

Margaret DePond: My name is Margaret DePond and I'm sitting here with Brigitte Moran at the Marin Farmers Markets office on San Pablo Avenue. It is 10 after 10 on October 17. I am a history student at Dominican University and an intern with the Oral History Project on Marin agriculture for the Marin History Museum and we're going to be talking about the Marin County Farmers Markets today.

Brigitte Moran: And I am Brigitte Moran. I'm the executive director for the Marin Farmers Markets and Marin Agricultural Institute. I'm sitting in the same place as Maggie is.

Margaret DePond: From your little pre interview that we did yesterday, you said that both your parents were born in France, that you spent your first five years there. Can you tell me about your maternal grandparents, your mothers' parents?

Brigitte Moran: My mother's parents are from Brittany, so the northwest of France, and my grandmother was a house maker and a Bouton [ph?] and my grandfather was in the army; [he] fought in World War II. My mom and grandmother were all refugees because that's where the Americans came in so they went off to Normandy, and then they're Platons [ph?]. They have five kids.

Margaret DePond: Did they have anything to do with agriculture?

Brigitte Moran: They are closer to their food than we are, today anyways, so they had their own garden. It was probably a quarter acre and they grew all their own food and they would walk a block down the street and go get the potatoes, but in that time my mom would get really scared because the Nazis were occupying the town. She was a ten or eleven year-old little girl, and sometimes stuff happened to little girls, so she'd have to ride her bike really quick down to the quarter acre of land to get the potatoes or the carrots or whatever. It was scary just to go get your food.

Margaret DePond: I would imagine. Will you tell me about your paternal grandparents? Did they have the same sort of experiences?

Brigitte Moran: No. It was different because they were in the south of France so they were actually part of the underground so when you hear my mom's stories my mom's stories are full of fear from the war because they were occupied and their windows were blocked out and if there was light that came out of their windows the windows were shot out and you could be having dinner behind that window, whereas my dad's side was part

of the French underground and so as a kid he remembers standing on the top of a picnic table and saying in French something to the effect of "Screw the Nazis." So as a child, as a ten year-old, he felt very empowered. In fact, one of our cousins is actually a Polish refugee whose family was shot and killed and my aunt took him in and raised him 'cause he was just adorable as a little boy, and so he became part of the family. He didn't get wherever they sent the folks 'cause they got him out of France, so different outlooks on the war.

Margaret DePond: What about your father's family side on food? You said that your...?

Brigitte Moran: On food, well, in the north there's more of fish, aquaculture. Their foods are—

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Brigitte Moran: Their foods are lighter, more fishy, whereas my dad's food is more sausages, red meats, peppers, more Spanish flair to it, so very different whereas Normandy is and Brittany is more Irish or English. So my grandpa didn't have a farm for food. I think he just got his from the local grocers, but they lived in the mountains.

Margaret DePond: So you—

Brigitte Moran: I don't know any stories of food from him, other than that it's more of the sausages, the beefs, a heartier food than the north.

Margaret DePond: You also said in your pre interview that you were born in Montreal but you spent your first five years in France. Where in France did you spend that time?

Brigitte Moran: Well, my mom and dad met in Canada, had me and then we moved back to France and we lived where both of my grandparents lived so we moved back and forth between Brittany and then came back through Canada and then immigrated down to San Francisco because I had a cousin here who sponsored us.

Margaret DePond: You said that you moved back and forth between your...?

Brigitte Moran: Between Brittany and Normandy, between Brittany and the Pyrenees.

Margaret DePond: What are your earliest memories of that time? Do you remember anything about it?

Brigitte Moran: Yeah, and I think maybe it's from pictures but I do remember, and we went back every summer since we've lived here pretty much. Almost, not every summer but a lot of them. They were just...I remember them [my grandparents], but I think they're later memories. I don't think they're from five and below.

Margaret DePond: What's a really poignant memory of you and your grandparents, spending time in France. What's one that really stands out to you?

Brigitte Moran: My grandma was from Brittany and in Brittany they wear quaffs, and I don't think I have any pictures here, but it looks like the flying nun if you remember her and it's this lace thing that they wear over their heads and she was the town ironer. She ironed all the quaffs for the entire town and they were little gossips so all the women would sit like little hens at the corner and talk, and I was the American granddaughter and I was very weird compared to the rest of them because I wore- it was the seventies, so I wore striped socks and cow bells and hippie hair. And so they would all sit there and pretend like I couldn't hear them and so anyways they would gossip away. One day my grandmother had a rabbit in the lanai, this big, fat rabbit, and I said, "Oh, my God. You brought us a pet." She said, "Mais non, c'est diner". It's dinner. Of course, we're having dinner. I'm thinking, "oh, my God," 'cause now I had been raised as an American.

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Margaret DePond: You spent your first five years in France. You said that you don't necessarily remember a lot of time from age five and below, but what's one of your most poignant memories about going back to France and visiting your grandparents?

Brigitte Moran: I guess when I said I didn't remember a lot, [I meant] I know that my foundation comes from France, but I can't speak to specific incidences. I just know that that's where I come from, but a specific story. Okay. My grandmother was Platonne, which means those women there wore quaffs, and they come in all different shapes. Some of them are cones, some of them are flat. Hers was flat because she was from the Mobile [ph?] and she was in charge of ironing everyone's quaff in the town, a town of two thousand people, and these ladies in black, 'cause all the women wore black, and some of them had velvet on the front, and they were ornate with these quaffs, [they all] would sit at the corner and talk about the American granddaughter that was in town all dressed up in her American garb. I would French braid my hair so that I'd look like a hippie and I

