

**RRRC Food System Public Meeting – Group Discussion Results
February 3, 2015
Warrenton Visitors Center**

1) By show of hands, how many are:

- Farmers – 4
- Other ag-related businesses – 1
- Large-scale buyers – 1
- Government – 7
- Other local citizens – 4

2) What market channels are you currently using to sell/buy your products?

- Commodity sales
- Local aggregator
- Farmers markets

3) Do you have any interest in expanding your operation? Why or why not?

- Yes, to increase net profit
- Yes, to make a living wage

4) For producers: Where are your products primary market(s)?

- Dairy: School systems and other locations within the region, as well as out of state
- Cattle: Pennsylvania and Kansas

5) For buyers: By show of hands how many spend 10% or more of their total food budget on local food?

- One person responded yes

6) What do you see as the barriers to selling and buying food products locally?

- Labor
- High land value
- Lack of infrastructure
- Regulations
- Stringency of organic standards
- Lack of time
- Lack of consumer demand
- Lack of supply
- Cheap gas
- NIMBY attitudes
- Labeling confusion
- Corporate marketing strategies (i.e. what is local?)
- Lack of consumer education

7) What are the opportunities?

- There is a rise in participation of new markets such as meal subscriptions and online groceries
- Food clubs are experiencing more success than CSAs

- Prices farmers receive from aggregators can improve if seconds and thirds are used
- Region is close to urban centers
- Proximity to ethnic markets with high demand for local foods
- Local foods usually have fewer preservatives which can be marketed to health conscious consumers
- Potential to correct undervaluing of livestock due to commodity marketing
- Proximity to customers with high income
- Can piggyback on increased interest in organic foods
- Increased interest in local foods among university students
- Families are driving increased interest in healthy eating and food safety

8) What resources/incentives if provided would help you sell or buy more food locally?

- Changes to local school purchasing policies to make sourcing local easier or even encouraged
- Processing facility for meats
- Processing facility for dairy
- Monetary incentives
- Changes to local ordinances that are prohibitive to processing facilities
- Regional co-op to find vegetable sales
- Public education

9) What would you most like to see come out of this project?

- One success story that is profitable/sustainable
- Projects that encompass more than farmers markets, and with a regional focus
- Increased community support
- A sustainable agriculture economy for the next generation of farmers
- Champion(s) to keep the effort moving

10) Any additional comments?

- Cloud funding could be used to help fund projects
- Local media should be utilized to increase public awareness of the effort and local food