets. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The CVG partnership has created greater community awareness of locally grown food. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The CVG partnership has made me feel more secure about my farm/business income. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**16. What steps could be taken to improve the CVG marketing/outreach efforts in 2006?**

**17. What is most beneficial about being a CVG partner?**

**18. What steps could be taken to improve your overall experience in CVG?**

**19. In what ways can CVG achieve its goal to preserve local farms and agricultural land?**

**20. What do you see as CVG's successes?**

**21. What other suggestions or feedback do you have?**

**Appendix D: Consumer Survey**

Location: _____________________

Date: ___________________

| | Where do you live? | | | Rec. label? | **Yes**: Where seen? | What does it mean to you? | **No**: Heard of CV? | What does it mean to you? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| # | Outside Yolo | Yolo, outside C.V. | In C.V. | Y/N | DFM EFM DC SC NG | | Y/N | |
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