had cow bells and I had stripes, which were to these women who wore all black kind of off the charts. So they would gossip and I could understand them and I could hear them talking about me. So one day I went home and my grandmother had a rabbit in the lanai, a big, fat, beautiful rabbit, and I said, "Oh, you brought us a present, a pet." He's hopping around the lanai. And she said, "No, no. C'est diner." I said, "Oh, my God," 'cause as an American we didn't grow up seeing our food be slaughtered, or in Safeway you just saw meat. You didn't know it was actually a chicken. So I was a little in shock. I said, "No, you can't," and then I started to cry, "You can't kill this rabbit. It's my rabbit. It's Marcel. [ph?] I named it. I made it a house, a box, so he could come in and out. So she went and got another rabbit, broke its neck, and we had it for dinner, but I had Marcel so what I would do is that I would take the rabbit in a basket and I would walk down the street in front of these women who my grandmother ironed all their quaffs and they thought I was completely insane because I was walking around with the dinner in the basket that I didn't let my grandmother kill. And I would have to go to the garden to go get the potatoes or the carrots or whatever she was growing and she would go with me but she'd say, "You go ahead. You go ahead," as if they didn't know I was related to her, <laughs> 'cause she didn't want to be associated with me. She thought it was crazy, and I didn't think that was so crazy to save this poor, little rabbit, but the story for Marcel was that he ended up being a stud. He never did get slaughtered for dinner and he was studded out so he had a good life. So that's a story from that side of my grandparents.

Margaret DePond: How has French heritage affected your view of agriculture now in the work that you do?

Brigitte Moran: I think I've come full circle in evaluating that we know where our food comes from so it's not as much agriculture as the food, as the product itself, as knowing where the product comes from and how important it is that it comes from a local source, and knowing that story, the rabbit. I think as Americans we've raised our own children to be horrified that meat comes from a cow. That's ridiculous. If you eat meat, if you're not a vegetarian, then you should acknowledge the fact that that animal is being slaughtered and that a chicken is a chicken, a bunny is a bunny, and if you don't then you're not really being true about your food. So the French and the Europeans I think have held on to that a little bit longer than we have here, and so [I feel like] part of my work is helping to bring that back. It's bringing us back to our food, bringing us back to understanding where it comes from, and with that comes the responsibility of how our food is slaughtered. And I think as Americans we've done an injustice to our animals by the way we raise them and the way we slaughter them. It's one thing to eat meat because I am a meat eater and I believe that they have a role and they are a source of food, but I also believe that they should be treated humanely and that they should have dignity in their death, that they're slaughtered properly, humanely.

Margaret DePond: What do you think of the proposition that's on the ballot this year? I don't remember the number. It's Prop 12 or something.

Brigitte Moran: Prop 2.

Margaret DePond: Prop 2 about animals raised on farms need to have room to turn around and if they are birds they need to have room to spread their wings fully. What do you think of that prop?

Brigitte Moran: I agree with that. And right now I haven't fully read the proposition and it could be written in a way that's not right, but I do agree with the principles that chickens should have enough room in their cages, that they should have time outside, that they've kept all of those things. Right now I know that one of the biggest sources that are fighting that proposition are coming out of the Midwest because it's going to affect them more than it's going to affect us. California, a lot of times, sets the rules and sets the pace for the rest of the country as far as many things go, and if we pass something like that, that'll start to go across the country. And it's scary to a lot of industrial chicken farmers or ranchers, but I think it's time that we did that. I think it's time that we made them responsible for the way we, they, raise our food.

Margaret DePond: Do you know how Marin farmers or northern California farmers are taking that proposition? Do you know if they're behind it or against it?

Brigitte Moran: I know the state Farm Bureau is against it and I don't know why. I know that most of the Marin growers raise their animals that way. In fact, I don't know any who don't [raise them] in the right way. They're all free range. You go out in Marin and it's the ideal of how you would want to raise food, but I don't know where they stand.

Margaret DePond: Going back to your background a little bit, when you moved from France to Montreal to this area were you around agriculture or buying your food from a farmers market or is any of that from your background?

Brigitte Moran: My mom, being French, only knew to buy her food fresh and only knew how to make things from scratch. In fact, she was so excited when she discovered Ragu sauce in a can because oh, my gosh, you could make spaghetti and just pour the sauce on top <laughs> of it and you didn't have to cook the sauce, which was to her ingenious. She immigrated from France to America. She wanted to become American, and it was just in the time where women were just trying to find their independence and raising three children and so she didn't know there were Space Sticks. Space Sticks were the things

that we ate that astronauts had and they were energy and they were good for you and it was a treat. Well, instead of having to bake cookies, my mom actually made crepes and very bizarre things that we ate compared to the American kids, but there were convenience foods just started and so when she immigrated here it was like well, I've got three kids, life is hard, this is a little easier, so she kind of changed the way she knew how to cook and the way she knew. And I think all of America was doing that at the same time. I think all of the cultures were saying, "Wow. This is a lot easier, a jar, a can, a box." I don't think microwaves were done yet but microwaves were coming and then it went to a whole other level. So when she came here she knew how to cook from scratch and she went the other direction. She started that process.

Margaret DePond: If your mother started the process of not going to a farmers market to buy fresh produce and buying lots of things from the grocery stores, prepackaged meals, how did you become interested in doing the advocacy work as I see it advocating for a farmers market and Marin County farmers? How did you get involved? What was your first experience?

Brigitte Moran: Okay. Well, there were no farmers markets when my mom immigrated here so in the sixties what happened with the food culture here is there were farmers markets years ago. Then everything got regulated. The state of California went to standard pack so farmers could no longer sell at farmers markets. It became illegal. In fact, there were some Marin rebels that would bring their pears in to the city and sell and that was "just wrong". They weren't allowed to do that. So when my mom did come here, in her defense or in that era's defense, there was no opportunity to buy local produce. That's when agriculture went mono crop so all of a sudden you didn't have these local stores like you did maybe 20 years earlier.

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Margaret DePond: How did you get involved?

