



Newsletter

December 2025



Regenerative Meat: A Path Toward Climate Stability and Healthier Lives



The Slow Meat Pavilion Takes Center Stage at Terra Madre Americas

Terra Madre Americas, the U.S. counterpart to the world-renown Terra Madre Salone del Gusto (Turin, Italy), made its official debut as Sacramento's largest food festival on the weekend of Sept. 26-28, and plans to return every other year - next in September 2027.

The Slow Meat Pavilion was hosted by [Roots of Change](#) (ROC), a nonprofit working to create a regenerative, healthy, and fair food system in the U.S. Michael Dimock, ROC's executive director and founder, has been involved with the Slow Food movement for more than 20 years on both the national and international boards, and we're proud to claim him as a current member of our Slow Food Sonoma County North chapter.

With the focus on regeneratively raised meat, the large space was a hive of continuous activity during the 3-day conference. The program included discussions with livestock and poultry producers, educators, chefs, and policy makers, all advocating for change. In addition, there were live butchery and cooking demonstrations. Snail awardees chef Sean McGaughey of [Quail & Condor](#) and [Troubadour](#) prepared a delicious Wagyu beef tartar and Duskie Estes of [Black Pig Meat Co.](#) put her Iron Chef skills to work keeping things rolling smoothly.

Those of us lucky to have been there left better informed and were entertained too!

What is Regenerative Meat and Why Is it Important?

As global demand for protein grows, society faces a crucial question: how can we produce nutritious food without worsening ecological degradation? One compelling answer is regenerative meat—animal products raised using regenerative agriculture. Unlike industrial livestock systems, regenerative farming restores ecosystems, improves soil health, increases biodiversity, and strengthens agricultural resilience. Through holistic grazing, diverse cover crops, and natural nutrient cycling, these systems mimic healthy wild ecosystems, producing meat that benefits both the planet and human health.

A major advantage of regenerative meat is its potential to mitigate climate change. Managed grazing encourages movement patterns similar to natural herds, stimulating grass growth and deep root systems. These roots pull carbon from the atmosphere and store it in the soil, turning grasslands into carbon sinks. Regenerative agriculture also reduces reliance on synthetic fertilizers and chemicals, whose production emits greenhouse gases.

Healthy soils retain more water, lowering irrigation needs and improving resilience to drought and extreme weather. Boosted biodiversity—from microbes to pollinators to wildlife—creates stable ecosystems better equipped to withstand climate stressors. Unlike concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), which often generate pollution, regenerative systems distribute manure naturally, enhancing soil fertility and reducing runoff. In these ways, regenerative meat offers the possibility of producing protein while healing the environment.

Health Benefits for Individuals

Regenerative meat can also support human health. Animals raised on diverse, natural forage often produce meat richer in omega-3s, conjugated linoleic acid, antioxidants, and essential minerals—nutrients associated with anti-inflammatory benefits, improved heart health, and better metabolic outcomes. Regenerative producers also avoid routine antibiotics and growth hormones, reducing consumer exposure to resistant bacteria and synthetic compounds. With greater attention to animal welfare, livestock experience less stress, which can improve meat quality, flavor, and texture.

A Holistic Solution

Regenerative meat is not a cure-all, but it offers a promising, science-backed model for responsible protein production. By improving soil health, capturing carbon, and supporting diverse ecosystems, regenerative agriculture enhances climate resilience while providing nutrient-dense, cleaner meat. As awareness grows around the connection between environmental and human well-being, regenerative meat demonstrates how food systems can nourish people while restoring the landscapes that sustain us.

Use Your Purchasing Power

Your shopping choices matter. Roots of Change has provided a [list of regenerative meat growers](#) and where to buy from them.

Sonoma County North Calendar

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

December

8 Slow Books, Planning for 2026, Windsor, 6 pm: [Sign Up Here](#)

10 Terra Madre Day Dinner, Healdsburg, 5:30-8 pm: [Tickets Here](#)

13 Holiday Marketplace, Geyserville, 12-4 pm. Sonoma County North will have a table and will be selling Bodega Red Potato caps.

January

TBD Scone-Making Class, Patisserie Angelica, Sebastopol

28 Slow Cinema, Healdsburg, 3-5 pm

February

4 Tastes & Tales of Italy, Healdsburg, 5:30-8 pm

14 Marketplace, Geyserville, 12-4 pm

25 Annual Snail of Approval Awards Ceremony, Sebastopol, 5:30-7:30 pm

December Slow Books: An Invitation

If you are interested in participating in our Slow Books discussions, please join us for an evening of appetizers and planning for 2026 at 6 pm on December 8 in Windsor. We'll vote on book selections for the year, and plan ways to accommodate everyone who would like to attend during the year. [Sign Up Here](#)

Save These Dates!

Tastes & Tales of Italy

Wednesday, February 4, 5:30-8:30 pm

The Clubhouse at Tayman Golf Course, Healdsburg

Please join us for an evening on beautiful Fitch Mountain for a Northern Italy-inspired dinner! The menu is planned by our three delegates (Samantha Ramey, Americana;

Tiffany Holbrook, Wiseacre Farm; Donna del Rey, Relish Culinary Adventures) to Terra Madre 2024, the bi-annual international Slow Food gathering in Torino, Italy.

