



Slow Food  
SONOMA COUNTY NORTH

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SONOMA COUNTY NORTH NEWSLETTER, Summer  
2015



## A Visit to the Sonoma County Meat Company

Lisa Hunter

A few weeks ago I toured the Sonoma County Meat Company. I had signed up for this Sonoma County North event to boost the low registration and had little interest in meat and butchering. And was I surprised! I was fascinated by the intricacies of running a responsible, healthy, "slow" business, full of admiration for the craft of butchering, and extremely respectful of what Rian Rinn and Jenine Alexander have accomplished in their one year of business.

Rian and Jenine—members of Sonoma County North and owners of Wyeth Acres egg farm--created Sonoma County Meat Company in 2014, after devoting several years to finding a suitable property and turning it into a state-of-the-art meat company. They are both a USDA- and state-inspected facility; the USDA process is so complex that the inspector is there daily from 6 am-2 pm and has her own office. They purchase their pasture-raised meat from nearby farms such as Sonoma Natural Beef, Williams Ranches, and Little M Farms.

A separate freezer stores state-inspected meats from ranches, FFA, and hunters, waiting to be cut and packaged. There is a smoker for bacon, ham, and their sausage and pepperoni sticks.

Watching Rian skillfully break down a huge hanging side of beef with his knives is to watch an artist at work. Was I really saying this? Yes, I was fascinated watching him rapidly separate the meat from the animal's vertebrae, pulling free long scallop-edged pieces.

When we finished our tour, our hosts were immediately engulfed by a line of customers who filled their shop. [www.sonomacountymeatco.com](http://www.sonomacountymeatco.com)



## National and Chapter Updates

**Changes in Slow Food USA:** Funding from several grants has ended and the national office has had to cut back staff to 3 plus an intern. President Richard McCarthy hopes that the membership drive in September will result in a healthier budget for the national office.

**Slow Food California:** There will be a meeting of leaders from California chapters on September 6 and 7 in Sebastopol. Sonoma County North will host a reception on September 5, assist with farm tours, and arrange for some housing. The meeting is planned to precede the [National Heirloom Expo](#) on September 8-10 (Santa Rosa, Sonoma County Fairgrounds). **If you are willing to offer housing for a Slow Food leader on September 5 and 6, please let us know at [slowfoodsonomacountynorth@gmail.com](mailto:slowfoodsonomacountynorth@gmail.com).**



***Secrets of Potato Culture Workshop:*** In March, Nathan Boone, former owner of Firstlight Farm, discussed and demonstrated how to plant potatoes, covering information from the ideal time to plant through harvesting and storage. During the workshop approximately 35 seed potatoes were covered with soil in a local raised bed, which should yield about 350 potatoes. If all goes well, the crop will be used for future Slow Food meals.

***Tastes & Tales of Terra Madre:*** 100 people attended an outdoor sit-down dinner at the Gradek Ranch on April 12. Chef Louis Maldonado grilled lamb, chapter leaders prepared and served the meal, and music by Hank Floyd with Jack and Sandy filled the spring air. Past and present delegates to Terra Madre spoke of their experiences at that biannual international event. The high bidders for two 100-

mile in-home dinners were Bob and Trisha Forman and Paul and Yael Bernier/Edson and Ann Howard. The evening raised \$3722 to send delegates to Terra Madre 2016 and to support chapter projects.

***Chapter Annual Meeting:*** About 30 people attended the meeting on May 17 at Foggy River Farm. The business meeting brought members up to date on chapter projects, events, and financial status. The meeting was followed by a picnic of pizza from Foggy River's oven and potluck sides and desserts.

***Tours of Bayer Farm and Sonoma County Meat Company:*** On June 6, several members met at Bayer Farm in west Santa Rosa for a tour of the community gardens and a picnic lunch. This was followed by a tour of nearby Sonoma County Meat Company.

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## New Sonoma County North Website and a Producer Page!