Brigitte Moran: Okay, so farmers markets started about- in this state probably 25 years ago, 19- I think '77 is when they got put into place. I was an event coordinator and had nothing to do with agriculture, nothing whatsoever, and was looking to do some events in downtown San Rafael and I bid for the job and they said, "Sure. You've got it." And then I called the State Agriculture Department and said, "What is a farmers market and how do you do this?" And I got a lot of help from the State Ag Department. They came down here and they helped me, they "held my hand," things that I needed to know like avocados don't grow in Marin County, bananas don't grow in Marin County, things you kind of know but you don't really care about especially at that era. It was like there was a

whole shift that happened in food where everybody knew where their food came from and then all of a sudden things started to change with where the food came from and nobody asked, "Well, how come we're getting the beef at so much cheaper?" When I was a kid we didn't eat beef all the time 'cause it was expensive so you had it once in a while. We just didn't eat like we eat today. So the way I got interested in it was kind of by a fluke and then all of a sudden I started working with the farmers that work with me at the market. I've been doing it for 20 years in San Rafael downtown and you start to learn and hear their stories and see the value and the taste and the difference is humongous where you have a tomato from the market and a tomato from a grocery store. To me, I can tell that taste any time.

Margaret DePond: What year was your first event in downtown San Rafael?

Brigitte Moran: The first farmers market was...well, it was 20 years ago, 19. What is that? 87, 88, 87? That's when I started.

Margaret DePond: An article that I read about you, I think it was written in 1990, and it said that you were a really strong supporter of that Thursday night downtown market even though, to my knowledge too, the way that I read it, you had already had the Civic Center farmers market and the one in the veterans building.

Brigitte Moran: I didn't start these markets. The Civic Center markets were founded by Lynn Bagley.

Margaret DePond: How come you were such a strong supporter of the Thursday night market even though we had the other two?

Brigitte Moran: Because they were for different reasons. The downtown market was... Downtown San Rafael was dying. It was at a 30% vacancy rate. Downtown when I was a kid had Woolworth's, Macy's, Sears, Penney's. It was the thriving place where you went to shop and the malls came in, and the malls kind of detoured people to the malls and not to downtowns. Downtowns had to kind of redefine themselves and find out who they were and what niche they filled for the community. So the need in downtown San Rafael was to rebuild and regenerate downtown, and Jake Ours, who was the redevelopment director of San Rafael at the time and a visionary, was one of the persons that helped redevelop that with the City Council in San Rafael. And he saw that San Luis Obispo had this huge farmers market that generated community and generated local food and was a great thing for their town. So we went down there and said, "Okay. That's what we want to do," and we did it here. The other thing is that people wouldn't walk in downtown from

A Street to D Street but you would walk from, at the time, Emporium to Macy's, the same distance, and the perception was- is that oh, that's too far. I have to park right in front of that store. And when San Rafael grew there was no more parking right in front of the stores. You had to park in a parking lot and although in San Francisco we're used to doing that here in Marin we're not as used to even today parking and walking, which is good for us.

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Margaret DePond: Thursday night market...

Brigitte Moran: Thursday night.

Margaret DuPond: ...how, why?

Brigitte Moran: Okay. So, the benefit of the Thursday night market and the need for it was to bring people together. One of the other things that happened in San Rafael is it became very multicultural. About 20 years ago is when it started, although I was multicultural before it was even cool. <laughs> So there was this feeling like it was all segregated, Marin County was, whereas the downtown market was a Mercado where people of Latin America felt comfortable there. They didn't feel like it was the Marin place. It was the community place. So I remember one of those articles. They said, "Where are you busing these people in from?" And I thought oh, my God, oh, my. <laughs> It's just these are our people. These are us. This is who we are. We just didn't mingle and so we didn't know who we were. A lot of the folks who lived in the canal were coming down to the market in droves and you had this multicultural thing going on that Marin wasn't used to anymore. We just hadn't seen that. So I think now 20 years later everyone's really comfortable with it, and who doesn't go to the market, but it's very culturally diverse. We did a survey after that article came out. I actually wrote a letter back to the IJ and it took me seven hours because I was really angry the first letter, less angry the third letter, and then it got down to the letter I could actually mail.

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Margaret DuPond: You did a survey?

Brigitte Moran: Oh, we did a survey and there was an interesting thing that was happening. It was the people felt really comfortable just being themselves at the market

and so I started going around and asking different people where they came from and who they were, and the one that hit me the most was that I went up to this woman who looked kind of homeless honestly and kind of ragged. And I said, "So where do you live?" "San Rafael." "Where?" "Forbes area." Okay. Well, that was a kind of surprise. "What are you doing here?" She says, "Oh, I'm a doctor at Marin General and I run from my house to the market, buy all my produce and run back home." I thought okay, wow. Okay. There's a perception right there. It's what we see. It's what we perceive to be true but it wasn't really true. And then I went down to the group of teenagers, the hoodlums that were hanging out at Fourth and Court, and they weren't hoodlums. They were little kids from Davidson and Saint Rafael's who had baggy pants and who were trying to be 12 or 13 or whatever it was they were, and they happened to be my son's friends shockingly enough. So there's all these perceptions that we have but the realities are these were all the people of our community and it's a safe place for people to hang out to get food. It's not like the civic center markets in that that's based on food. The downtown market is based on bringing community together and giving a place for people to gather around food and also an incubator for small business 'cause a lot of those people over in the canal and all over Marin want to start a small business and they don't have the capital to start a retail operation. So you're from Guatemala and you input all your stuff from Guatemala. Where do you sell it? Well, if you can sell it for 35 bucks a night at the farmers market that's a cool thing to be able to share with the rest of your community.

Margaret DuPond: You talk about perceptions that people have of Marin County. What are Marin County's perceptions on food?

