

**RRRC Food System Public Meeting – Group Discussion Results
February 4, 2015
Culpeper County Board Room**

1) By show of hands, how many are:

- Farmers – 4
- Other ag-related businesses – 3
- Large-scale buyers – 1
- Government – 5
- Other local citizens – 5

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

- Grocery stores
- Farmers markets
- Internet
- On-farm
- Produce auction
- Stockyard
- Backyard
- Local independent stores
- CSAs

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

- No, do not want to take the risks involved
- No, focus is on providing on-farm education and want to maintain current programs
- Yes, want to expand by 23%; driven by the increased demand of existing and new customers
- Yes, want to add value-added processing

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

- Hay to local farmers
- DC metro area
- Expanding into other states
- Exports internationally especially orchards selling to Europe and Russia.

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

- Seven people responded yes

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

- Regulations (food taxes)
- Logistics
- Food safety regulations
- Scale
- Price
- Convenience
- Dependability
- Lack of variety in available local foods
- Lack of infrastructure
- Lack of power in market

- Lack of consumer confidence
- Liability
- Lack of subsidies to help farmers scale up
- Difficulty in attaining food safety certification
- Cost and time of certifications
- Producer education

7) What are the opportunities?

- Increase in funding opportunities
- Proximity to large markets
- Proximity to the federal government
- Improve efficiency to achieve full-field harvest; can process seconds and thirds or send to food banks
- Economic development potential
- Demand for education

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

- Grants, especially those with less cumbersome applications and a tighter timeframe between application and award
- Grant writers and a database of available ones
- Expansion of the cost-share program for high-tunnels
- Solar incentives
- Farm incubator, including land, equipment, training and mentors
- A regional staff person to assist with marketing
- Cheap labor
- Attract farm input businesses (e.g. equipment manufacturers, seed companies, etc.)
- Financial and farm planners
- Accountant
- Consumer education
- Logistics channel, including central pick-up locations

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

- Regional food council
- Deeper understanding of current situation and potential; weed out lifestyle farmers
- Evaluate consumer commitment to local
- Advertising
- Education for seasonal eating
- Increased buyer loyalty