

SUMMARY OF OUTREACH TO ARCATA FOOD BUSINESSES

February 28, 2022

Prepared for: **The City of Arcata**

Prepared by: **Zero Waste Humboldt &
Juliette P. Bohn Consulting**

The following document summarizes the results of the outreach conducted by the Zero Waste Humboldt (ZWH) team in January / February 2022. The purpose of the Outreach was to assist the City of Arcata with implementation of tasks #13, #15, #19, and #25 as part of a CalRecycle "Food Waste Prevention and Rescue Program" grant workplan. The project work consisted of conducting direct outreach to Arcata food businesses in order to provide owners / managers with information and resources to help to prevent food waste, donate edible food, and compost to the extent feasible. Results of this effort are presented in the following three categories: Outcomes/Deliverables, Key Observations, and Consultant's Recommendations.

The ZWH team contacted all City of Arcata SB 1383 Tier 1 and Tier 2 regulated entities, as well as all food businesses within the AB 1826 compliance threshold. All businesses were initially contacted by phone to set up a site visit. Each site visit (in-person outreach) consisted of meeting with the business owner/manager to discuss current food waste prevention and reduction options available, and assess current food waste reduction efforts employed (benchmarking). Some business owners preferred to receive the outreach by phone followed up with additional information delivered via email or in-person packet drop-off.

The outreach packets provided to each business contained the following:

- A copy of the City of Arcata letter for those businesses that did not recall having received it
- 1-page food waste reduction Information Sheet with example edible food donation tracking sheet included on the back side
- Refrigerator magnet containing:
 1. Contact information for all edible food recovery organizations including what types of food they accept
 2. Contact information for the three current food scrap composting options, and
 3. Recology's Recycling Guidelines

The outreach methods utilized for each food business type is summarized below.

Entity Type	# Regulated Entities Under SB 1383 and/or AB 1826	Method of Outreach			
		# In-person outreach w/ packet	# By phone w/ packet drop-off or emailed packet	# Outreach packet drop-off only	# Declined to participate in any form
GROCERY STORES	6	6	-	-	-
WHOLESALE FOOD VENDORS	7	7	-	-	-
RESTAURANTS	52	29	6	15	2
LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES	12	5	7	-	-
HEALTH FACILITIES	1	1	-	-	-
HOTELS	4	3	1	-	-
Outreach to Other Food Businesses					
FOOD EVENT PLANNERS & CATERERS	18	3	15	-	-
OTHER NON-REGULATED FOOD BUSINESSES ¹	2	1	1	-	-
TOTAL	102	55	30	15	2

In total, 54% of all outreach was conducted in-person, 83% of attempted outreach was achieved, and 98% of targeted food businesses received outreach materials. Two businesses were contacted using the Spanish language, and both were provided outreach materials in Spanish and English.

¹ In-person outreach was provided to one additional food producer and one additional restaurant that do not fall under either waste reduction regulation.

The following section contains a summary of information gathered while conducting outreach with Arcata food businesses.

GROCERY STORES

The City of Arcata has six (6) grocery stores and no supermarkets. All grocery store outreach was conducted in-person.

- All six Arcata grocery stores are both SB 1383 Tier 1 entities and AB 1826 regulated entities.
- All six grocery stores are currently donating food multiple times per week to Food for People, Arcata House, or the Eureka Rescue Mission.
- Most grocery stores (5/6) currently have farmers picking up food scraps to feed pigs.
- One (1) grocery store - the North Coast Co-Op operates an on-site compost system.
- All six grocery stores have thin film plastic back-hauled to a distributor, all stores have cardboard collection/backhaul, and most (5/6) have mixed recycling collection.

WHOLESALE FOOD VENDORS

The ZWH team identified seven (7) Wholesale Food Vendors operating in the City of Arcata². All Wholesale Food Vendor outreach was conducted in-person. The ZWH team conducted additional in-person outreach with one wholesale beverage producer.

- Four (4) wholesale food vendors are regulated under both SB 1383 Tier 1 and AB 1826, while three (3) are regulated under SB 1383 Tier 1 only.
- Arcata has several (~13) smaller food and beverage manufacturers that may technically qualify for SB 1383 compliance, but would likely also qualify for a De Minimis waiver due to intermittent production runs and minimal food waste generation.
 - Further investigation is needed to determine the SB 1383 Wholesale Food Vendor compliance status of the smaller food producers such as those that rent space at the City's Foodworks Culinary Center.
- Three out of seven (3/7) donate food to employees, Food for People, and the Arcata House.
 - Donated food consists of: mis-baked and unsold Brio bread, mis-labeled or mis-packaged Cypress Grove Chevre cheese, and Tofu Shop tofu that is nearing the use by date or has damaged packaging.
- Four of seven (4/7) vendors do not make edible food donations.
 - Lost Coast Roast and Grain Girls do not have food to donate.
 - Desserts on Us does not have food to donate as distributors manage the rotation of dated product.
 - Beck's donates unsold items directly to employees or people in the building.
- Four out of seven (4/7) have existing arrangements for food scrap collection

² Arcata does not have any food distributors.

