



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

APRIL 2025 NEWSLETTER



Food Waste - It's a Crime!



Did You Know?

In Sonoma County, food represents nearly 33% of a single-family residential waste stream. For the average family, that can add up to \$2,200 per household annually.

How Can We Reduce Food Waste at Home?

Plan Well - Tips for reducing food waste from [Save The Food](#)

Store Smart - Information on proper food storage from [Save The Food](#)

Cook Creatively - Recipes for reducing food waste from [Save The Food](#)

Preserve It - Recipes and preservation tips from the [UC Master Food Preservers](#)

Compost at Home - Composting basics from the [UC Master Gardeners of Sonoma County](#)

* Compost at the Curb – Know what goes in your green bin from [Zero Waste Sonoma](#)

An Over-Abundant Veggie Patch or Fruit Tree?

Share the Bounty - [Farm to Pantry](#), [Petaluma Bounty](#), or [Sonoma County Gleaners](#) will help collect and deliver your yard “gleanings” to nearby food pantries, senior housing, community kitchens and schools. With food assistance programs being slashed, it’s more critical than ever that healthy fruits and vegetables, that would otherwise go to waste, go to those most in need.

Help Out Our Farmers and Save an "Ugly" Spud.

It’s reported that 16% of produce never actually makes it off the farm — which means that fresh food is left behind right at its source, often due to strict cosmetic specifications from consumers. We can help salvage those imperfect fruits and vegetables by shopping at a farmers’ market.

Another way is to join a farm CSA (Consumer Supported Agriculture program) that provides a box of seasonal, fresh picked farm produce on a regular schedule. Consider signing up with one of our Snails of Approval CSA's: [FEED Coop](#), [Seven Moons Farm](#), [SingleThread Farm](#), and [Tierra Vegetables](#).

** As of January 1, 2022, people and organizations throughout California are required to separate organic material (mainly food scraps and yard waste) from other garbage. These materials emit 20% of the state's methane, a climate super pollutant, 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide. The goal is for 75% of this waste to be diverted from landfills and turned into compost or biofuel by 2025. ([SB 1383](#))*

Sonoma County North Calendar

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

April

16 Redwood Empire Food Bank Volunteer Day, Santa Rosa, 10 am

22 Independent viewing of *Common Ground* on Amazon (to be discussed on May 7) [Sign up for Amazon's Watch Party](#)

May

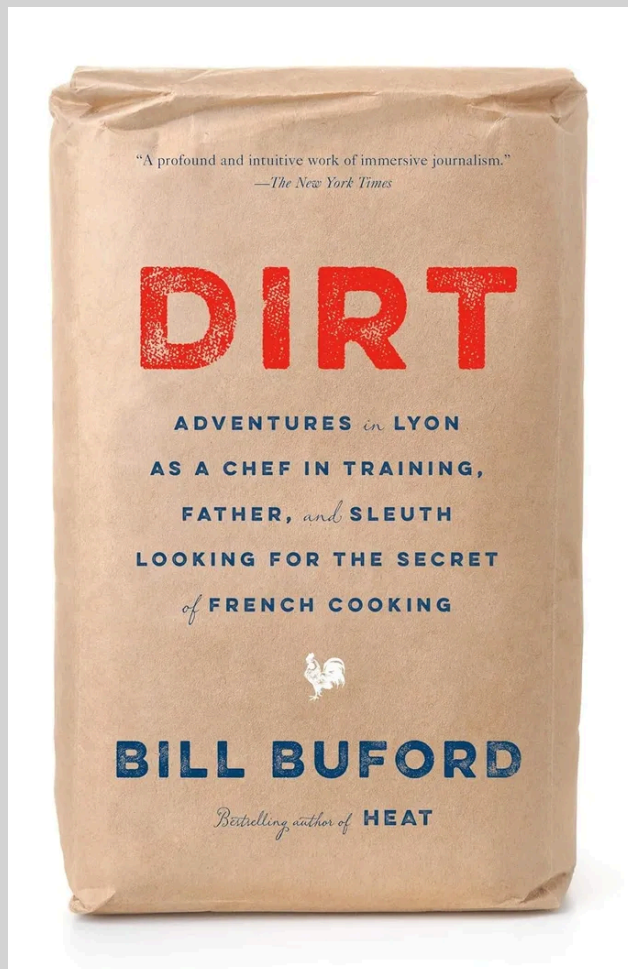
7 Slow Cinema: Discussion of *Common Ground*, Windsor, 1 pm