Brigitte Moran: Probably one of the most educated food consumers in the country I would say way ahead of their time, very loyal to the growers, not all of Marin County but five percent support the farmers market, but I think the rest of them support local agriculture and buying healthy and eating healthy. We're a healthy community. Farmers markets are inconvenient and if you're busy and you have two to three children and you're in the middle of soccer and baseball and everything else, shopping at a farmers market takes a little time. You have to be really committed to it.

Margaret DuPond: It was recommended that before I spoke with you that I should actually go to the Marin farmers market.

Brigitte Moran: I'm glad you did. <laughs>

Margaret DuPond: I really enjoyed myself.

Brigitte Moran: You were recommended.

Margaret DuPond: I went to the one at the civic center and it was two Sundays ago and when I went there I guess I was surprised at the amount of people, the amount of stalls, and when I went there I saw a lot of moms with their kids and kids picking out what they wanted to eat, trying all of the food. I saw a whole range of people. It seems to me that it's become really popular. Has it and why has the market...?

Brigitte Moran: It's growing. I think we screwed up our food system for about 60 years and this is the way we used to shop and we're getting back to it, but our lives got so busy because we had to be moms, we had to work. Women throughout this time period have tripled their job load, so now we're starting to kind of go backwards and say, "Wait a second here. We put food on the lowest priority." I fed my kids McDonald's 99 cent burgers when they were young and I thought I was giving them protein and I had no idea what was happening to the meat or that sugar was being put in the buns. I didn't know any of that stuff. It was just assumed that someone out there was protecting my food. So with knowledge now I can go back and I think people here in Marin are putting value on what they feed their children and on how they feed their children, but there's 250,000 people in Marin County, and I say were about five percent of them who actually support 100% the market and those moms are all there. Just four years ago I think we were only at two percent of the county so we are growing fast.

Margaret DuPond: It's more than doubled in four years?

Brigitte Moran: Uh huh, because it's a national trend now. You can't pick up a paper where they don't talk about local food and supporting local growers, knowing where your food comes from. It's scary not to know where your food comes from.

Margaret DuPond: The New York Times Magazine...

Brigitte Moran: I haven't read it yet.

Margaret DuPond: ...was nice enough to bring this and the entire article is about food, why we should grow our food the way we should, taking our food back, making it more important. When the farmers markets first started apparently from what you said they weren't very popular.

Brigitte Moran: They were slow. The Marin markets for example. First of all, we had no Marin row crops in Marin County. We didn't grow row crops for a while.

Margaret DuPond: Can you explain what a row crop is?

Brigitte Moran: A row crop is row crops. They're in rows. <laughs> They're like lettuces and beets and asparaguses and things that grow in the ground that are in rows. Okay. Then you have stone fruit, which is your peaches and your nectarines and that's pretty much it, stone fruit and row crops. Then you have your ranchos, your beef and your dairy, and we didn't have any row crops when these markets were started. So the founder went out to other areas of northern California and got farmers to come in here and sell their products. Some people got what farmers markets were but others were like okay, I can only get my lettuce here and my tomatoes, and the variety wasn't as big as it is today. So we're going back to where we were 60, 70 years ago.

Margaret DuPond: How do you mean?

Brigitte Moran: Where our smaller growers who have a hundred acres or less are supplying our communities, and there's a new generation going in to farming where their interest is selling at farmers markets and selling at that level, knowing their customer, being able to say, "Our farmers at the market..." If you ask any of them, they love meeting you as much as you love meeting them.

Margaret DuPond: I did meet some of them.

Brigitte Moran: Yeah. They love it. They love to know what you did with their peacheal they love to know that. They spent all these months growing this product and to get feedback on what you did with it is really rewarding to them. And then as a consumer when you go up and you say, "What do I do with these potatoes?" and David Little always tells you, "Put olive oil, salt and pepper," and there's a lot different things you can do than olive oil and salt and pepper but <laughs> that's his recipe for a lot of things. They enjoy having the conversation about what they spend their time working on all year around.

Margaret DuPond: Have the row crops diversified?

Brigitte Moran: The row crops have now... We've got about 300 acres of row crops in Marin County, which is not a lot but it's a start and they're all organic so that is a huge

statement to be able to say that all of our all of our crops are organic. The market is not all organic.

Margaret DuPond: Why has organic become so important? Do you feel that people are becoming absolutely like my mom, is obsessed with eating organic? Why has that become so important? I have a good friend who grows almonds and she grows almonds in Sacramento and she says that there's no such thing as organic, that the regulations for an organic farmer are that they only have to be organic for a certain amount of years, and when it comes to trees that grow for 15 years you can start for seven years using as much non-organic fertilizer as you want and then call your trees organic after another couple of years. Why have people become obsessed with organic?

Brigitte Moran: And I'm not a specialist or an expert by any stretch of the imagination on organic and I don't only eat organic, but I think there are some pesticides that I could not name that are scary and that we shouldn't eat, and I trust that the pesticides that are used on strawberries for example are not something that I would want to feed my grandchildren. So there are certain products that I personally will not buy that aren't organic like a strawberry. My grandkids take those strawberries and put them right in their mouths and those have chemicals on them. I think we're scared of all the stuff that people have put on us. We don't trust our food system anymore. I don't know for a fact what all these chemicals are they're putting on [food]. Even the drugs that we get, we don't know what's going to happen to us. We don't trust our meat anymore. When you can think that a hamburger holds 4, possibly 400, different animals in one hamburger, that's a scary thought. Okay. So there's all this unknown about our food, which is why this whole local movement has taken hold I believe because when I speak to David Little I know exactly what he did to his potatoes. He's going to tell me what he did and he's going to tell me what fertilizers or pesticides he used and I can go look them up whereas if I go in to a grocery store I don't know really what's been used on that product. And between organic and transitional or sustainable, there are so many different words that they use, but the organic certification is true and it's a good certification. Some people abuse it, though. Whole Foods got caught just a month ago or two months ago with their frozen package, California grown mix, coming out of China with a CCOF label on it saying that it was certified organic. CCOF doesn't certifying Chinese produce. Now why is it called California mix when it's coming out of China? So there's all sorts of food tricks that people use to market their products.