- Lost Coast Roast works with the Local Worm Guy.
- Brio sells non-donatable bread to 4 different pig farmers.
- Past date tofu and pulp waste known as Okara is collected by 6 different farmers.
 - Tofu production waste is fed to pigs, cattle, chickens, goats, and horses
- Beck's bakery works with a local farmer to provide animal food, and contracts with Full Cycle Compost for food waste composting.
- Grain Girls has an on-site composting system.
- Cypress Grove Chevre and Desserts on Us do not feed product residuals to animals due to regulatory challenges associated with feeding cheese waste to pigs, and the high chocolate content of the cookies being unhealthful for animals (respectively).
 - Both food vendors committed to investigate working with local composters to manage these materials.
- All wholesale food vendors are recycling all recyclable materials.

RESTAURANTS

The City of Arcata has sixty-six (66) restaurants and several (~15) smaller specialty food businesses and food trucks. Calls were made to fifty-three (53) restaurants that were initially identified to fall under one or both State regulatory thresholds to set up site visits. The ZWH team was able to meet with thirty-six (36) restaurant owners and key managers. Another fifteen (15) information packets were dropped off to restaurant owners / managers.

- Three (3) restaurants fall within both the SB 1383 Tier 2 and the AB 1826 compliance thresholds³. Forty-nine (49) restaurants fall within the AB 1826 compliance threshold only.
- Only three (3) restaurants make donations to food recovery organizations.
 - Two make periodic donations and one makes monthly/bi-monthly donations.
- Three (3) restaurants used to make edible food donations to churches and the Eureka Rescue Mission but shut down donation operations due to the Covid-19.
- Three (3) stated an interest in making occasional food donations now that they have the food recovery organization contact information.
 - One noted occasionally having extra bread, another noted they could make donations when they shut down the restaurant each winter, and a third will re-establish regular food donations once the dining room re-opens.
- The majority of Arcata restaurants contacted reported that they do not make any food donations for the following reasons:
 - Twelve (12) restaurants reported that they give extra food to employees, tenants, or family, and seven (7) reported giving extra food directly to homeless people.
 - Sixteen (16) restaurants reported no extra food as they make all food to order.

³ SB 1383 Tier 2 status requires City verification of total facility area (ft²).

- Nine (9) stated they have no donatable food because they are mindful of how much to purchase and prepare due to their many years in operation.
- Three (3) cited that food safety codes prevent them from donating food that has been out for more than 4 hours (e.g., pre-made pizza and hamburgers).
- Two (2) noted that they repurpose certain leftovers to prevent food wastage.
- Eight (8) restaurants participate in some form of composting (4) or feeding animals (4).
- Twenty-eight (28) restaurants reported they do not have any collection of food scraps.
 - The reasons cited are: very small amounts of food scraps, use scraps to make broth, space constraints, or concerns about health and safety related to rats or people going through the food scrap bins.
 - Four (4) restaurants noted they used to participate in food scraps collection, but stopped due to inconsistent collection on the part of the composter or farmer.
 - Three (3) will consider composting now that they have contact information.
- Thirty-five (35) restaurants are known to be source-separating both mixed recyclables and cardboard.
- Nine (9) restaurants have mixed recycling services only.
- Six (6) have cardboard recycling services only.
- Remaining restaurant waste that is disposed mainly consists of: customer plate scrapings, food-soiled paper, paper liners, waxed cardboard, paper towels, and non-recyclable plastics.

LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES

There are twelve (12) local education agencies in Arcata. Cal Poly Humboldt is not included in this category as it is a Non-Local Entity that is not regulated by the City of Arcata under SB 1383.

Outreach to five (5) of the largest local schools was conducted in person, the remaining seven (7) were reached by phone followed with an email and/or drop-off of outreach materials.