8th Annual Snail of Approval Awards Ceremony

Wednesday, February 25, 2026, 5:30-8 pm, Sebastopol Grange

Join us as we honor our 2025 Snail of Approval award recipients who exemplify Slow Food's values of good, clean, and fair food for all. More details to come, but for now, mark your calendars for this special celebration of our vibrant food community!



Spotlight On Bryan Hohnstein, FEED Cooperative

Slow Food Award

At the 2025 Snail of Approval awards, the team behind **FEED Cooperative** took home the first ever award in the "Supporting Organizations" category, which highlights the important work of groups who strengthen our local food system without directly producing food.



This new kind of Snail was established to raise up the unsung heroes doing critical behind-the-scenes work in arenas like systems and advocacy who help our local food scene flourish. FEED's General Manager, Bryan Hohnstein, hazards to guess that "lots of our FEED customers are Slow Foodies," and also shared that the awards' audience—farmers, retailers, and cooks—reminded him of the importance of "getting busy people with the same mindset together to talk about what's working."

Food Hub

An aspect of the food system that has been receiving lots of positive attention in recent years, including at Slow Food and Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) gatherings here in Sonoma County, is the food hub. FEED Cooperative is one such food hub, an organization that aggregates diverse crops from various local farms to sell to individuals (via their **FEED Bin** program) and to wholesale buyers, such as grocery stores, restaurants, and corporate kitchens. In this way, says Hohnstein, FEED lives their mission to "create a space for farmers to thrive."

Farmer Cooperative

In many ways, FEED is a farm-centered organization. FEED has a cooperative structure, with 8 employee members (staff) and 30 **producer members** (farmers). Several distinct advantages encourage farmers to go into business with FEED. For one, "farmers come to us with their pricing; for the most part we do not negotiate with farms about the price they get for their food," explains Hohnstein. Getting the price they need for their crop and securing a reliable bulk purchasing relationship has been a "huge draw for farmers." Due to FEED's nature as a cooperative with board seats reserved for producer members, "farmers have ownership and a say of where the business is going," add Hohnstein. "They have more skin in the game."

North Bay farmers walk a thorny path toward financial sustainability. It takes community support, sensible policy, and diverse market opportunities to keep farmers afloat. By creating innovative economic opportunities for small-scale producers, FEED allows eaters to access a diverse array of hyper-local fare and, most importantly, gives farmers a partner they can rely on, season in and season out.

Community Support

As winter dawns, farmers and FEED staff alike are taking stock of the past season and working on infrastructure and planning to support next year's growth. Hohnstein reports that the FEED team is focused on "embracing the community." That means having more events this coming year to get FEED's name out there and build connections between farmers and eaters.

You can support FEED's work by buying or gifting a [FEED Bin subscription](#). And, Hohnstein encourages, don't forget to support the [local businesses who buy wholesale from FEED](#). Backing the bounty of your local fields can be as easy as taking a trip to your local grocer or pizza place.

Snail of Approval

New Snails

Click on their logos to find out more about our newest Snails.



Little Saint embodies the values of the Slow Food movement through its seasonal, authentically plant-based cuisine, where every dish tastes fresh from the farm and highlights creative, interesting flavors. Whatever isn't grown in-house is thoughtfully sourced from other local growers and producers who share their commitment to sustainability. Little Saint also brings these values to the community through partnerships and outreach, and even their bar program is inspired by the farm-driven philosophy that guides their kitchen.



Little Saint Farm's "beyond organic" practices include no-till farming, chemical-free heirloom crops, and biodiverse hedgerows and ponds that support pollinators and protect the watershed. With over 100 vegetables and 200 flowers, they nourish both soil and community—donating to local organizations, running CSA programs (coming in 2026), and offering farm workshops. Partnering with local producers and using eco-conscious methods like composting and biodegradable packaging, they grow flavorful, sustainable food for Sonoma County.



Ambix Spirits is dedicated to craft, sustainability, and community. They create fresh, delicious ciders, wines, and spirits using natural fermentation, organic practices, and fruit from more than 200 heirloom varieties grown on their Sonoma County orchard, supplemented by fruit from local growers. Their care for the land shows in no-till farming, cover crops, pollinator plantings, native gardens, composting, and repurposing materials, including sending apple pomace to local dairy farms.

We hope you will support these local businesses! You can see a full list of businesses who are making a difference in Sonoma County on our [webpage](#).

Sonoma County North Is Looking for Volunteers!

We're planning for 2026 and would love for our members to get more involved in our initiatives and activities.

Classes. We'd like to offer some hands-on classes or demonstrations. Do you have a food-related skill you'd like to share: cooking, baking, farming and agriculture? Email us at slowfoodsonomacountynorth@gmail.com with your thoughts and we'll work together to make it happen.

Social Media. We're looking for another member of our Communications Team who will do our social media (Facebook and Instagram) postings. Let us know if you'd like to work with us at slowfoodsonomacountynorth@gmail.com.

Slow Food Russian River: Buy a Local Farmer Breakfast

Join the worldwide Terra Madre Day celebration by honoring a handful of local Slow Food farmers! We will gather at Americana Santa Rosa to enjoy a wonderful Slow Food breakfast together at this Snail of Approval restaurant. [Reserve Your Space](#)

Wednesday, December 10, 2025 9am-11am
Americana Santa Rosa Restaurant
205 5th Street, Santa Rosa, CA 95401 • 707-755-1548

Membership

[Join or Renew](#)



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