PACIFIC COAST FARMERS' MARKET ASSOCIATION

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WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP AT PCFMA

PCFMA is proud to be a diverse workplace, with our staff representing as many ages, cultural backgrounds, and personal identities as the markets we operate. We are fortunate to have built a strong team with women working at every level of the organization, from market managers and marketing/promotions staff to departmental directors, regional managers, and administration. In fact, as of 2024, our leadership team is comprised mostly of women! In honor of **Women's History Month** and **International Women's Day on March 8th**, we'd like to highlight the dedication, passion, and hard work of the women in positions of leadership here, and their desire to support and promote farmers' markets and the livelihoods of the farmers who participate in them, as well as supporting other staff members here at PCFMA.

These women come to us from a variety of different backgrounds and life endeavors. Their world of experience gives the association a broad outlook while their collective wisdom enriches our Association and the community at large in countless ways.

Elisabeth Garon, Director of Operations
She began working at PCFMA as a Market Manager in 2015. A little less than a year later, Lis was promoted to Operations Coordinator. Her responsibilities shifted to developing the online producer application and creating processes within PCFMA to aid in building PCFMA's markets. Then in 2020, she was promoted to

Regional Manager for the Contra Costa/Solano area. She left us to pursue her passions and fill a leadership position at the Alameda Food Bank, ensuring thousands of families had access to an ample food supply. She returned to the PCFMA with fresh eyes and was offered the position of Director of Operations at the beginning of 2024. With her experience and passion for this industry, we are confident she will keep us all organized and ready for the years ahead.

Maureen Hovda, Director of Finance and Administration
Maureen began working for PCFMA in February of 2010 as the Finance Manager before rising to the position of Director of Finance and Administration in 2015. In Maureen's role, she is responsible for managing the organization's financial position and being the head of Human Resources. She says, "I am passionate about supporting PCFMA's staff and ensuring everyone that works for PCFMA is safe. I feel the same way about the women producers that sell in PCFMA markets." she adds, "My favorite part of my work is when I see staff that are passionate about their positions and are excited about what they do. I work hard to ensure that PCFMA staff are all treated fairly and equitably. That is by far my most important goal in my role at PCFMA."

Cheyenne Erickson, Regional Manager, Northern
A new arrival to PCFMA, Cheyenne's agricultural journey began in her youth on her family's small farm in Northern California, nurturing her love for farming by raising animals through 4-H and FFA. During summers, she sold peaches at farmers' markets alongside her grandparents, fostering her strong ties to the farming community. Cheyenne earned her bachelor's degree in agriculture communications from Texas A&M University. Following her studies, she relocated to the Bay Area, where she managed farmers' markets for over three years. Currently, she serves as the President of the Contra Costa County Farm Bureau and volunteers as the coach for the Brentwood FFA Floral team.

Brooke Souza, Regional Manager, Southern
Another new addition to our roster, Brooke supervises markets in the South Bay and lower peninsula area. Farmers markets are one of her biggest passions in life. She has ten years of experience in the markets as a vendor and market manager. She's worked with some amazing market programs and has seen all the hard work that goes on to make a market succeed. She says, "I have so much respect for all of those working behind the scenes, and the tremendous effort that goes into making markets a hit with the community. I believe that together we can strive for new levels of excellence."

Shelly McMahon, Board of Directors Vice Chair, farmer
Shelly and her family of a husband and four boys own Shelly's Farm in Brentwood, offering their chickens, or "girls" as she calls them, the advantages of open air, a natural diet, and no chemicals. The farm has been in operation since 1999, when she grew herbs, tomatoes, peppers, and raised a few chickens. Now they are poultry-only on 8 acres of pasture, and their passion is to ethically produce pastured poultry for both eggs and meat, with a strong emphasis on animal welfare. Shelly joined the PCFMA Board in 2007.

Kathy Topete, Board of Directors Treasurer, farmer
Kathy comes to us from Topete Family Farm in Reedley where she, her husband, and their children grow a variety of grapes. They hand-selected cuttings and planted the grapes themselves over 45 years ago. Their farm is small, about 10 acres, but she said they grow what varieties she and her family like. Kathy still loves to choose selected grapes to grow, to harvest, and work at the farmers' markets. Kathy joined the PCFMA Board in 2023.

Ying Moua, Board Member, farmer
Ying and her family operate Yia Moua Farms in Le Grand. The family began farming in California's Central Valley to grow the specialty vegetable crops that she and her family were familiar with. Their successful farm participates in many of PCFMA's farmers' markets. She says, "As a farmer for more than 10 years, I understand the hard work we put into growing vegetables. I believe it is my responsibility as a board member to help ensure that farmers continue to have access to direct marketing." Ying joined the PCFMA Board in 2018.

Lynette Miscione, Board Member, and former PCFMA staff member
Lynette worked at PCFMA as a Market Manager from 2016 to 2017 before moving to Southern California and joining the team operating the Santa Monica Farmers' Market. Lynette has returned to the Bay Area and now works at Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa, a Bay Area nonprofit organization that operates food pantries

and dining rooms throughout Contra Costa County. She joined the PCFMA Board in March of 2023.

Michelle Livingston, Board Member, farmer
She has been participating in PCFMA markets as an agricultural producer for approximately 20 years. She is Director of Marketing for Rainbow Orchards, a 4th generation family farm, located in Camino, CA. They grow apples, pears, apple cider, wine, hard cider, blueberries, blackberries, and stone fruits They participate in many farmers' markets and are members of several farmers' markets associations which has given me a broad perspective on the many ways that markets can be run. I've assisted fledgling organizations with ideas to boost sales for farmers, and have witnessed many strategies that have helped, as well as many that didn't. By serving on the PCFMA board, I can bring this experience to help all of my fellow producers maximize sales. I have a strong relationship with customers and with fellow farmers, so I hope to bring their concerns and ideas to the board.

Join us in celebrating and supporting all women this month! Whether working at PCFMA, running farms and ranches, or serving their community, we would like to thank them for their passion, perseverance, and hard work in making their community and farmers' markets a success.

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