



SLOW FOOD SONOMA COUNTY :: NORTH ::

MAY 2022 NEWSLETTER



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Dennis Imbach

Regeneration

Regeneration

"Regenerating doesn't mean rebuilding so much as to revive. It's a universal theme: as a tree regenerates a lost branch, so the soil impoverished by monocultures and pesticides can be regenerated through agroecology. Our waters can be regenerated through the traditional



Stemple Creek Ranch

knowledge and culture of small-scale fishers and their low-impact practices; our cities, meanwhile, can reduce the distance between places of production and consumption, and restore visibility to the people behind the food we eat every day." (Slow Food International)

Regenerative Agriculture

For many years, the goal of healthy farming and ranching was to be **sustainable**--to do no harm to the environment. This has been replaced by the more active notion of actually improving the land through various techniques which restore the environment to a more healthy state. Regenerative agriculture is a major mitigator of climate change and therefore is a focus of our chapter this year.

Regenerative agriculture describes farming and grazing practices that, among other benefits, reverse climate change by rebuilding soil organic matter and restoring degraded soil biodiversity – resulting in both carbon draw-down and improving the water cycle. ([Regeneration International/Regenerative Agriculture 101.](#)) At its core, regenerative agriculture is farming and ranching in harmony with nature.

Regenerative Farming and Ranching Techniques



Farm to Fight Hunger

Our chapter recently toured two farms that practice regenerative agriculture, **Farm to Fight Hunger** and **Stemple Creek Ranch**. Both spoke of the advantages of using techniques such as composting, planting hedgerows, cover cropping, and rotational grazing.

According to **NRDC**, the techniques for caring for the soil vary with the context of each farm, and there are many practices

that fulfill a regenerative philosophy. Some of these are:

Cover cropping (reduces soil erosion, increases water retention, improves soil health, increases biodiversity)

Intensive rotational grazing (an Indigenous practice that mimics the way large animals moved in herds across grasslands; livestock are moved between pastures on a regular basis to improve soil fertility and allow pasture grasses time to regrow)

No-till farming (leaves the soil intact when planting rather than disturbing the soil through plowing)

Composting (turns waste from manure or food into fertilizer)

Reduced or no fossil fuel–based inputs, including pesticides (builds soil health and leverages other natural systems to help manage pests)

Agroforestry (an Indigenous practice that integrates trees and shrubs into crop and animal systems)

Conservation buffers like hedgerows and riparian buffers (areas of land populated with various plants to help manage specific environmental issues)

Regeneration Is a Slow Food International Theme

Terra Madre Salone del Gusto is "the largest international event dedicated to good, clean and fair food, organized by Slow Food" bi-annually in Italy. This year's Terra Madre Salone del Gusto **returns to Italy from September 22 to 26, 2022**. Hosted by the City of Turin and the Piedmont Region, the event will be held in Parco Dora, an ex-industrial area which has been the subject of significant urban redevelopment work over the last 15 years. The festival will bring to life these spaces which were once home to factories and steelworks, now transformed into a new green lung for the city, and it's this meeting of past and present that has created the theme of Regeneration.

Our chapter is sending one delegate to Terra Madre 2022. Stay tuned for information

about this person in future newsletters! In the meantime, consider attending as a guest. According to everyone who has been there, it's a life-changing experience. [Learn more about Terra Madre Salone del Gusto here.](#)

Slow Food Events

Look for an invitation with details about a month before each event.

May

22 Annual Meeting, Timber Crest Farms, Healdsburg, 3:30-5 pm. [Sign up here for this free event.](#)

25 Slow Books, *Southwind Through the Kitchen*, Elizabeth David

June

22 Olive Oil Tasting, Moon Dog Olive Farm, Cloverdale, 2 pm

29 Slow Cookbooks, Cloverdale, 4 pm

July

10 Annual Summer Picnic, Gradek Ranch, Healdsburg, 4 pm

Spotlight on Member/Producer: Duskie Estes



Duskie and Lucky Ducky

Duskie Estes, co-owner of [Black Pig Meat Co.](#), lives by the motto that big change comes from many small acts. Her list of accomplishments demonstrates her dedication to these principles.

Winning Awards

Duskie and husband, John Stewart's Black Pig Meat Co. won our [Slow Food Snail of Approval](#) award 5 years running. Their Black Pig prosciutto and coppa won the [Good Food Awards](#), and in 2009, the couple earned the [Star Chef Sustainability](#) award.

Growing Farm to Pantry

In addition to running their Black Piglet food truck, catering events, raising their two daughters, and working the farm which has rabbits, chickens, ducks, sheep, pigs, and goats, Duskie currently serves as executive director of [Farm to Pantry](#), the grassroots organization that rescues and shares locally grown food.

Duskie oversees 500 volunteer gleaners, 400 property owners, and 100 community partners who, in 2021, worked together to distribute 35,000 lbs of produce. Since Farm to Pantry's founding in 2008, it has delivered over 4 million servings of fruits and vegetables to the food insecure, the elderly, the ill, the houseless, and schools, all done with dignity.

Reducing Food Waste

Another aspect of Farm to Pantry's mission is to greatly reduce food waste, a lesser-known contributor to global warming. In the United States, 40% of all food produced is wasted, but Duskie says, "The issue goes way beyond just the loss of the food; for example, packaging, water, gas for trucks, we waste much more than food." In addition, she says, "We know that 8% of carbon gas emissions come from food waste. When food sits in a landfill, it produces methane."

