

Agricultural Institute of Marin (AIM) Announces 3-Year Plan for Resilient & Racially Equitable Regional Food System

AIM's 3-year plan and its corollary, Path to Racial Equity Plan, offer a detailed, step-by-step vision for an attainable, socially-just food system.

SAN RAFAEL, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, March 5, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today the Agricultural Institute of Marin (AIM), an educational 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization serving the San Francisco Bay Area through eight Certified Farmers Markets and other food- and hunger-related social programs, announces a new, far-reaching [3-Year Strategic Plan](#) that seeks to create a model for a local and regional food system that is healthy and equitable for all. The plan and its corollary, [Path to Racial Equity Plan](#), are inextricably linked and offer a detailed vision for an attainable and socially-just food system built on ecologically intelligent, human health-centered principles.

"The COVID-19 pandemic and Black Lives Matter social movement of the past year provided us with the impetus to accelerate positive change in our food system," said Andy Naja-Riese, AIM's chief executive officer. "With this new strategic plan, we can shift the existing farmers market paradigm within the context of a healthy, equitable food system. There's serious work to be done, but AIM and our stakeholders are 100 percent committed to transformational change."

AIM seeks to 'act locally' to spark systemic change throughout the nation through its education, policy change, and community access programs that address the interrelated issues of: diet-related disease, food insecurity, loss of viable farmland and small family farms, structural racism, excess food, and carbon emissions from a globalized food system.



AIM's CEO, Andy Naja-Riese, led a diverse team of stakeholders to develop a visionary three-year strategic plan, committing the full endorsement of AIM's board and its resources to building a more equitable, resilient local and regional food system in the SF Bay Area.

The plan was developed by a diverse team of stakeholders, including AIM Board Members, executive leadership with input provided by farmers and community members over a period of nine months. It outlines four actionable goals underpinned by a cross-cutting foundational goal of racial equity. Each of the four goals has clearly-stated outcomes and key performance indicators for measurement of success. The interrelated goals in the plan were informed by these guiding principles:

1. Strengthen local and regional food systems.
2. Enhance opportunities for small to mid-size producers.
3. Promote short supply chains: from the producer to the shopper.
4. Encourage responsible production of agriculture, food, and artisan products with an emphasis on organic and regenerative practices.
5. Promote integrity and transparency in our markets.
6. Provide education on the farm, in the classroom, at the market, and online.



The COVID pandemic and BLM movement have provided us the impetus to accelerate positive change in our food system. This plan offers a detailed path forward that can serve as a model for others.”

Andy Naja-Riese

7. Support and influence policy by advocating for a healthier, equitable food system.
8. Address food-related racial and economic inequalities among producers, shoppers, and communities.
9. Promote access to healthy, nutrient-dense foods among all people
10. Commit to climate action.

Similarly, AIM’s plan includes a proposed list of aspirational market standards for the producers and communities it serves.

“As this breakthrough plan becomes reality, we hope to inspire smaller farmers – many of whom are currently disenfranchised – to push the boundaries for progressive, exciting change,” said Priscilla Lucero, co-owner of Lucero Organic Farm in Galt, Oakland’s Grand Lake Farmers Market producer, and AIM board member. “This plan isn’t window dressing. It includes specific ideas to increase opportunities to access markets, funding, and technical resources to help these food producers innovate and grow.”

About AIM

The Agricultural Institute of Marin (AIM) is an educational 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization headquartered in San Rafael, California. AIM serves 350+ farmers, food purveyors, and artisans



from 40 California counties who participate in AIM's eight Certified Farmers Markets in the cities of Hayward, Newark, Oakland, San Rafael, and San Francisco. AIM also provides hands-on and virtual education programs to thousands of children and adults, operates a farm audit program, runs a mobile market for older adults and underserved communities, curates a multi-farm produce box program, and operates CalFresh/EBT and Market Match services to create a healthier, equitable food system across the San Francisco Bay Area. AIM's mission envisions a responsible food and farming system that is environmentally beneficial, economically viable, and socially just. www.agriculturalinstitute.org

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