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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AIM Announces New Chief Executive Officer Andy Naja-Riese, MSPH

SAN RAFAEL CA, April 18, 2018 - AIM (Agricultural Institute of Marin), the organization that manages seven Certified Farmers Markets in the Bay Area, today announced the appointment of Andy Naja-Riese as its new CEO.

The news was announced at AIM by co-chairs of AIM's Board of Directors, Tamara Hicks and Lynn Giacomini Stray. In a joint statement they said, "We are incredibly excited to welcome Andy to the key executive role for this organization. He is a creative visionary, and compassionate leader, who has a wealth of experience in nutrition assistance and community agriculture programs. Andy's leadership and experience will continue to inspire AIM and set the bar in farmers markets while expanding AIM's farm-based education programs."

Naja-Riese expressed his admiration for AIM and his excitement to be leading the organization. "AIM is well known for being an early innovator of the farmers market concept, including integration with local communities," he said. "Farmers markets create community experiences where children and families can connect directly with farmers, ranchers, fishermen, and food purveyors to learn where their food comes from." He added, "AIM's farmers markets represent a win-win for Bay Area farmers and the consumers that can purchase nutritious foods and stimulate the local economy at the same time."

Prior to joining AIM, Naja-Riese was Chief of the Program Integrity Branch of the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, Western Region. He was responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly called Food Stamps and now known as CalFresh in California). In that role, he oversaw the administration of \$12 billion in benefits, redeemed by 8 million low-income households at grocery stores, farmers markets, and other retailers across the Western States. He has provided vision, facilitation skills, and

guidance to many state, community, and tribal partners resulting in vibrant local food systems and innovative, nationally-recognized education and marketing programs in schools and retail settings.

Andy received his Bachelor's degree in Community, Environment, Science, and Health from Cornell University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. He received his Master's degree in Society, Human Development, and Health from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Andy is currently the Secretary of the City of San Rafael's Citizens Advisory Committee on Economic Development and Affordable Housing and an active member of the Marin/Napa chapter of the Cornell University Alumni Ambassador Admissions Network. Andy resides in San Rafael with his husband, Gary, and enjoys gardening, cooking and fermenting local foods.

AIM's prior Executive Director, Brigitte Moran, retired in December after leading the organization for 14 years. Beth Schecter, MPH, MBA, stepped in to serve as Interim CEO until Andy arrives.

Naja-Riese will start as Chief Executive Officer on May 7th.

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About AIM

AIM's mission is to educate the public about the nutritional and economic benefits of buying locally grown food directly from farms, and to connect and support communities and agriculture. Success in achieving our mission requires collaboration and consistent mutual support among farmers, communities and AIM. The Board of Directors believes that we as a community can continue to grow a sustainable, local, and healthy food system.

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