

Food Systems Facilitation/ Second Meeting (April 13, 2- 4 PM)

Outcome of these meetings – items needed to put together strategic plan (vision, goals, strategies that will address key issues identified, prioritized projects, metrics to measure success)

Our region has a thriving and inclusive food system that:

- 1) Provides affordable and abundant healthy food for our informed families and community
- 2) Provides a competitive financial return, respect for our farmers, and good jobs for our community
- 3) Protects and regenerates the health of our farmland and natural resources

APPROVED BY GROUP, with no edits!!

Strategies Brainstorming Session structured with discussion on each key issue identified

- **Strategies that came up in the first session are the following:**
 - Centralized Job Bank
 - More gardening in schools to increase appreciation of food
 - Review zoning codes to see if food production is possible in new places
 - Food processing center for meat and produce
 - Organize distribution for local foods
 - Eliminate Food Obstacles
 - Strategies to address WATER!
 - Local food app
 - Good quality local foods at reasonable prices specifically for Food Banks
 - Definition of green
 - Good source of Seconds
 - Transparency (esp. with GMO's)
 - Connect local producers with restaurants and advertising of local foods
 - Agricultural training and mentoring for all that want it, but especially for low income, prisoner, and women's shelter populations
 - Orange County Community Kitchen

Issue 1: Lack of Labor

- Those on government assistance programs (besides Social Security) or doing court mandated community service, would be assigned work programs that are local food related to provide job skills and transition the person off assistance.
- Paid intern programs for seasonal vegetable/produce farmers. Certified internships w/specific learning experiences provided (not just pulling weeds).
- Livable wage and benefits needed for farm workers.
Payment for overtime worked.
- Understanding/education of labor laws for farm workers, and how that impacts pay, overtime, hazards etc.
- Hartland Institute an example of functional intern programs/student labor
- Profitability of the farm enterprise key to being able to provide living wage/benefits
- Certifications for Interns-result of the internship-provides marketable skills for resumes/future careers
- Certifications for field workers-job skills-bilingual education/training.
- Connecting MS/HS Ag programs and student families with STEM education
- Connecting those MS/HS students to Community College system for dual enrollment classes
- 5, Five incubators , recruit train, support new farmers, shared equipment
- Returning vets, can become farm labor
- Decent and affordable housing
- Training program for mentally ill,
- Job Bank

Issue 2: Lack of Farmers

- Incubators (see Lack of Labor bullets on 5 incubators)
- Increase awareness and appreciation of farmers
- Processing center (infrastructure makes farming easier and more attractive)
- Marketing our region as a place to farm
- Business planning and succession planning for farmers
- Local incentives to encourage soil and water protection
- Assistance to medium sized farms, Increase profitability Soil and water conservation
- Review of policies and assessment of effect on small med and large farms
- Encourage successful farmers to lease land to new farmers
- Farm Link-improve and increase awareness
- Mentorship
- Train farmers in schools, Rappahannock, FFA
- Fostering farm to school programs

Issue 3: Lack of Infrastructure

- Food Node: Keep food local first, incentives to buy, packaging, freezer, aggregation
- Farm to Chef Express and Market Maker
- Make sure superintendent and key decision makers have buy-in and local champions to push food service directors
- Working w private sector, grassroots efforts

Parking LOT issues:

- Water
- Soil protection
- Benefits of having farms: Wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, riparian zones, safe food, etc.
- Page and Rappahannock, models of farm to school
- Voluntary BMPs published for farms
- Education about urgency of problem
- Farm to Table

Key Issues for next meeting:

- Lack of Infrastructure (continued)
- Need for local food promotion/consumer education & preserving integrity of truly local foods
- Others from parking lot and/or attendees