



**SLOW FOOD  
SONOMA  
COUNTY  
:: NORTH ::**

# OCTOBER 2024 NEWSLETTER



**Join Us - Vote No  
on Measure J and  
Protect Local  
Food**



*Measure J - Sonoma County Prohibition on Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (\*CAFOs)  
Ballot Question:*

*“Should the County Code be amended to prohibit, outside of the Coastal Zone, farms and other animal production operations that meet the definition of ‘Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations’ as defined by federal regulations, require phasing out of existing CAFOs over three years, authorize daily financial penalties for violations and require, among other things, the Agricultural Commissioner to create a job retraining program for CAFO workers?”*

(\*A CAFO, as defined by USDA, confines more than 125,000 chickens raised for meat, more than 82,000 egg-laying hens, or more than 700 mature dairy cows, for more than 45 days a year).

The 21 likely CAFOs on the proponents Measure J list include ten egg farms; four chicken-for-meat farms, including Rocky and Rosie Chicken; six dairies, including Straus and Clover; and one duck farm.

Sounds reasonable, right? Let’s look at the potential impacts if passed:

- Strict adherence to the definition of a CAFO does not take into account how the animals are confined and could unfairly impact well-managed farms. For instance, dairy cows, while allowed to graze during most of the year, are typically sheltered more than 45 days during winter months and alfalfa-fed. This protects the animals, facilitates milking and allows better control of waste runoff leaching into groundwater. Proposition 12, the Prevention of Cruelty to Farm Animals Act, was passed by California voters in 2018. The law went into effect on January 1, 2022, requiring that egg-laying hens be housed in cage-free systems that allow them to move freely.
- Sonoma County Board of Supervisors revealed extensive negative impacts including an estimated economic cost of “\$418,299,719 with a loss of 1,381 jobs.”
- The ordinance would not prevent the importation of dairy and poultry products from outside of Sonoma County. Instead of products raised locally, products would be shipped in from large CAFOs from across the state and country. There would be no assurance of improvement in animal welfare for products sold in Sonoma County.
- Large tracts of grazing land and open space may be lost to urban sprawl.

Normally, we in Slow Food would be all-in when it comes to protecting animal rights. However, Measure J leaves too much open to interpretation. **Please join us at Slow Food Sonoma County North in support of our farmers and ranchers and vote No on Measure J.**

**Not registered to vote yet? Use the link at the end of this article!**

*“I have spent 30 years fighting for a healthy, humane and just food system and the family farms that bring so much to Sonoma County’s communities and environment. Measure J is a sledge hammer that will harm the ranchers, dairies, and farmers who help define our culture and cuisine. Everyone who actually knows and understands our county’s agriculture is against Measure J.”*

— **Michael Dimock, Executive Director of Roots of Change and Slow Food Sonoma County North Member**

“Vote no on Measure J. If this passes, no more Liberty Duck, Straus or Clover. It affects our local eggs, milk, cheese, beef and poultry. Its real goal is to end animal agriculture here all together. In fact, it would leave us with only access to CAFO meat and dairy from elsewhere. It would change the face of Sonoma County ag. We would lose what I love about cooking here. Know the face that feeds you.” — **Duskie Estes, Black Pig Meat Company, chef, farmer, rancher and Slow Food Snail of Approval Awardee**

## Learn more, support, vote.....

[California Certified Organic Farmers](#)

[Communities for Food & Family Farms](#)

[No on Measure J, Yes on Local Food](#)

[CAFF Sonoma County Statement](#)

[California Online Voter Registration Application](#)

## Sonoma County North Events

Mark your calendars, and look for an invitation with details about a month before each event.

### October

**16** Farm to Pantry Gleaning at Farm to Fight Hunger. [Sign up here](#)

**23** Farm to Pantry Gleaning at Farm to Fight Hunger. [Sign up here](#)

**27** Sonoma County North Annual Meeting at Farm to Fight Hunger, Healdsburg, 3-5 pm. [Sign up here](#)

**28** Slow Books: *The Upstairs Delicatessen: On Eating, Reading, Reading About Eating, and Eating While Reading*, by Dwight Garner

