March 22, 2016

Honorable Susan Talamantes Eggman
Member California State Assembly, 13th District
State Capitol, Room 3173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 2324—Farmers’ Markets—SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Eggman:

The Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) is a statewide organization that represents both farmers and non-farm urban residents who support sustainable food and farming policies. CAFF is pleased to support your AB 2324, which would address record keeping issues that arose from recent legislation and also restore the ability of farmers to sell certain products within the certified section of farmers’ markets.

AB 1871 from 2014 made significant changes in the laws regulating marketing of agricultural products through certified farmers’ markets in California. Included in AB 1871 was the creation of certain record keeping and reporting requirements for certified farmers’ market operators, which, as interpreted in proposed regulations, would impose a significant burden on operators in northern California who do not customarily collect sales data from farmers. We believe that such information is best left with the vendors unless and until there is a need for enforcement officials to inspect those records in connection with an investigation of a consumer misrepresentation or unfair competition violation.

AB 1871 also banned from the certified section of farmers’ markets many products that had been sold there by vendors, such as animal by-products. We believe that allowing the sale of some of these products in the certified section would help farmers who otherwise would have to rent a second booth outside the certified section, something which most cannot afford. Making the market operator responsible for verifying that these products are actually composed of ingredients from the vendor’s farm seems like a prudent approach.

We thank you for introducing this legislation and seeking to rectify some of the issues that have arisen from AB 1871. CAFF supports AB 2324 and encourages its passage.

Sincerely,

David Runsten
Policy Director