Recently our Communications Chair, Carol Diaz, finished revising our Sonoma County North website. Check it out! [Slow Food Sonoma County North](#)

Not only that, but we now have a Producer page dedicated to our members who have food-related businesses that fulfill the Slow Food mission of providing good, clean, and fair food. There is a brief description of each producer and links to their [websites](#). We encourage you to support them, and to let us know if you have a business that should be listed ([slowfoodsonomacountynorth@gmail.com](mailto:slowfoodsonomacountynorth@gmail.com)).

### Member Producers who are currently listed:

Artisan Preserves

Bear Republic Brewery

Bernier Farms

Boss Dog Marketing

Farm to Pantry

Farmhouse Inn and Restaurant

Foggy River Farm

Food Physique

Healdsburg Museum

Healdsburg SHED

Idlewild Wines

Montemaggiore

Oz Family Farm

Pizzardo

Sonoma County Meat Company

Soule Studio

Spoonbar

Sprawling River Farm at Vanoni Ranch

Wine Trail Escapes

Worth Our Weight

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## Upcoming Chapter Events

***Preston Farm Tour and Wine Tasting:*** July 23, 10 am, Healdsburg. Cost is \$15/person (\$20/nonmembers). Space is limited; sign up as soon as you receive your invitation!

***Around the Slow Table:*** Dinners will be held in two homes on July 24 in Healdsburg (7 people) and Cloverdale (8 people). When people sign up, we put them together with others who don't know each other in order to develop conviviality among our chapter members. The host prepares the main course and guests are asked to bring dishes to share. Invitations will be sent at the beginning of July.

***Singing Frog Farm Tour and Lunch:*** August 13, 10 am, Sebastopol. 90-minute farm tour followed by lunch with wine. Cost is \$25/person (\$35/nonmembers). Invitations will be sent in early August.

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## Goals in Focus for 2015

In January of this year, the chapter Board reviewed our 7 goals and their 22 objectives. We decided to concentrate on the following objectives during the year in order to broaden and deepen them.

- Support and promote our local farmers and their products **by publicizing producers on our website.**
- Support the products and activities of those who are preserving (or inventing) local and regional traditions in the growing and preparation of food **by (1) researching 1-2 foods and nominating them for the US Ark of Taste; and (2) continuing the annual Ark of Taste Grow-Out with farmers and school gardens, including Bayer Farm and Windsor Community Garden to increase community awareness of Ark products.**
- Present educational programs and events that enhance member and community knowledge about sustainable farming and food production, biodiversity, food traditions, and the benefits of eating food that is fresh, seasonal, and locally produced **by (1) offering farm visits to demonstrate the work and expertise needed to bring food from farm to table; and (2) promoting the National Heirloom Expo to our members and our project schools.**
- Create events that take place at table to increase the sense of community among members of the Sonoma County North chapter, members of fellow Sonoma County chapters, and members of the community **by continuing “Around the Slow Table” dinners.**
- Engage with community projects and organizations that promote food justice and equity in bringing food from farm to table **by continuing our relationship with the families at Bayer Farm.**
- Develop and broaden relationships and exchanges with others who share the guiding values of Slow Food **by creating a “Policy Night” discussion with other regional Slow Food leaders.**
- Develop or engage in projects that reach beyond Sonoma County to foster cultural exchange and support the food production and educational activities of struggling communities in the United States and elsewhere **by continuing to support the women of AMIDI in their farming and weaving, through the AMIDI Project.**

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### Why Join Slow Food—or Renew Your Membership?

*When you join Slow Food you become part of a global community which is “going Slow”—celebrating and championing regional foods and food traditions, supporting farmers, creating school and community gardens, and joining members from disparate ends of the food system in debate and common cause.*

*You also become a member of our smaller, local community of northern Sonoma County and can support and participate in monthly events and our projects: the Ark of Taste; scholarships for Beginning Farmers; gardens in elementary schools and after-school programs; an exchange program with Mayan women in Guatemala; and Slow Harvest gleaning. In California you automatically become a member of Slow Food California which is especially active in supporting statewide and local food policies that reflect the Slow philosophy.*

*To join or renew your membership online go to [Slow Food USA](#) and put Sonoma County North-CA as your chapter. To renew by check locally, contact [slowfoodsonomacountynorth@gmail.com](mailto:slowfoodsonomacountynorth@gmail.com).*



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