Roots of Change

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October 22, 2026
Volume 12, Issue 10

PULSE OF THE FOOD MOVEMENT

A Pivotal Moment for Food and Agriculture

Greetings!



With the midterm elections less that two weeks away and early voting underway in many communities, the decisions that follow the elections will have profound implications for the future of food and agriculture in America. At a time when food affordability is a pressing concern for families and farmers face growing economic and environmental challenges, the need for a healthier, more affordable, and resilient food system has never been clearer. That is why ROC continues to support programs like **Market Match** and **GusNIP** that make healthy food more affordable, direct purchasing from small and midsized farms through programs like the **Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program**, and supporting California's regenerative farmers and ranchers.

Whatever the election outcomes, progress will depend on bringing people across the political spectrum together to advance practical solutions that strengthen local economies and unite rural and urban communities around shared priorities.

As we look ahead, listen to our latest **Flipping the Table podcast conversation with Jenny Lester Moffitt, a fifth-generation California farmer and former USDA Under Secretary, who shares her perspective on the challenges and opportunities shaping the future of American agriculture**. See links below.

Image: geralt, Pixabey

In this PULSE you will find:

- **Flipping the Table Podcast: A Conversation with Jenny Lester Moffitt on the Future of Agriculture**
- **California Farm to School Summit - Report**
- **Northfork California Meat Summit - Report**

- **Blog Post by ROC team member Dalia Hernandez: Food, Heritage, and the Future to Build at Terra Madre, Italy**
- **Film screenings: "World Without Cows" in Modesto; "Groundswell" and "Land of Canaan" in Berkeley**
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Flipping the Table Podcast



A Conversation with Jenny Lester Moffitt on the Future of Agriculture

The midterms are fast approaching, there's still no farm bill, and farm country is in crisis.

We asked someone who's worked on both sides of the farm gate for her perspective on this moment.

Jenny Lester Moffitt, a 5th generation California farmer, former USDA Under Secretary, and former Deputy Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, shares the challenges and opportunities in our food systems, and a path forward to a brighter future for America's farmers, ranchers and rural communities.

Listen on Apple Podcasts | Listen on Spotify | Listen on YouTube

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California Farm to School Summit

ROC attended last week's **California Farm to School Summit** at **Soil Born Farms** in Rancho Cordova to celebrate the investment of ongoing funds for the Farm to School program in the state budget which we supported. Governor Gavin Newsom signed **SB 172** into law last July permanently establishing and funding **California's Farm to School Program**.

Championed by **First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom**, the program which is the largest in the nation, supports local farmers, strengthens regional food systems, and expands nutrition education in classrooms. The event was co-hosted by the First Partner in partnership with the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), Center for Ecoliteracy, Alice Waters Institute, National Farm to School Network, Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation, TomKat Foundation, and the Henry Ford.

Panelists discussed how California serves as a model for the nation, how to get from ultraprocessed to fresh school meals by connecting small, climate-smart farms with school meal programs, and why school meals matter: **Nearly 1 in 3 California families with children experience food insecurity and food served during the school day**

is the leading source of healthy food for U.S. children.

The numbers speak for themselves:

- Approximately **3.5 billion free school meals** served.
- **$86 million invested through the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program.**
- **375 Farm to School projects funded, benefiting 4.2 million California public school students.**
- **80% of Farm to School Incubator grantees are Title I schools.**
- **100% of farmer grantees are small, mid-sized or socially and economically disadvantaged producers.**
- Every **$1** invested through Farm to School farmer grants generates an estimated **$2.10 in economic activity.**

Source: ***www.gov.ca.gov***. *For additional info* ***click here***.









North Fork California Meat Summit

Last week, Michael and Coco drove to Siskiyou County, with its fall-browned mountains and soft grassy irrigated plains, to attend the first **North Fork California Meat Summit**. Ranchers and other participants from throughout the northern valley came together for two days in the local **Dowling Ranch** barn and at the new Siskiyou Economic Development Council Offices to have honest conversations about the external pressures on ranching, how to better tell your brand story, the realities of a Co-op model, and the possibilities in diversifying a ranch's operations.