Margaret DuPond: Who exposed that?

Woman 1: There was an article in the Chronicle that talked about different types of spinach and it mentioned they all came from China, and an uproar started. This is just

one instance that I know about. An uproar started that was heard the next day and they printed a little article in the food section the following week saying that there was so much uproar that in grocery stores you would see "Not Grown in China, California Grown." People were so angry.

Brigitte Moran: But this even took it to another level because this actually used the CCOF label as an organic, that it was organic and it was not organic. We have some growers who are not CCOF or Marin organic. It's not Marin organic. It's Marin ORCA, [ph?] which is the certifying agency in Marin. Ed Pearson, for example. He grows out of Novato and he doesn't certify his product because it costs money and so sometimes they just don't want to fill out the paperwork. These guys work hard and some of them are kind of rebels and they think I'm not playing the government role; I know what I do to my products; I know my customers; I tell them what I do; anyone's welcome on my farm; I have complete transparency. So they don't feel the need for it, which is not necessarily a good thing when you go to a larger farm because you need some kind of regulation, but when you're dealing with an Ed Pearson do you need it when you go right up to his farm and he's out and he'll let you work on it if you want? <laughs> No.

Margaret DuPond: How have the farmers market or how has this transition in food that you keep talking about affected people's perceptions about where their food can come from or where their food comes from?

Brigitte Moran: I think we didn't care for 20, 30 years. I think we just ate and we didn't think about where it came from, what was sustaining us. It's the most important thing we do during the day. It's what sustains us, it's what keeps us going, and we didn't think about it at all. We didn't care where our meat came from. We ate at fast food restaurants. It was about convenience. It was about everything but what it should be. It should be about breaking bread together. It should be about knowing and honoring the earth that it comes from and the people that grow it for us. Things go crazy in this world. I want to know some farmers because they're going to feed me.

Margaret DuPond: How do you spread that message? I am a college student. I live on campus. I don't have a kitchen. I'm incredibly busy. I go to McDonald's. I go to Carl's Jr. I go to all of the fast food restaurants because it's easy. What would you say to me to convince me to go to the farmers market?

Brigitte Moran: Let's go see a slaughterhouse. <laughs> Or you could You Tube them; that's your generation's role. You Tube slaughterhouses. No, I would tell you to encourage Bon Appétit, that is the food service provider in your facility, to source food locally, and they are probably one of the better examples.

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Brigitte Moran: They are probably one of the leaders in sourcing locally. It's up to us as consumers to tell our hospitals, our schools, wherever we eat that we want our food source locally and that we want a higher quality of food.

Margaret DuPond: Have you been to a slaughterhouse?

Brigitte Moran: You can't get in one. No one can get in one. There're no stories on them. No reporter has been able to get in them. I've gone to a ranch kill, which I did. I wrote a cookbook and I wanted to know what it felt like to see an animal slaughtered and so I went to Mike Gale's ranch up in... Well, you've been there. And he is the most wonderful man in the whole world, and the way he raises his animals is humane and it just didn't feel wrong. It just felt like here is this animal who lived its great life and now it was time to slaughter. It was done individually by itself. The guy's name was Johnny One Shot. Johnny One Shot, yeah. Someone I know has got a license plate that says that on the back of his truck. But it is. It's one shot and that's not what happens in a slaughterhouse. So five o'clock in the morning and it was very peaceful.

Margaret DuPond: How does that make you feel about the food that you're eating, seeing how a potato is grown organically?

Brigitte Moran: I feel more responsible than I used to. Twenty-five, 20 years ago, if you asked me, "did I care?" I ate at McDonald's. I did all the things that every American usually does and now I feel like I have a responsibility to ask how was my food raised, how was my animal that I'm going to eat slaughtered. I feel that's my duty is to only support people who do things humanely and to raise food in a manner that makes me feel comfortable, that there is this mass production going on somewhere and that no one really cares, but there's really Dennis Dierks picking my lettuce out of the land and here's your lettuce, Brigitte. There is just a different connection to my food. It tastes better too.

Margaret DuPond: Switching from the consumer to the grower, how has the farmers market and the continued success in the growing, the success at the farmers market, affected local growers?

Brigitte Moran: It's helped them immensely. Farmers markets are probably the connection between them, and first of all between them and the consumer, but then on top of it the Thursday market is the connection between them and the restaurants and the grocery stores. So now what's happening is what David Little for example who is up in

Tomatoes used to lease land; he now owns land. That's a huge thing for somebody who is in farming to go from leasing your land to owning it, and that's because he's been able to sell at many farmers markets and he's got clients now like Shipanese [ph?] or different restaurants, Lark Creek Inn, all different high-end restaurants who want his potatoes 'cause they have more flavor than a typical potato. He does dry farming, so...

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Margaret DuPond: Can you explain what dry farming is?

Brigitte Moran: He doesn't water. The way he explained it to me was if you have a pan and that's the land and it's got water in it because it rains on the land, right, and then you put potatoes in the ground, it's a sponge that you would put on the pan and it just soaks up the water, but what you do is you put those potatoes at the bottom of a hill or at an incline. And I'm not the farmer. He probably would correct me, but the water goes down from the bottom of the hill and that's where the potatoes are planted and so it soaks up all that water. And he does tomato dry farming and he does potato, but where he is has a lot of water in the land because we're a maritime climate and with fog and everything else that they have out there.

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Margaret DuPond: Another article that Trish Sell Macy [ph?] gave me to read was about farming families, 'cause the farming lifestyle in Marin seems really difficult because of the cost of production and it's hard to compete with farms from other parts of the country and so a lot of children of farmers don't necessarily want to get into that business. How important is it to have family farms and to keep that tradition of family farming going for you and for something like the farmers market?

