

**Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Food System Planning**  
**On-going Items for Consideration**  
**July 29, 2014**

**ISSUES TO CONSIDER:**

We need to look at other national and statewide food system models:

- VT Food Desert Plan (VA Beach)
- UMASS Soil Building ...non-GMO grains
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- New generation farming

We need reliable data on sources of food donations to area Food Banks...

- Who's donating...?
- What roles are the farms playing...which farms are donating to the pantries...conventional & non-conventional?
- What is the frequency of visits to the food pantries/banks?
- # of individuals served on a weekly basis
- # of food pantries in the region
- The project should include clear, actionable items and share strategies of how to engage youth in this initiative

Who are other potential partners?

- Fresh Link
- Soil & Water Consortiums
- Farm Bureau
- Farmers Market youth Programs
- Culpeper Farmers Cooperative (Ed)

Possible Topics for Community Education & Outreach

- Matching beginning farmers with landowners...entrepreneurship opportunities in the food economy
- Sustainability Planning
  - Succession Planning/ Transitioning into and out of farming
- Conventional vs. Non-conventional farming
- Education on GMOs- What's the market for corn, soybeans, alfalfa, etc.?
- Marketing and identifying key players in the Washington D.C. market

Other Issues...How do we address them?

- How do we recruit youth to the project?
  - VCE has youth 4-H Program
- Reinforce the benefits of farming and new techniques to improve soil health
- Determine the most effective communications is needed to heighten the interest of farmers and the larger community...to show them what this initiative can really do for them.
- The project needs to clearly demonstrate the direct connections between farming and increased tax revenue; fiscal health
- All members of the team should agree to share knowledge of what's happening across the region regarding the food/agriculture economy...share with the local governments and other stakeholders
  - Farm Bureau
  - Soil & water conservation consortium
  - Marketing to the Washington, D.C. area...scaling up
    - Define the market
  - Keep other Aggregators in the loop
- Blue Ridge Produce
- Need for greater awareness & education of ag market demands
- Current and future market opportunities...What fits with our region's ability to produce?
- Future of farming and food production needs...

**Activity Assignments**

Activities	Responsibility	Deadline
Give brief summary of similar food system models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All</li> <li>• Don to provide VA Food Desert Plan</li> </ul>	On-going as plans are released
Share possible strategies for helping small farmers... focus on niche farming methods & other diverse farming opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All</li> </ul>	On-going
Bring ideas for effective marketing to the DC area...scaling up to meet the ag/food –to-table needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All</li> </ul>	During the Economic Impact Analysis process
Community Outreach (to youth, local organizations & farmers, etc.) with an effective message about the project...communication strategies...keep our message simple...no bureaucratic jargon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Michelle</li> </ul>	Prior to Meetings presenting results of Economic Analysis
Opportunities for producing & marketing value-added products...layering of products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All</li> </ul>	During the strategic planning process
New generation farming...what do they need?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ray</li> <li>• Kenner</li> </ul>	Look at past studies prior to survey and focus groups
Map out a farm operation and its potential new trajectories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kit: Farm at Sunnyside</li> <li>• Mike: Beef operation</li> </ul>	Prior to strategic planning meetings