



PACIFIC COAST
FARMERS' MARKET
ASSOCIATION

REFLECTING ON 20 YEARS AT PCFMA



When I was growing up in South Texas, it seems like every family event, every summer, featured barbecued beef brisket, pinto beans, potato salad, and cole slaw. Christmas Eve at my grandparents always included Polish sausage that they had made and smoked themselves. Even within my immediate family, dinners were always eaten together with Mom cooking during the week, take out on Fridays, and Dad barbecuing or frying chicken on the weekend. So from a very young age, I came to associate food with family.

While I was in college, Dad, who at that time had been delivering mail door-to-door for 31 years, decided he was going to retire. Mom, who had spent years either teaching elementary school or running the cafeteria at our elementary school, decided that she deserved to retire too. So, when I came home from the dorm for the summer, I was shocked to find that there were no longer home cooked meals every night. Mom was very clear, if I wanted to eat, then I needed to cook. So, with her help, I learned to cook and I found that I enjoyed the creative outlet it provided.

Twenty years ago, when I was offered the opportunity to join the staff of the Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Association, I thought it was a great fit for my love of food and cooking. Little did I know at the time, just how much more I had to learn.

Since joining PCFMA, I have come to not just love food, but to truly appreciate it and the incredible passion, patience and effort that is required for farmers to coax that food from the soil. I have come to respect the seasons in a way that I never did before as I watch for chill hours during the winter and warm days during the spring in anticipation of the return of my favorite summer peaches. I have rediscovered foods that I thought I hated but that are incredible when prepared fresh from the farmers market instead of from a cardboard box pulled from the freezer. I have discovered foods that I had never seen in their whole form,

only in a prepared dish at a restaurant.

This journey began on a Friday morning in August 2003 when I showed up for my first day of work at PCFMA to find the doors locked and no one in the office. As it turns out, staff were in San Jose supporting the grand opening of PCFMA's newest farmers market, at the Kaiser Permanente hospital. A quick call to one of my new colleagues got the door unlocked for me and I jumped into this strange new world that today seems very familiar, but still manages to surprise me on a regular basis.

Over my time at PCFMA, I have helped to launch new markets, designed systems for tracking program outcomes, performed cooking demonstrations at market and community events, and written more funding proposals than I care to remember. There have been tremendous challenges: cars that have driven through street closure barricades, windstorms that have turned tents into kites, and a worldwide pandemic that upended our operations and our business model. But on balance, the successes outweigh the challenges. Over the past 20 years I have watched farms flourish, young people go from selling for their parents' farm to actively running the farm business, small businesses that have become farmers market phenomena build on that success to move into commercial retail sales, and helped to feed tens of thousands of my neighbors with the freshest and best food that can be found.

I am incredibly grateful for the people who first invited me to join the PCFMFA team and who, nearly nine years ago, asked me to step into the role of Executive Director. I am equally grateful for all of the incredible people who I have worked with who have stoked my love for food into a passion for the food system and who have somehow found ways to take some of my crazy ideas and turn them into successful programs and impactful services.

So as I mark 20 years at PCFMA, I send my heartfelt thanks to this big, crazy, sometimes dysfunctional, but always loved and respected family of farmers, food producers, coworkers and colleagues that has been a part of this journey. I hope that my efforts over these years have helped to make PCFMA, and our food system, a little stronger and a little more sustainable so that those who are just starting at PCFMA, are able to enjoy the journey as much as I am.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allen", written in a cursive, flowing style.

Allen Moy
Executive Director

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