- Six (6) schools fall within both the SB 1383 Tier 2 and AB 1826 compliance thresholds.
 - Seven out of twelve (7/12) schools have an onsite kitchen where food is prepared, the remaining five (5) schools serve food that is prepared off-site.
- Six (6) schools fall within the SB 1383 Tier 2 compliance threshold only.
- Two (2) schools reported occasionally making donations to food recovery organizations.
- Four (4) schools reported making direct donations of extra food to staff or families in need.
- All schools have a share table where uneaten food can be placed / taken by hungry students.
- Six (6) schools have food waste collected for off-site composting or animal feed.
- One (1) school has a compost system on-site, one (1) school has an on-site worm bin.
- Two (2) schools that compost food scraps also provide food to local farmers to feed chickens.
- All schools have mixed-recycling collection services, and four (4) have additional cardboard collection services.

HEALTH FACILITIES

Mad River Community Hospital (MRCH), Arcata's largest health facility, is a stellar waste reducer. MRH outreach was conducted via in-person site visit and two phone conversations.

- MRCH is regulated under AB 1826 only.
- Although not regulated under SB 1383 (due to the facility having fewer than 100 beds) MRCH has a shelf in their walk-in refrigerator dedicated to edible food donation storage.
 - Food for People collects donations every Friday.
 - MRCH currently receives records of pounds donated per year from Food for People.
- MRCH uses fifteen (15) 5-gallon buckets to collect and compost food preparation scraps at their on-site farm. The farm manager selects what is wanted for the farm compost, and sets the remaining kitchen scrap buckets out for collection by Tule Fog Farm to feed pigs.
- The majority of the remaining waste at MRCH is food waste which cannot be composted at their onsite farm due to regulations preventing cross-contamination at health facilities.
 - MRCH is looking for a solution to their food waste that does not conflict with cross-contamination laws.
 - MRCH committed to investigate the Co-Op's on-site compost system to see if it is suitable to meet cross-contamination prevention requirements.

HOTELS

There are ten (10) hotels located in Arcata, but only four (4) serve food. None of the hotels are regulated under SB 1383 (due to having less than 200 rooms), however, all are regulated under AB 1826⁴. Only those hotels that serve food were targeted for outreach; all outreach was conducted in-person.

- All hotels contacted serve a small guest breakfast only.
- None of the hotels reported making food donations.
- Two (2) hotels have, on rare occasion, donated extra food to food recovery organizations.
- One (1) hotel gives leftover food to staff.
- None of the hotels have food scraps collection as there is minimal food preparation on-site.
- Three (3) hotels have mixed recycling collection, and all hotels have cardboard collection service.

⁴ AB 1826 includes yard trimmings which are assumed to be hauled off from hotel premises by contracted landscaping companies and composted at the Wes Green composting facility.

FOOD EVENT PLANNERS & CATERERS

Arcata has four (4) high-visibility larger annual events and a total of fourteen (14) catering businesses are located in, or provide catering services to, the Arcata area. These entities were included in the outreach effort to satisfy the grant workplan goal of reaching out to "food event planners". ZWH met with two (2) local festival planners, and contacted two (2) by phone. ZWH met with one (1) caterer in-person, one (1) by phone, and 12 via email with outreach packet attached.

- Of the largest, most long-running events, two (2) were identified to meet the 2,000 persons per day threshold for SB 1383 compliance (Oysterfest and North Country Fair).
- All four (4) event planners received emailed and dropped-off outreach packets.
- All caterers were provided a digital version of the table of options for donating / composting food that is not consumed during events.
 - This information can be attached with email billing or other correspondence.

OUTCOMES / DELIVERABLES

1. List of businesses (16) that pledged to expand current food waste reduction practices or adopt new practices to reduce food waste in their operations as a result of the outreach efforts (Attachment A). This pledge was designed to capture the intent of businesses to use the food rescue organization contact information to donate extra food in the future, and to investigate food waste composting.
 - It should be noted that most (9/11) Tier 1 businesses are already making regular food donations as noted in the 2021 Edible Food Recovery Assessment. Setting up "new food donor participants" from the remaining Tier 2 and AB 1826 businesses was not practical during the outreach timeframe as most have only occasional extra food to donate, are already donating directly to family members & staff, or to people/families in need.
2. List showing food generators who were contacted, summary of contact methods and key outcomes from outreach (MS Excel workbook: Mater List of Arcata Food Generators with Outreach Record). This list identifies Arcata food generators that fall within SB 1383 and/or AB 1826 thresholds.
3. The ZWH team identified owners and managers of grocery stores, wholesale food vendors, local education agencies, health facilities, hotels, and food event planners (caterers & larger annual events) to participate in the outreach program (Task #13). The ZWH team directly spoke with thirty-seven (37) business owners / managers / school officials / event planners / caterers to provide an overview of the current food waste prevention, edible food donation, and composting / animal feed options. Another twelve (12) caterers received a detailed email with outreach materials. Waste audits were offered as part of the outreach meetings, but due to the concurrent timing with the highly contagious Omicron variant, and associated ongoing labor shortages, most businesses were uninterested in having extra people in their kitchens, or adding to staff time constraints. One waste audit of a grocery store is scheduled for early March 2022.

