



BOARD STUDY / COMMUNITY EDUCATION SERIES NOTES

August 16, 2016

A Second Look at the Value of Double Up Food Bucks

Facilitated by: Jeff Hertz, Research Assistant to the Board of Directors

Topic: In this Board Study, the Board of Directors and meeting attendees will cooperatively explore La Montañita's opportunities to further develop, market, and implement the Double Up Food Bucks program. Board members will also use this as an opportunity to coordinate future efforts with the New Mexico Farmers Market Association in order to leverage future state and federal funding.

To access instructions and materials for this Board Study, visit:

<http://lamontanita.coop/directors/documents/>

Presentation and Discussion Notes

Double Up Food Bucks Update

- August and September are very important for Double Up Food Bucks (DUFB) marketing. Karolyn, marketing director, reports:
 - La Montañita's participation in the DUFB program has been featured on several news stations and TV shows.
 - Program is also being advertised on a banner on a bus that runs Central Ave.
 - Flyers in stores
 - A DUFB event is scheduled to take place at the West Side location on Saturday, August 27, 2-4pm, featuring and promoting local food; another event is planned for October.
 - Website and Facebook
 - When you call Health and Human Services to enroll in SNAP, there is an ad to listen to when placed on hold
- Early data shows DUFB is doing well. EBT customer purchases are up significantly from a year ago. It supports many of La Montañita's goals as far as supporting local farmers and increasing access to quality food.

Veteran Farmer Project Updates

- The project is going well. Local product from the Veteran Farmer Project (VFP) is being channeled into the Nob Hill and West Side stores in order to help provide more local product for DUFB shoppers. Veterans are happy for this new distribution opportunity instead of selling primarily at Farmers markets.

- This project, which helps veterans connect with and contribute to the agricultural community, is very connected and aligned with the Ends. We have six core members. Others come and go.
- We just hired a vet on staff to help build this program.
- The program is also hoping to purchase hoop houses, which has the potential to extend growing season for local produce.
- Study group in the DTL meetings is focusing on how the work of the co-op aligns with the Ends, and how future community development work can help achieve the Ends. The Ends are being distributed on cards to all the staff.
- How do we define a veteran and a farmer? This is important in identifying other grants and funding we could apply for.
 - Definitions appear in the 2014 Farm Bill, the USDA, and the IRS. Jeff has posted the Government Resource Inventory on the website as one of the materials for this Board Study.

Discussion: What is going well? How might the co-op further support local produce sales through DUFB?

- Recommendations from the New Mexico Voices for Children Policy Brief on DUFB [as presented by Jeffrey Hertz]:
 - Promote the program directly to SNAP participants through the New Mexico Human Services Department
 - Increase training and outreach to statewide Income Support Division personnel who work directly with SNAP participants
 - Create marketing materials (and translate into Spanish) that can be more widely disseminated in libraries, banks, post offices, DMV locations, child care sites, and schools
 - Conduct more outreach via cooking demos on site and other community locations
 - Work with health professionals to spread the word about the program
- The UNM location is now SNAP and EBT eligible, which is great for students.
- Do we do anything in connection with preschool and Head Start program? Not right now, but that is a good idea.
- We have the firepower of 40 years and local. The more we can do education and marketing without cost, the better. The more we have people and groups coming to us, collaborating with us, the better.
- La Montañita has been very good at doing a lot with a small budget. The kinds of community development we do, we do on a shoestring. Making big impact with little finances means we have to be strategic how we deploy our resources.
- Question: Do we have the DUFB signs in Spanish and English? Yes.
- Staff comment: Kudos to all your department has done on a shoestring budget, but I see a lot of waste in produce departments, throwing out food. I am not a produce manager, so I don't know if this is just the way things have to be.
 - Response from GM: We will be implementing a new distribution process that will give us a better handle on the amount of waste from each store. A number of factors can contribute to that waste—ordering quantities, prices. Going into September, we will be setting benchmarks to reduce waste.

- It is normal to have some waste because a portion of the case of produce is already bad. But we want the best and freshest possible, so the waste is less.
- Member-owner criticizes the co-op for changing vendors. GM response: We have not changed vendors. We are ordering from the same places.
- We are feeding the chickens at the VFP with the compost from the West Side store.
- There is not much winter farmers' market activity in Albuquerque. That is part of why La Montañita's participation in the DUFB program is so important, because it ensures year-round access to local produce.
- This fall, we should see a bumper crop in apples. Other than that, local farmers have had a tough year, challenged by weather and insects. For the apple bumper crop, the CDC is working with growers on a sizing method so that we will have the premium size in our stores. And to achieve as much as possible full utilization of the apple product, apples that get called out will go to cider-makers.
- Produce deflation in 2016 has been the highest of the past 25 years.
- La Montañita is offering a scholarship for a New Mexico student at UNM in the Sustainability program—students qualify in a number of ways including based on need. It is called the La Montañita Co-op Marshall Kovitz Memorial Scholarship.

Next Board Study: Michelle Bloodworth from Apex (apexeval.org) will lead the Board Study focused on data collection and measuring hard-to-measure outcomes.