



Media Contacts:

Shayla Sosa

Senior Director of Marketing and External Relations
Phone: 415.868.6608; shayla@agriculturalinstitute.org

OR

Andy Naja-Riese

Chief Executive Officer
Phone: 415.856.9680; andy@agriculturalinstitute.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Taste, Return, Repeat: AIM Launches Reusable Foodware Pilot at Thursday Marin Farmers Market

San Rafael, CA, January 7th, 2025 – The Agricultural Institute of Marin (AIM) is excited to announce the official launch of its Reusable Foodware Pilot Program at the Thursday Marin Farmers Market, in partnership with Zero Waste Marin (ZWM) and Sparkl Reusables. This initiative is a pilot program funded by ZWM and aligns with the Marin County Reusable Foodware Ordinance, all while representing a significant step toward reducing single-use foodware waste.

The pilot aims to help participating food and beverage vendors transition to reusable foodware, supporting a circular reuse system and advancing environmental sustainability.

Participating market vendors are already embracing the change. “It was a great first day offering reusable containers. I feel proud to have this option, and we received a lot of positive feedback,” shared Yuko Kaneko, chef and owner of Kinoko Japanese, a participating food vendor. “I hope we can circulate them quickly so that many more people can join this program. This is just the starting point!”

How the Program Works

Participating in the Reusable Foodware Pilot is simple:

1. **Request Reusable Items** – Order your food or beverage in a Sparkl reusable container from participating vendors.
2. **Return Used Items** – Drop off the used containers at designated collection stations located throughout the market.
3. **Visit the Sparkl Booth** – Stop by the Sparkl booth for more information or to retrieve your deposit (if applicable).

This program reduces waste by replacing non-recyclable and non-compostable single-use items, such as paper coffee cups, with sustainable alternatives.

Participating food and beverage businesses in the pilot include: Kinoko, Rozmary Kitchen, Porchetta Toscana/Pibil, Mr. Dim Sum, Wanna’s Kitchen, La Esperanza Pupuseria, Zolo Coffee, & Myriad Coffee Roasters.

For the first month, Sparkl Reusables is waiving the deposit for reusable containers to encourage participation and gather feedback. This initial phase will guide the transition to a potential deposit-based system.

“We’re thrilled to offer a solution that reduces waste and supports a sustainable, community-centered food system,” said Andy Naja-Riese, AIM’s CEO. “This pilot is the foundation for our long-term vision to implement a circular reuse system at the future Center for Food & Agriculture.”

Join us every Thursday, 8am - 1pm, at the Marin Farmers Market in the Veterans Memorial parking lot to enjoy delicious, locally prepared food while helping the planet.

###

About AIM

The Agricultural Institute of Marin (AIM) is an educational 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization headquartered in San Rafael, California. AIM’s mission is to educate, inspire, and connect communities, responsible farmers, and producers as part of a healthy, earth-friendly, equitable local and regional food system. AIM serves 400+ farmers, food purveyors, and artisans from 44 California counties who participate in AIM’s nine Certified Farmers Markets in the cities of Hayward, Newark, Oakland, Point Reyes, San Rafael, and San Francisco. AIM also provides hands-on and virtual education programs to thousands of children and adults, operates a farm audit program, runs a mobile market for older adults and underserved communities, curates a multi-farm produce box program, and operates CalFresh/EBT and Market Match services to create a healthier, equitable food system across the San Francisco Bay Area.

agriculturalinstitute.org

About Zero Waste Marin

Zero Waste Marin, otherwise known as the Marin County Hazardous and Solid Waste Joint Powers Authority, is a governmental agency representing the County and the 11 cities and towns of Marin. Our mission is to protect natural resources by promoting source reduction of waste through reuse, repair, and more mindful purchasing. To make recycling and composting easy, we offer a variety of programs including: the Household Hazardous Waste Program, the Zero Waste Schools Program, and public outreach and education programs. These programs align with County-wide goals to act on climate change and promote healthy, safe, and sustainable communities.

zerowastemarin.org

About Sparkl

Sparkl Reusables is a leader in the implementation of reuse and zero-waste systems in the SF Bay Area through education, design, and program deployment. By collaborating with local institutions, schools, senior meal programs, and businesses, Sparkl fosters a circular economy and helps reduce the environmental impact of disposable packaging.

sparklreusables.com