Businesses were asked about current donation and food waste reduction efforts in order to benchmark current practices. As most businesses had no records of donations, businesses were provided with an example for tracking donated edible food for future use. Where known, quantities of donated food and frequency of donations are noted in the Master List. The outreach effort also gathered benchmark information on the number of businesses with existing food waste reduction practices, and the methods employed.

4. Initiated communications between the City of Arcata and SB 1383 and AB 1826 regulated food businesses and institutions to ensure consistency of implementation of food donation procedures (Task #15). This was accomplished through providing in-person guidance on food donation procedures during the scheduled appointments. Basics covered: use of contact

information provided on fridge magnet (and Information Sheet), who to call for hot prepared food donations, how to store donatable food, when to expect collection, and how to keep donation records.

5. The ZWH team contacted fifty-three (53) City of Arcata restaurants and directly met with thirty-six (36) owners and managers to provide an overview of the current food waste prevention, edible food donation, and composting / animal feed options available (Task #19). Waste audits, manager trainings, and employee trainings were offered as part of the outreach meetings, but due to the concurrent timing with the highly contagious Omicron variant, and associated ongoing labor shortages, businesses were uninterested in having extra people in their kitchens, or adding to staff time constraints.

Restaurants were asked about current donation and food waste reduction efforts in order to benchmark current practices. As most businesses had no records of donations, businesses were provided with an example for tracking donated edible food for future use. Where known, quantities of donated food and frequency of donations are noted in the Master List. The outreach effort also gathered benchmark information on the number of businesses with existing food waste reduction practices, and the methods employed.

6. Created three (3) videos and captured multiple photographs to be used for social media recognition of businesses with measurable success in preventing food waste and participation in food rescue (Task #25). One additional recognition video featuring Mad River Community Hospital is scheduled for early June when the on-site garden is in full production. These videos will be posted to the Zero Waste Humboldt website and other social media platforms to serve as business-to-business inspiration.
7. All food businesses received a 1/4-page sized refrigerator magnet containing a chart of food rescue organization contact information and the types of foods they accept, as well as the contact information for the three (3) current food waste composting services available in Arcata. This will be a visible, permanent resource for businesses / kitchen staff to more easily donate extra food.
8. All food businesses received information on the food waste reduction hierarchy, and food waste prevention tips.
9. Businesses were provided information on food scrap collection for animal food, and directed to the ZWH website for updated contact information for farmers that will take food scraps.
10. All businesses were provided with Recology's recycling guidelines to inform them on the variety of materials that can be recycled.
11. Identification of farmers raising pigs, chickens, or goats that are interested in collecting food scraps from Arcata businesses.

12. Development of baseline waste and recycling information for all Arcata food businesses. This list can be used to identify businesses with potential for increased waste reduction through food waste prevention, donation, composting, or by increasing mixed recycling services.
13. Extended outreach realized:
 - Humboldt County Public Health, Environmental Health Department agreed to keep the 1-page Information Sheet and refrigerator magnet charts on hand for visits to Arcata food businesses.
 - The January 2022 Arcata Chamber of Commerce newsletter (distributed to all members) carried a short announcement about this outreach project.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- Most of the businesses were very receptive to the information and were very cooperative. We met with fifty-four (54) businesses that dedicated their time to meet with us.
- Many food businesses are using pig/animal farm collection and mentioned the need for consistency in collection. Some businesses had stopped due to inconsistent collection.
 - This speaks for the need to site a local compost facility that is inclusive of current animal food / compost collection services.
- Local composting services can take food soiled paper (pizza boxes, napkins, paper towels, etc.), which pig/animal farmers don't take. This is a key point for future outreach.
- As a supplemental local solution, the City could consider seeking grants to provide on-site compost systems for interested businesses and schools.
- Only four (4) out of eighteen (18) farmers listed to have pigs/chickens/goats are willing to collect food scraps from businesses. Reasons cited for not collecting business food scraps are regimented animal diets, and the labor required to regularly collect food scraps.
- Stellar waste reducing businesses generally have equal or lesser volume of garbage service as compared to recycling + composting services.
 - One example is Oriental Buffet which has 2yd³ weekly garbage service, 3.5 yd³ weekly cardboard + mixed recycling collection in addition to diverting food scraps to a local farm and making food donations (when they return to full dine-in operation).
- Stellar waste reducing businesses identified through the outreach include: Los Bagels, Tofu Shop, North Coast Co-Op, Wildberries Marketplace, Wildflower Café, Safeway, Oriental Buffet, Cafe Brio, Slice of Humboldt Pie, Don's Donuts, The Kitchen, Comfort Inn, and Mad River Community Hospital.