Brigitte Moran: All of the farmers that are at the market are family farms, averages a hundred acres or less, so they're all small family farms. That's extremely important. Their viability is vital to the market. I think what's hardest for those small family farms is that they don't have these huge marketing budgets so they're really good at farming, and what we're really good at is marketing so that's why it's a good partnership. They can come. They can grow all week long. They can plant and pick and do everything that they have to do, and then they come to the market and they get to be the store for one day but we've done all their marketing for them. All those people are there for them, and I think what some of the missing link for them is how to market themselves. So a Marin grower for example has to compete with somebody from the central valley. The competition

comes from the fact that you the consumer who lives in Marin wants your product as local as possible so we help them with marketing their product. It's the most local product you can buy. It's a Marin so support your Marin grower. So now it's actually flipped on us whereas the central valley guy has a hard time selling even if it's less money over the guy who's from Marin because the customers here in Marin County are so loyal to our growers.

Margaret DuPond: When I went to the farmers market I found though that a lot of the stalls were not from Marin County. Why?

Brigitte Moran: Now remember we only have 300 acres of row crops. We cannot feed a county. We couldn't come close to feeding this county with the food that we grow here.

Margaret DuPond: So, it's incredibly important to diversify to have the farmers market.

Brigitte Moran: Uh huh. Our farmers come from 26 counties I think and about a 150 to 200-mile radius. We don't grow peaches. We don't grow avocados. We don't grow all sorts of things in Marin. We really just grow greens. Dairy is huge and beef is huge but crops are not big, so we need to bring food in from other parts of the state. Having the growers who are here diversify; they're starting to because everybody grew lettuce at first and so now everybody's saying, "Well, let's grow some strawberries." So okay, now we've got strawberries. Now we've got some tomatoes, our heirloom tomatoes, so it's starting to diversify but it takes years, and Dennis Dierks started in the downtown market 'cause he wasn't allowed in this market about 15 years ago, 16 years ago? And now everybody goes to Dennis, Paradise Valley Produce. He's got great lettuce: lettuces, leeks, onions, things like that.

Margaret DuPond: Is the farmers market as important to the dairy farmers in Marin County? I know a lot of Marin is dairy, like you said, is beef. One of the other interviews is of Albert Straus; we know how important that is. Does the farmers market draw a lot of dairy farmers? I didn't see a lot when I went.

Brigitte Moran: No. Actually, they are more important to us than we are to them. Albert Straus was just at the market for a few months at the Thursday market. We have Cowgirl Creamery. We have some of the cheese people and some of the butter folks but as far as milk, no, we don't have them at the market and we'd love to have them at the market, but for them the way they've marketed their product is through Whole Foods or through other different grocery outlets and they didn't start with the farmers market first. So it's a little more cumbersome for them whereas the smaller growers, the row crop growers, they

start at the market and then they leap in if they get big enough. And usually you have to have a minimum of a hundred acres to supply a Whole Foods, even one store of Whole Foods, 'cause they buy by the pallet, not by the case. So if we can get a grower to incubate in the farmers market and then go in to the retail outlet, the best business plan I would say is partly farmers market, partly wholesale. I think that's the most successful business model, but the dairies here, we'd love having them in the market but they need to find a place for us. It'll help too when we have a permanent home where we have some refrigeration because milk, cheeses, it's a little more difficult, meat a little more difficult without refrigeration unless you have a trailer or a truck.

Margaret DuPond: You said that the dairy farms are more important to you than the farmers market is to them. Why is that?

Brigitte Moran: Well, because we want the shopping experience to be as diverse as possible, having milk or yogurt or ice cream or whatever it is at the market, especially local, that local just makes it a better shopping experience for the consumer. If I can buy my vegetables and my milk and my yogurt and my meat and my bakery, then it's a fuller experience than if I could only buy vegetables, and that's the direction the market's taking. We are diversifying. We are allowing chickens and we are allowing eggs and whereas in the beginning it was all row crops and it was all fruit. It was just produce so now it's a little more diverse so to them we're the little guy 'cause they're bigger than we are; they're bigger than most of our growers even though they're small dairies.

Margaret DuPond: You also mentioned the permanent location that you want so badly. How important is the permanent location to the future success of the farmers markets?

Brigitte Moran: The market here, how important is it? We'll survive without it. It would make the experience for both the farmer and the consumer a hundred times better to have a covered pavilion and a dedicated space that honors our food and us coming together and around food, I think will help the market as it exists today but also help those niche growers, those ranchers out there in west Marin, who are beef ranchers who are now selling to the commodities market and who if they had a place with a butcher shop or a facility where they could sell. And niche market means you're filling a niche, a small, little niche. If those growers could have a place to sell in Marin County, then they would get more of their dollar, a row crop for example. I know the statistic is for every dollar that a farmer grows a mono crop they're getting ten cents on that dollar whereas a farmer who grows at a farmers market is getting 90 cents on the dollar, a huge difference. I don't know what the numbers are for the beef ranchers but it's similar so if they are going to the commodities market they're not getting the full dollar of what they deserve whereas if they were selling direct farmer to consumer they would be making a lot more

money and that would save our farms out in west Marin. Then I think we'd see the next generation coming in and saying, "Oh, wow. I can make a living doing this. Grandpa's not such a fool," 'cause right now it's just a lot of hard work and they don't get a lot of return for it. So having a pavilion or having a place on the farmers' side will just make it a place where consumers will come more and it'll feed each other.

Margaret DuPond: How receptive are people to this idea of the permanent location?

Brigitte Moran: The farmers are thrilled and very excited. We just need several million dollars and then we'll be fine. Thirty is what I'm hearing right now, 30 million. <laughs> Everyone's very receptive to it. It's a great idea. I think the only thing that's going to be stopping us is the money and we're working with the county; we're partnering with them. It's a hard partnership, not because it's the county, but because any time you do public/private partnerships it's hard, and it's a community site so the community's going to be very involved in it. So we've been working on it for four years and hopefully within five we'll be done and we can have a party there.