The first morning began with a tour of the **Marble Mountain Meats** processing facility, a USDA-certified location used by several ranchers in the region, and a talk by **Jenner Family Beef** on growing a direct-to-consumer business after over 150 years in the traditional cattle market. Warmed up by coffee, good company, and space heaters, participants then opened up during a business planning talk about the challenges they face with water access, diesel prices, and affordability as input costs keep creeping up. Mary and Brian Heffernan of **Five Marys Ranch** glowed in the afternoon light as they got real about how they built their brand box by box, relying on and honing their own abilities to market and tell their story. Michael and Coco participated in the evening trade show and the next morning's presentations to introduce the **Growing GRASS** project and promote **Terra Madre 2027** where ROC will have a big presence again. The group was dynamic and eager to listen and learn. Processors in the room appreciated the focus on their challenges in the middle of the supply chain, as well as the challenges producers face. It was an opportunity for different parts of the supply chain to open up.









Blog Post: Food, Heritage, and the Future to Build at Terra Madre, Italy



By ROC team member Dalia Hernandez

Last month, I joined the Roots of Change team at Terra Madre Salone del Gusto in Torino, Italy. Organized by Slow Food, Terra Madre is a biennial international gathering dedicated to food that mixes conference, festival, and market, all into one. Taking place over four days, it is a celebration of taste, culinary tradition, and food as cultural heritage. **Read the full blog post.**

Film Screenings in Modesto and Berkeley

"World Without Cows" Screening in Modesto, Oct 23 - Nov 7

World Without Cows follows award-winning journalists Michelle Michael and Brandon Whitworth across five years and twenty-two countries, from the cattle-crowded streets of India to the drought-worn grasslands of Kenya, in pursuit of a question most would assume is already

settled: **What role should cows play in the future of our food, our communities, and our planet?**



The film prompts debate and controversy because it seeks to balance the views of advocates of grassfed regenerative ranching with those who believe that Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) are a better system. ROC feels that this contrast of views creates an opportunity for a needed dialogue that could open hearts and minds to accelerated change for the better.

Click HERE for Info & Tickets

New Environmental Film Series in Berkeley this Fall & Winter

A Bioneers/360 Degrees Media/Brower Center Film Series at the David Brower Center in Berkeley.

The first two confirmed screenings for this fall are:



Wednesday, November 11th, 7pm:
Groundswell

Groundswell shares inspiring stories of



Wednesday, December 2nd, 7pm:
Land of Canaan

how regenerative approaches can rebuild soil health, draw carbon from the atmosphere, revive biodiversity, improve the nutritional value of our food, strengthen local economies and improve the lives of small farmers. The film is accompanied by an impact campaign, OneBillionAcres.org, dedicated to catalyzing the global transition to certified regenerative agriculture.

Directed by Rebecca and Josh Tickell; narrated by Demi Moore and featuring Woody Harrelson.

Watch the trailer here.

This extraordinary, truly surprising documentary follows the trajectory of Nasser Abufarha, the son of a watermelon farmer, who returned from the USA to his farming village in the West Bank in 2003 to discover that local farmers were abandoning farming and their ancient olive groves.

Note: This evening will include a question and answer period after the screening with some of the team associated with the film, and there will be a displays and tastings of the olive oils and other products made by the Palestinian farmers showcased in the film.

Directed by Maggie Lemere.

Watch the trailer here.

Click HERE for Info & Tickets

Regenerative Meat - Purchase Guide



As part of our Regenerative Meat project, we developed a **portal** that features a list of **NorCal regenerative meat brands and butcheries**. Please add your brand/butchery via **this link** if you're not already on the list, and please share with us if you know of other brands/butcheries that should to be added to the list. Our ally, the Good Meat Project, also has a very useful guide for **nationwide options**.

Regenerative Meat Purchase Guide

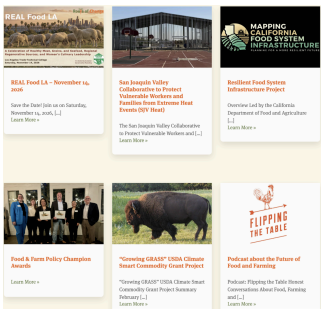
We need your help to continue making positive changes in the California Food System - your donation is very much appreciated!
Any amount helps us continue to build a healthy, resilient and peaceful future. THANK YOU!

DONATE

Thank you for your support of our work!

Doris Meier
Editor of the PULSE
Roots of Change

Projects



Policy



Podcast

FLIPPING THE TABLE

Roots of Change

A program of the **Public Health Institute**

Roots of Change | 1950 Franklin Street Suite 600 | Oakland, CA 94612 US

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