- Data showing the relative quantities of waste and recycling services can be a good indicator of which businesses can further reduce waste through edible food donations, food waste composting / donations to farms and/or increasing mixed recyclable material collections.
 - Opportunities to further reduce waste exist where businesses are recycling only cardboard or have a > 1:1 ratio of trash to recycling collection capacity.
- Two (2) grocery stores have significantly more waste than comparatively-sized stores. Although these stores have recycling services and make regular donations, their waste stream remains large. A waste audit would be useful to identify opportunities to increase recycling or food donations / composting (one will be conducted in early March 2022).
- Many of Arcata’s best known food manufacturers are smaller food producers such as those that rent space at the Foodworks Culinary Center. These entities did not show up on the City-provided business lists nor on the Recology business lists. Although these businesses were not included in the scope of this outreach, these smaller food producers hold the potential to help the City reduce additional food waste and provide a rich, clean source of organic material for animal feed and soil enrichment.
- This year, all schools offered free prepared lunches to all students through a government program. The unintended consequence has been a dramatic increase in food waste. If students don’t like the meal, they dump the whole lunch – plastic and all – in the trash. One principal described this as a serious disconnect between two different legislative goals.
- The COVID-caused disruption in Arcata schools has negatively affected long-running waste reduction systems/programs/policies.
 - Staff at larger schools noted that food waste and contamination levels in recycling bins have increased.
 - Some staff noted that in order to meaningfully reduce waste in schools, edible food recovery, recycling, and composting separation systems must be institutionalized into each school's operations, and must include students, teachers, administrators, and custodial staff - not simply rely on one or two champions among the staff.
- Although Cal Poly Humboldt is not a regulated by the City under SB1383, it must be noted that the university has recently experienced a decline in its on-site food rescue programs due to changes in policies as part of a new contract for dining services on the campus.

CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recommend the City of Arcata follow-up with businesses on the following:
 - Remind businesses of protections under the Good Samaritan Law.
 - Some businesses mentioned they had to get rid of food due to Health Department requirements; suggest refrigerating/freezing pizzas, burgers, and other pre-made food items before 4-hour mark for donation pick-up.
 - Convey that even small amounts of edible food add up and can feed people.
2. Develop email communication platform with food business owners to more quickly and regularly communicate SB 1383 and AB 1826 updates.
 - i.e., City working regionally to address infrastructure needs, ordinance will be adopted, long term goal for a compost site, eventual enforcement timeline etc.
3. Coordinate City outreach efforts with those planned by local compost service providers to avoid overlap and/or mixed messaging.
4. Encourage businesses to increase or start recycling collection and “right-size” garbage service.
 - Make it clear to businesses that they that they don't have to keep the same size garbage can - they can save money by increasing recyclable material recovery and down-sizing.
5. Conduct outreach to smaller food manufacturers, investigate SB 1383 regulatory status.
6. Revitalize composting services for food producers at the Foodworks Culinary Center.
7. As the host city for the university, engage the new dining services contractor for Cal Poly Humboldt to discuss the City's Zero Waste Action Plan and how partnering on SB1383 and other State laws supports both entity's climate goals.
8. Work with schools to fund and integrate enhanced materials management into their operations.
 - Note: ZWH has acquired grant funding to work with some Arcata schools.
9. Finalize garbage and recycling collection services dataset within the Arcata Master List to identify businesses that are good candidates for additional outreach / assistance, and track waste reduction progress through SB 1383 and AB 1826 compliance.
10. Query City event permits and event waste report records to obtain historic daily attendance records and and waste generation for all events held in Arcata. Determine which events serve more than 2,000 people per day and add these to the list SB 1383 "Large Events".

ATTACHMENT A

The following is a list of sixteen (16) businesses that pledged to expand current food waste reduction practices or adopt new practices to reduce food waste in their operations as a result of the outreach efforts by the Zero Waste Humboldt team.

1. North Coast Co-Op
2. Brio Breadworks
3. Cypress Grove Chevre
4. Tofu Shop
5. Round Table Pizza
6. Slice of Humboldt Pie
7. Japhy's
8. Stars
9. Humbrews
10. Wildflower Cafe
11. Carl's Jr.
12. Ultimate Yogurt
13. Riptide Cafe
14. Domino's Pizza
15. Sammy's BBQ
16. Los Bagels