Duskie believes that we all have the power to reduce food waste: "We all touch food at least 3 times per day--we have the power to control this."

On a larger scale, Duskie works to educate the public about SB1383, the California composting law passed in 2016 and currently in effect. SB1383 "Sets goals to reduce the disposal of organic waste in landfills, including edible food," according to the [Zero Waste Sonoma](#) website. The law is based on the fact that "Composting organic materials significantly reduces greenhouse gas production. Furthermore, when finished compost is applied on land, greenhouse gases are pulled from the atmosphere and into the soil."

Pivoting from Climate Change and COVID-19

The extreme weather events brought on by climate change became very personal for Duskie and John. In February 2019, floodwaters from Laguna de Santa Rosa overtook Sebastopol's Barlow district and resulted in the eventual closing of Zazu Kitchen and Farm, Duskie and John's award-winning restaurant. Then came the pandemic and 250 of their catering events were canceled. Duskie would not be daunted, however. She and John turned their energy towards their Black Pig Meat Co., the food truck and bacon company now in its second decade.

Their pasture-raised, heritage-breed pigs roam free on family farms, and Duskie says, "We want to have zero waste when it comes to pasture-raised meats. To be fully sustainable, a rancher has to sell the whole animal, so we sell snout-to-tail products. We train our butchers so they can take the skills with them." Some of Black Pig's innovative snout-to-tail products include bacon caramel corn, bacon toffee lollipops, lard lip balm, and lard lather. (For their full events calendar and list of products and purveyors, visit [Black Pig Meat Co.](#))

Kudos!

Thank you Duskie, for all the hats you wear and for your stalwart dedication to saving the planet, one small action at a time.

More about Duskie:

[Bay Area Ranchers Co-Op](#)

Watch "Burger Truck Brawl & Guy Hawaiian Style, Episodes 2" on Discovery+

Snail of Approval



Congratulations to our newest 2022 Snail of Approval awardees. [Taub Family Outpost](#) in Sonoma serves up ingredient-driven California cuisine with international flair, inspired by favorite dishes from around the world and rooted in farm-fresh goods. [Sunray Farm](#), also in Sonoma, is an organic, family-run small farm with big feelings about soil health. You can find their produce and flowers at the [Petaluma East Side Farmers' Market](#).



**2021 Snail of Approval Awardees at the Awards Ceremony on April 21, 2022.
Congratulations!**

Bodega Red Potato Presidium

The Presidium sold 1,400 pounds of Bodega Red Potato seed to 17 farmers and 4 retailers on March 15. There have been inquiries about seed from over 30 additional growers looking to plant the Bodega Red, and we plan to have ample seed to fulfill all requests in 2023.

Here is more information about the [Bodega Red Potato Presidium](#).

Recipe of the Month: Heirloom Bean Dip

Trevor Kunk's Heirloom Bean Dip

Rancho Gordo

Appetizer for 10-12+

INGREDIENTS

2 lbs Yellow Eye or Moro beans, soaked

2 carrots, peeled

2 onions, peeled and roughly chopped
3 ribs celery, washed and roughly chopped
10 cloves garlic, peeled
1 lb bacon
2 T salt
Salt and pepper to taste
Extra virgin olive oil
Lemon juice
* Optional: dash of Tabasco, red wine vinegar

PROCEDURE

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Arrange the bacon on a roasting pan and roast the bacon until cooked, about 25 minutes. Remove the bacon and fat, reserving both. Add the vegetables and garlic to the roasting pan and toss with enough of the reserved bacon fat to coat. Save the remaining fat for another dish.
2. Return the pan to the oven and roast until the vegetables start to caramelize, about 15 minutes.
3. In a dutch oven or stock pot, add the soaked beans, the reserved bacon, 2 T salt, and the roasted vegetable mixture. Stir well and cover by 2 inches of water. Bring to a rapid boil, and allow to continue boiling for about 10 minutes. Reduce heat to a simmer and continue cooking until the beans are soft, between 45 and 90 minutes.
4. Puree the cooked mixture with an immersion blender or in batches in a blender.
5. Pass the pureed mixture through a chinois, food mill, or finely meshed sieve (a food processor works*). The viscosity should be light and creamy. Add water if necessary.
6. Right before serving, add the optional dash of Tabasco and red wine vinegar, and swirl in olive oil and lemon juice.

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Sonoma
County
North
Events

Membership

Welcome New Members!

Kim Brown

Diane Gould

Bruce Hartsough

Jacqueline Kramer
Lesli Lee
Joan MacKenzie
Carla Miller
Kathryn Thomas
Eric White
Patricia Young

And Welcome Back!

Debbie Platt

Join or renew your membership online and list Sonoma County North-CA as your chapter. If you prefer to renew locally by check, please download our membership form and follow the instructions. Several times a year, Slow Food USA promotes **Pay What You Can Day** where you can join or renew for any amount on one day only. Watch your email for these promotions.

In Memoriam: Dennis Imbach



Dennis with daughter Angie and grand-daughter Bailey

Long-time Sonoma County North member Dennis Imbach died at his home in Cloverdale on May 9, 2022. Dennis was born in August 1939, and was married to Board member and Events chair Marie Giacalone. Expert griller and tomato grower par excellence, Dennis was gregarious, opinionated, loyal, and generous. Dennis, we raise a glass to you and will miss you.



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