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Margaret DuPond: Of all the time you've spent at the farmers markets, what is your most vivid memory?

Brigitte Moran: Oh. I don't know. Every once in a while, like any job, you get really overwhelmed and you can't see the love of it and I love what I do, and Jake Ours who is the person who hired me to start the downtown market used to always tell me that if I ever got too frazzled or ever didn't see the work that we were doing and how it was benefiting the community was to step back, stand above the market and just look down and look at it and see what's going on. If three people complain to you and you're feeling like oh, my God, everything I do is wrong, step back and look at the five thousand people that are down there enjoying themselves and breaking bread and talking with farmers and see the good that's happening from all the work. And so I guess every time I step back and just look at what's happening it's like this little beehive and it's like this place where everyone's enjoying each other and they're enjoying their kids and the farmers and it's just an incredible place to be. Every moment I do that is when it makes me feel like God, I'm doing the right thing right now; I'm where I belong.

Margaret DuPond: Working with the market, working with the advocacy, how has that affected you personally? I read in an article that...

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Margaret DuPond: And I read that your daughter, Monique, has also gotten involved with the markets so how has your work translated to your family and to your personal life?

Brigitte Moran: My daughter started running the market about seven years ago in downtown so I came over here and started working with Marin Farmers Markets about five years ago, 4-1/2 years ago, and she...

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Brigitte Moran: I mean Marin Farmers Markets; I mean being the executive director of these seven markets and helping to try and build this facility. So Monique took over the downtown market and she's very good at it. She's really good at it but she's been there since she was seven, eight years old, sort of hanging around. How it's affected my family and me to be in markets. I think it's helped me to understand the value of my food and to respect the farmer and to respect where the food comes from. I try to do it by example. I cheat. We all have to compromise in certain places but we can't have anxiety about oh, my God, where did that cow come from, where did that hamburger come from? You just do your best and if all of us do our best we keep moving the movement forward and we'll get back to where we were. It's a slow process and I've been watching it for 20 years and it works, and it's kind of going at a much faster pace right now. The past four or five years...It's like a locomotive all of a sudden 'cause people are getting it. They're getting that, "oh my gosh, our health has gone down." This generation is the first generation that will not exceed the last generation in age because of diabetes and weight. It's because they're all eating fried foods and McDonald's and Carl's Jr.'s and all those foods. There're a lot of overweight little kids right now and that's sad when you look at it. What are they doing? Are they exercising? What are they eating? Are their moms working so hard that they can't feed them, they can't cook for them? How many people cook nowadays? People don't cook like they used to so it's all those things. I don't cook like I used to but it's in my head so I say, "Okay. You got to cook, got to bring the family together," 'cause it's not only about eating healthy; it's also about keeping your family as a unit, sitting together at a table, making sure that little Joey is not hanging out with bad Davy.
<laughs>

Margaret DuPond: As part of your family table, what do you cook?

Brigitte Moran: There's way too many of us. <laughs> There is the three kids and the husbands and the wives and the grandkids, three grandkids, and we eat together a lot. We're together a lot. We're a very close family and it's about food a lot of the time, three times a day, so lunch and dinner. Sometimes I think oh, my God, I just had a huge meal with lunch with them and now they're all over for dinner, but it's important because it's where we solve our problems, it's where we love each other and support each other and learn from each other. Every generation learns from the other. And now I'm trying to learn, [so I can] teach my kids how to cook. My daughter's 29 years old. I forgot to teach them how to cook. What kind of a mother? <laughs> 'Cause I was part of that generation where we didn't do that for our kids and now they're looking at me, calling me and actually asking, "How do you boil an egg?" Oh, my God, where did I screw up? <laughs> 'Cause everyone should know how to cook.

Margaret DuPond: What dishes do you cook that you make from your French background?

Brigitte Moran: Let's see here. They call one of them... Okay. Let's see. What dishes?

Margaret DuPond: When you say you're teaching them how to cook, is there a particular dish you hope they will know how to cook and pass on to your grandchildren?

Brigitte Moran: Well, I'm going to keep cooking those, but it's funny. I've changed the way I cook 'cause my mom taught me recipes of her mom and it was more about recipes, and now I cook more seasonally. I cook more about what I find at the market and that's kind of a light bulb for me right now because when I think of what I'm going to do for the day I go to the market and see what's available and I think okay, I'm going to do a pepper dish today because all the peppers are in season. And I've learned more to cook based on what's being in season right now and so I think that's more what I'm teaching them and that's what they're learning more. So these recipes that exist I cook those for the big holidays, and my son loves chicken Milanese, and on a day where he's feeling sad he gets chicken Milanese or a celebration, but otherwise yeah, it's just based on...

Kelly Brisbois: What's the name of your cookbook?

Brigitte Moran: It's a debate. Would you like to argue with my publisher? Because I've been arguing with him for six months. <laughs> Yeah, it's a debate. We haven't agreed yet.

Margaret DuPond: What do you hope it will be called?

Brigitte Moran: I've got 20 titles. He wants to call it Marin County Farmers Market Cookbook and he can't because that's not what it's about. It's about buying locally and it's about supporting local food systems. I would like it to be called Marin, a County that Knows How to Eat Locally or North of the Golden Gate Where Food Grows, North of the Golden Gate Where We Know How to Eat. There are so many different directions I'd like it to go but it's not about the farmers market only. It's about us as consumers choosing and the choices we have, and it goes on to plastic. Would you bring a canvas bag when you go shopping, all sorts of things like that.

Margaret DuPond: When is it scheduled to come out?

Brigitte Moran: Next year if we can agree on a title. <laughs>

Margaret DuPond: What would happen if the farmers market just disappeared? What would happen to the community? What would happen to the growers? What would happen to Marin County agriculture if one day someone showed up and the Sunday civic center market wasn't there?