12 Slow Books: *Dirt: Adventures in Lyon as a Chef in Training, Father, and Sleuth Looking for the Secret of French Cooking*, by Bill Buford

July

12 Annual Summer Picnic at the Gradek Ranch, Healdsburg, 4 pm

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](#).

MAY SELECTION: *Dirt: Adventures in Lyon as a Chef in Training, Father, and Sleuth Looking for the Secret of French Cooking*, by Bill Buford

Learn more about this book [here](#).

Spotlight on Marin Coast Ranch



In each newsletter, contributor Allison Eckert spotlights a member of our Slow Food community. This month features a conversation with Mandy Schmidt, a 5th-generation rancher at [Marin Coast Ranch](#).

It Starts with the Soil

Mandy Schmidt of Marin Coast Ranch speaks with a passion that runs as deep as the roots of the perennial grasses that blanket the pastures her family has stewarded for generations. With 1,000 acres held in partnership with Marin Agricultural Land Trust, her family's commitment to

sustainable ranching is evident in every aspect of their operation. Their practices align seamlessly with the Slow Food movement's tenets of Good, Clean, and Fair food, ensuring that both their livestock and the land can thrive in harmony.

"Soil health is probably the number one priority of our day-to-day operations," Mandy explains. "Everything else comes from that, right? If our soil is healthy, our forages will thrive, which means our cattle will thrive." This philosophy drives the ranch's approach to livestock grazing, wherein ruminants and grasslands—which co-evolved over eons—can interact as nature intended. Instead of relying on artificial interventions like antibiotics and trucked-in feed, the ranch focuses on rotational grazing, maintaining robust pastures, and selectively breeding healthy bloodlines to sustain their herds.

Beyond the Beef

This mindful approach extends beyond their livestock. "We have a coho salmon habitat restoration project on our ranch, so we're very mindful of keeping our waterways as clean as possible," Mandy shares. Such conservation efforts highlight how their commitment to clean food isn't just about what's on the plate, but about the entire ecosystem that supports it. Their awareness of the interconnectedness of land, water, and livestock is what makes Marin Coast Ranch a model for regenerative agriculture.

One of the biggest challenges in modern food production, Mandy notes, is society's demand for instant gratification. "We have become so used to wanting things right now, even if they're not in season. When you're working with mother nature, you have to be patient." The push for out-of-season produce and rapid animal growth cycles has led to unsustainable farming practices. Marin Coast Ranch, however, embraces the natural cycles of birth and harvest, ensuring that their cattle are raised in accordance with the land's rhythms rather than industrial timelines that demand year-round calving and high-carb feed.

Get Curious

Treating their animals with care and respect is another of the Schmidts' core values. "From day one, 99% of the time, it's a family member that's interacting with the animals, so we know that they're being taken care of," Mandy shares. This commitment to ethical husbandry is a rare but critical practice in an industry often defined by detachment and mass production.

In an era where food labels can be misleading or vague, Mandy emphasizes the importance of transparency and curiosity to help consumers make informed choices. She particularly recommends looking for certification processes like Slow Food's, wherein evaluators visit farms "in person, to check if we're doing what we say we're doing." While her family takes pride in their Slow Food accolades, Mandy encourages consumers to engage directly with local ranchers, asking about their practices and whether they outsource any part of their business, or taking a [ranch tour](#).

