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SLO Natural Foods Moves and Expands!

Slow Money SLO group helps make it happen

by Jeff Wade, Slow Money Local Leader

July 9, 2013 - The 30 year young [SLO Natural Foods Cooperative](#) has moved into a larger, more comfortable space and will have their Grand Opening celebration on July 13th from 10-4 with food samples, prizes and music. All are welcome; you don't need to be a member to shop and prices are competitive. This store is bigger, brighter and has much more food, supplements, body care and pet food than the previous location. Staff can help with advice on health and body care and they have a great bulk department. See a [video preview](#) of the new store on Victoria Avenue in San Luis Obispo, just around the corner from the old location, open now!

Loans, board membership and volunteer support from the local Slow Money group have assisted SLO Natural Foods in their quest to expand and provide a comfortable place for their loyal customers as well as new friends, seeking healthy food alternatives and unique health care and household products. SLO Natural Foods was the first of six separate businesses who have

benefited from Slow Money SLO funding in our first year of existence. It was an especially great opportunity since they also have a mission to support local food suppliers.

Slow Money is a national movement seeking to connect local food and farm enterprises with people who want to know where their money is invested and support the local community. The book *Slow Money* by Woody Tasch espoused the importance of funding local food and farm businesses to begin and grow. The subtitle is “investing as if food, farms, and fertility mattered”.

A local Slow Money group was formed in July 2012 to bring the principles and benefits of this movement to San Luis Obispo County; we call it [Slow Money SLO](#) and are among the 30 plus local groups operating in the US and a few other countries.

The bigger picture is that local investments bolster the food and farm economy and build high quality, more resilient and sustainable food sources. At the same time, local investors can now touch and consume the products they have funded and know the farmer or producer where the fruits of their investment are realized. It includes helping to build the local supply chain that connects farmer and consumer.

How does such support come about? SLO County individuals come together at regular gatherings and get to know each other. Food is shared and entrepreneurs discuss their plans and explain how they are improving the local food system and providing a social good. In most cases these businesses are already operating. Individuals who feel a connection with the entrepreneur and their business may then arrange to get together and take the conversation to the next stage.

Loans or equity investments and terms may be discussed. The investing and borrowing parties determine mutually agreeable financial arrangements. In some cases, professional advice, services or connections are provided which can be just as important as funding in the early stages. The Slow Money SLO group is not an investment club and funds are not pooled.

The next Gathering of Slow Money SLO is August 6th. We meet at the SLO Grange on 2880 Broad Street. New investors, borrowers and all who are interested are welcome and there is no fee to participate. Visit www.SlowMoneySLO.org to express your interest or complete an entrepreneur form and you will be contacted with more details. Or, [send email](#) to learn more.