### November

**13** Sausage-Making Class, Cloverdale, 10-1

### December

**10** Terra Madre Day Dinner, Idlewild, Healdsburg

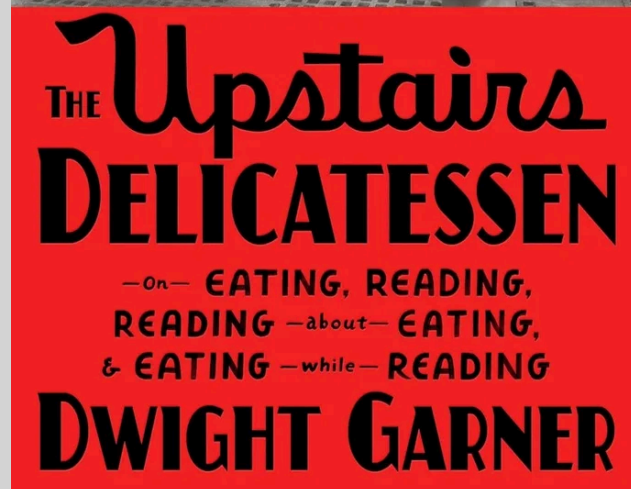
## Special Event from the [Pine Cone Foundation](#)

**October 26**, Pine Cone Foundation, *The Journey from Ranch to Plate*, Petaluma. This is a fundraiser for the Foundation's annual micro-grant program for farmers, ranchers, and fisheries. Read about the workshop and buy your ticket [here](#).

## Slow Books

Slow Books is an ongoing activity of our chapter. The group meets every 6 weeks to discuss a food-related book and enjoy a potluck dinner based on the book. We meet in people's homes which can usually only accommodate up to 8 people. For this reason, we are usually unable to invite others than our core group of participants.

But we're learning a lot from the books we've read, and thought you might want to enjoy the books as well. We will therefore let you know what we're reading each meeting through the newsletter and our [website](#).



### OCTOBER SELECTION: *The Upstairs Delicatessen: On Eating, Reading, Reading About Eating, and Eating While Reading*, by Dwight Garner

Dwight Garner, the beloved New York Times critic and the author of *Garner's Quotations*, serves up the intertwined pleasures of books and food. The product of a lifetime of obsessively reading, eating, and every combination therein, *The Upstairs Delicatessen: On Eating, Reading, Reading About Eating, and Eating While Reading* is a charming, emotional memoir, one that only Garner could write. In it, he records the voices of great writers and the stories from his life that fill his mind as he moves through the sections of the day and of this book: breakfast, lunch, shopping, the occasional nap, drinking, and dinner. (Amazon) [Read more here](#).

# Spotlight: Why Evan Wiig and CAFF Urge No on J



*In each newsletter, contributor Allison Eckert spotlights a member of our Slow Food community. This month features a conversation with Evan Wiig of CAFF.*

At Slow Food Sonoma County North, we tend to think most often about how we can joyfully and responsibly vote with our forks. But with election season upon us, Evan Wiig, Director of Membership & Communications at the [Community Alliance with Family Farmers \(CAFF\)](#) joined us to urge our readers to oppose Measure J this November 5th.

Upon introducing himself, Wiig underscores the “with” that you see in CAFF’s full name, adding that “we’re not a trade organization – we’re a partnership between family farms and the community.” As such, CAFF advocates for change in the agricultural sphere and to the policies governing it, focusing on progress that is good for small-scale farmers as well as their customers and neighbors. Per [CAFF’s statement opposing Measure J](#), the proposed legislation misses that mark.

Measure J aims to close down any Sonoma County “CAFOs,” short for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations – a term that originated as an EPA wastewater management category. Voters who support ecological health, animal welfare, and a vibrant local food system may be surprised to see so many local food systems leaders they trust opposing Measure J, which was purportedly designed to stop cruel and polluting factory farming in our area. So, why shouldn’t we kick the

CAFOs out? Aren't they opposed to all that organizations like CAFF and Slow Food stand for? Wiig helped clarify some compelling reasons for Sonoma County voters to hold out for better legislation and vote No on J.

## Listen to Small Farmers

CAFF is a leading voice for small farmers, the kinds of producers that Wiig says that the media and organizers of the Yes on J campaign have erroneously claimed are behind this initiative. The idea that small farmers back Measure J, or that the measure will lead to a thriving small farm economy is “patently false,” says Wiig. Yes on J has “animal sanctuaries, demonstration farms, and homesteaders” among their endorsers, but Wiig is concerned that there is not one small farm in support of J that a customer could buy food from as an alternative to those that J aims to shut down. In contrast, an [alliance of small farmers and sustainable ag partners](#), including CAFF, counts among their supporters several trusted members of our local food system, even including some farmers whose leadership Slow Food has celebrated in the past.