How to Share in Mandy's Harvest

While their popular beef share has sold out for this year, you can still support Marin Coast Ranch by signing up for a [lamb share](#) or purchasing [beef jerky](#). Mandy notes that their success has come from “aligning with customers excited about the seasonality of local pastures,” which means many stock up on meat during harvest for the whole year ahead. If you want to invest in sustainably and ethically raised meat, consider securing a share for your family or partnering with friends and neighbors to go in on a share. Shopping from ranchers like Mandy is a tangible way to advocate for a food system that prioritizes the land, the animals, and the future of local family farms.

Marin Coast Ranch received a Snail of Approval from Slow Food in Sonoma County in 2024.

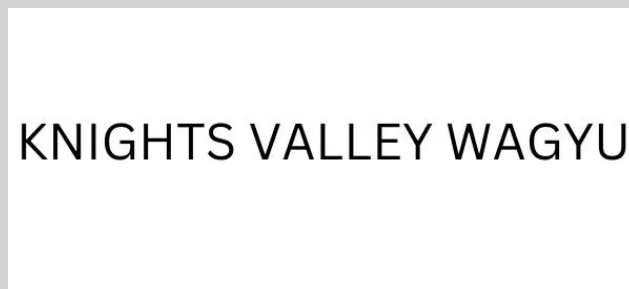
Snail of Approval

7th Annual Snail of Approval-Slow Food in Sonoma County Awards



Thank you to everyone who attended our ceremony last month honoring our Snail of Approval awardees from 2024. And a special thank you to the awardees for bringing such delicious bites to share. We appreciate them for supporting good, clean and fair food in Sonoma County.

New Awardees



We are open for applications for 2025! Congratulations to our two newest.

[Jupiter Foods](#) in Petaluma, the first grocery store in our new category of "Supporting Organizations." We honor them for supporting farmers and supplying their community with locally grown produce. On the shelves are also pantry staples that showcase “best of class” regional and

global craft foods with an emphasis on small producers. In true Slow Food fashion, they also list the farmer who grows the produce and the mileage distance from the store. This shop is a true community hub!

[Knights Valley Wagyu](#) is honored for nurturing the land in their care, which is devoted to wildlife, native plants, and cattle. The ranch-raised wagyu have 100% Japanese genetics. But their wagyu is leaner, with greater flavor development and interest, while still heralding the unique taste of Japanese wagyu. The cows forage on native grass in open pastures, which results in them leading more active, happy lives with their family groups. The environment is the ranch's top priority; no pesticides, fertilizers, or chemical agents are allowed, and water usage is minimal. For consumers, eating small amounts of thoughtfully and sustainably raised beef supports an alternative to factory farming of large animals. You can find Knights Valley wagyu at various local restaurants.

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

Bodega Red Potato Project

Seed for our heirloom Bodega Red potatoes is available now from 6 local nurseries and 1 in Davis. We suggest phoning them to be sure of their supply before you head over.

Cloverdale Home and Garden, 216 S. Cloverdale Boulevard, Cloverdale, 707.894.6654. **Harmony Farm Supply & Nursery**, 3244 Gravenstein Highway North, Sebastopol, 707.823.9125. **Harmony Farm Supply & Nursery**, 5400 Old Redwood Highway North, Penngrove, 707.665.6345. **King's Nursery**, 1212 13th Street, Santa Rosa, 707.542.4782. **Petaluma Seed Bank**, 110 Petaluma Boulevard North, Petaluma, 707.773.1336. **Redwood Barn Nursery**, 1607 5th Street, Davis, 530.758.2276. **Wright's Feed**, 10 Mill Street, Healdsburg, 707.433.3745.

Local Farmer Project

We are pleased to announce that Sonoma County North's Local Farmer/Rancher two-year grant of \$1000 has just been awarded to [Kibo Farm](#). With the funding, Kibo will improve the work flow and placement of key functions of their seed sowing and wash/pack areas; and provide development opportunities for employees. Congratulations, Kibo!

Membership

[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.

Newsletter: Carol Diaz, Allison Eckert, Kate Hendricks, Lisa Hunter



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