Brigitte Moran: Oh, that's so sad to even think. Well, you'd have 480 farmers out of business. You'd have a lot of consumers who find this is their place to commune with their community probably lonely. I don't know. Oh, my gosh, if it were all gone how sad that would be and who would have done this? You have to hunt them down. <laughs>

Margaret DuPond: It's only hypothetical.

Brigitte Moran: I know, but it's so horrible. I've never even thought of that. There would be 480 people out of business at just this market. If you were to remove all of the markets in the country... There's five thousand markets in the country. There's a lot of people's livelihood. I don't remember what the percentage was but the amount of people that used to be in agriculture 50 years ago was tripled what it is or quadrupled what it is today. So God, we'd be getting our food out of Chile and all sorts of other places and then what would happen if you took it to the next level and if there was a war or there was something where you couldn't get food from Chile, where you couldn't get food from China? What if we grew no food here and we couldn't feed ourselves? That would be really scary to me. I feel so safe even in this economic times where things are screwy 'cause all we need is food, food and water, and so I know a lot of farmers and you'll want to be my friend <laughs> because you don't really need stocks and bonds. You need food so we want to have growers in our country.

Margaret DuPond: On a happier note—

Brigitte Moran: Yes, please.

Margaret DuPond: What are your goals for the future of the farmers market? What is your overall vision for the perfect market?

Brigitte Moran: I would like every single one of our farmers and vendors to be making a good earning, a good living, that they're diversified, that they're feeding as many of Marin County folks who want to be fed locally as possible, that we have this permanent home, that they're all this little beehive where they're all selling their food and mixing together. It's really not that deep. It's just food. It's food that we eat and it's simple. We've just made it complicated. It's a simple thing, breaking bread together, so success... I don't know. It would be that, all of them doing really well, not one of them telling me at the end of the day that they had a bad day.

Margaret DuPond: It sounds like you have formed a lot of important alliances, partnerships, people and agencies you collaborate with. Can you describe that process for the farmers market, how it is you've gone about building those relationships with local agencies and all the different people who have helped make this be a success?

Brigitte Moran: I think all the agencies are really important. We all work together. If MALT doesn't save the land so the farmers can grow on it, then we don't have farmers to sell. If Marin Organic doesn't work on helping those growers become organic, then that whole niche doesn't get built. [The] UC (Cooperative) Extension, they're out there educating our growers. We partner with them working on how to get them into the market so how did we go about doing that? We just sat in meetings and met with them and helped and did whatever we could as our part of this pie. It seems like five or six organizations and we're just one piece of it. We're the end piece. We're the closest to the consumer but there's all the other pieces, there's RCD that makes sure that they have water to be able to irrigate their farms. And so I think that before we were more separate. We did our own little things and now we see the value of all being together and supporting each other. We did that ad "It takes a village to bring you your food," and it's true. All those organizations are vital to each other.

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Kelly Brisbois: What is the hottest controversy right now in farming in Marin or biggest issue that has to be overcome? Is it drought? Is it financial with fuel prices? What's the biggest obstacle farmers have to overcome right now, growers?

Brigitte Moran: For the meat ranchers right now the biggest obstacle is getting a slaughterhouse. We're losing Rancho up in Petaluma and if we don't have an infrastructure for them to be able to sell, if they have no place to slaughter, then there's no place in Marin that is going to let a slaughterhouse be built so there are some folks that are working very hard to make sure Rancho continues, Phyllis Faber being one of them. So that's probably the beef ranchers' biggest problem.

Kelly Brisbois: Rancho is the name of a slaughterhouse that's in Petaluma that services the beef cattle ranches in this region?

Brigitte Moran: Yes, uh huh, and if that one goes under or stops functioning, then probably the closest one [is], Mendocino I think. Things are going really, really well right now because of the community supporting the farmers so well, but I think the next step is this pavilion and getting through those hurdles. That's the biggest one for us, 'cause right now they're all problems with success, too many cars, too much parking, they want shopping carts. We don't have shopping carts. We are crossing that supermarket/farmers market world. How convenient can we make it? Those are the problems we're having and those are good problems, successful problems.

Kelly Brisbois: Is there anything that we didn't ask you that you would like to talk about?

Brigitte Moran: No, I don't think so.

Woman 1: What does CCOF stand for?

Brigitte Moran: California Certified Organic Farmers.

Woman 1: The Marin organization is Marin Organic?

Brigitte Moran: Well, the certifying agency, Marin Organic, is more of a marketing organization, a support organization to organic farmers. Marin Ag Department has the

certifying agency, which is Marin Organic, MOCA, M-O-C-A, Marin Organic Certifying Agency.

Kelly Brisbois: You can be certified locally...

Brigitte Moran: This is the first county in the country.

Kelly Brisbois: ...by the state?

Brigitte Moran: Yes, or private organizations. There're not tons but there's several different organizations. For example, Whole Foods got certified by an organization to be a certified organic grocery store, and I thought, "Well, how could you do that when you're not all organic?" They said, "Oh, no. We're just certified that we won't alter anything that comes into the store that is organic," and I said, "Well, if you want for \$3500 we'll certify you as the organic farmers market." They said, "We're not all organic." I said, "Yeah, but we'll certify that you don't alter anything that comes in to the market." That's just tricky marketing.

Kelly Brisbois: What were you saying about that we're the first county to...?

Brigitte Moran: Our ag commissioner is Stacy Carlson. We are the first county to certify 'cause before it was just CCOF that did it and outside agencies, but now the county does it as a really reasonable cost to the growers. See, I don't know what the rates are for CCOF but I thought they were in the thousands.

Kelly Brisbois: Brigitte, thank you so much for this interview.

Brigitte Moran: Thank you.

Kelly Brisbois: Thank you for your time and for your participation in this project.

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