Wiig sees a lot of common ground among the alliance against J and “voters who want to see small farms thrive, just like what’s been advertised to them as being a result of Measure J.” Some opponents of Measure J wonder whether its originators could be more interested in the total cessation of animal agriculture, rather than curbing any animal mistreatment in our area. Wiig calls Measure J a “nuclear option that would eradicate at least 90% of our local poultry and egg suppliers and a huge percentage of our dairies,” leading to dire consequences even among operators whom the team at CAFF considers “really amazing leaders” in the movement for good, clean, and fair food.

It seems as though the majority of small farmers and agricultural advocates in our area have spoken, and Wiig urges us to listen.

## Support Local Food Production

Our local agricultural industry is already struggling mightily, and Measure J is poised to “take away larger local farms without creating or supporting any alternative,” says Wiig. The farmers and good food advocates Wiig works with are concerned that, were J to pass, the void left by larger local farms would inevitably be filled by similarly large farms trucking their products into our markets, increasing greenhouse gas emissions in the process and, likely, offering food governed by looser environmental and animal welfare regulations than those of our own region.

Another unintended consequence of a future with Measure J, Wiig warns, is a likely acceleration of the loss of agricultural land in Sonoma County. “Given our current economics, pasture land regulated by J is not going to be replaced by this beautiful tapestry of small-scale regenerative farms – it will be absorbed by “the only two sectors growing in land use in our area: housing and vineyards.” Wiig points out that we’re “already losing orchards, dairies, and vegetable farms rapidly in Sonoma County,” and further straining the local agricultural sector would significantly stress an already imperiled industry. The agricultural character of Sonoma County, a key part of

what makes eating local Slow Food possible, is much more precarious than many of us may realize.

## Growing the Alternative

Without support to reduce the barrier to entry for producers interested in operating the kinds of regenerative farms that Slow Foodies support, we may come to live in a Sonoma County where “all of our farms are no longer economically viable, have been regulated out of existence,” per Wiig. As written, Measure J would shutter operations that house their animals indoors for at least 45 days a year, but Wiig asserts that many trustworthy farmers practicing responsible husbandry keep their animals inside for at least that long due to inclement weather. This is just one example of how CAFF’s membership sees Measure J as ineffective in supporting the humane and sustainable small-farm economy they’d like to see in Sonoma County.

CAFF’s strategy to address concerns about the viability of operating sustainable and humane animal agriculture locally is “to grow the alternative, not to simply erase what we think could be better.” Wiig and his teammates at CAFF aim to change the system, “not through bans, but through incentives to help small farmers succeed, not just make big farms fail.” Increasing land access, subsidizing crop insurance, supporting cooperatives, and sustaining supply chain infrastructure access for small farmers are some places where we can start to do just that.

If you care about small-scale and diversified local food production, Wiig encourages you to educate yourself by talking to food producers, challenging each of us to “see if you can find a farmer who makes their living growing and selling food who supports this thing – I haven’t.” In addition to doing your own research, you can lean on CAFF’s 40+ years of experience advocating for small farmers by [signing up for their action alerts](#). They can help guide you on your journey to learn more and make an informed choice in next month’s election.

## Snail of Approval

Congratulations to [Maison Porcella](#) for being awarded the Snail of Approval for their restaurant in Windsor. This is a second category for them as they were already awarded the Snail in the artisan producer category in 2022. Maison Porcella serves delicious, traditional, authentic French cuisine with an emphasis on fresh, local, and seasonal ingredients. The menu changes weekly, depending on local availability. They continue to sell their



products at local farmers' markets as well as in a retail section inside the restaurant.



Do you know a food-related business (restaurant, bakery, caterer, farm, ranch, artisan producer) that adheres to the good, clean and fair principles of food service and production? We would like to hear about it! You can nominate local businesses for Snail of Approval by submitting our quick [Nomination Form](#). Time is running out for 2024! We accept applications from January to October annually. We are just a month away from our 2024 cut-off.

For a full listing and map of Snail of Approval-Slow Food in Sonoma County awardees, visit our [webpage](#).

## Membership

### Welcome New Chapter Members!

- Shea Bond
- Traci Bone
- Rachel Britten
- Gary and Peggy Diedrichs
- Gina Floyd
- Yolyn Goldschmidt
- Karen Haas
- Carey Hendricks
- Liza Hinman
- Tiffany Holbrook
- Karla Jones
- Erik Kokkonen
- Nora Linville
- Karen McCabe

- Molly Nix
- Cecile Petets
- Leesa Petrie
- Mariangela Sassi

## And Welcome Back!

- Jan Mettler

[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 a **Give What You Can Day** where you can join or renew for any amount on one day only. Watch your email for these promotions.

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