

IL Food, Farms, Jobs Policy Task Force Meeting
Josephine Lauer Washuk
Organic School Project
5-7-08

1. Intro – OSP – NPO that provides wellness services to K-12 schools, primary focus is on healthy food procurement – organic, natural and locally sourced products
2. Farm to School Overview
 - a. Defn – curricular to connect youth to food source for nutrition/healthy reasons (field trips, speakers, gardens, Nutrition. Ed) vs. local food procurement
 - b. USDA Small Farms, School Meals Initiative 1997 to promote consumption of fruits and vegetables by encouraging procurement by state agencies/school districts of locally grown produce for economic stability of farms and health of youth.
 - c. DoD Fresh 1994 (8 states), 1997 (32 states), now 45 – allocated locally grown fruits and veg. to commodity program
 - i. (((((Illinois has allocated \$2 million annually to spend on fresh fruit and vegetables through the Department of Defense (DoD). The DoD allows participation in the program to all schools that request to participate subject to a \$500 allocation floor. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) allocated the money we could spend with DoD amongst all schools that selected yes under Fresh Fruits and Vegetables. Participation on the Annual Order Forms menu option on the Illinois Commodity System (ICS). In previous years, many schools that had money allocated to them failed to place any orders for fresh fruits or vegetables.)))
 - ii. Chicago typically opts out
 - d. National Farm to School Network – CFSC, Occidental College, Center of Food Justice – formed in 2000, funded by the USDA Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems (IFAFS 2000-2004) and Wk Kellogg Foundation
3. K-12 Institutional Local Food Procurement – Challenges, Barriers to Success
 - a. State bid regulations:
 - i. USDA NSLP contract awarded to lowest bidder; although there is “Buy America” lang., the lang. encouraging local food purchases is often absent from bids – confusion regarding federal laws on competition; 2002 amendment to Richard B Russell Child Nutrition Act – Section 9 stating “the Secretary shall encourage institutions participating in NSLP under this Act and school breakfast program to purchase, in addition to other food purchases “locally produced foods for school meal programs to the maximum extent practicable and appropriate.”

- b. Differences in food service structures:
 - i. self-op vs. contracts – differences in menu planning, ordering protocol and delivery systems – i.e. small self op can purchase direct from farmers or even farmers market, large district or one contracted with FSMC, like CPS, cannot...part of that is due to....
- c. Safety – liability insurance:
 - i. CPS requires up to \$5 million liability insurance from each vendor, eliminates possibility of contracting direct with farmers; HAACP plans
- d. Value Chain:
 - i. supply (quantity) concerns but also quality in terms of consistency and specs (138s vs. 100s for apples), delivery, processing– NYC carrots issue – and cost
- e. On-site limitations:
 - i. limited knowledge of food service staff – green beans; space and equipment issue – re-heating kitchens

That being said, there have been success stories; now estimated that over 1117 programs reaching 10,871 schools nationwide

- 4. I did study reviewing Farm to School in 26 states – and determined “success variables”
 - a. State legislation – VT, OK, IA, WA, OR, NM (see below)
 - b. Federal support, either:
 - i. DoD Fresh program – NC; or
 - ii. USDA Funding – Value-Added Development Grants (ME \$108k) to Federal State Marketing Improvement Program \$1.3 million to 21 states in 2007
 - c. Partnerships
 - i. University, land-grant based (NH, IA)
 - ii. Non-profit organizations (ME, IL)
 - d. Marketing/communications strategy
 - e. Also looked at procurement methods; and how much local food is actually served – is it just a salad bar, a 1 week event or is it more – none do everything (meat, dairy, produce, grains – only OSP pilot made attempt)
 - i. Co-op: often needs a coordinator or broker, either led by farm or NPO (IA GROWNLocally, FL New North FL Marketing Coop feed 300,000 students, CA Yolo County)
 - ii. Direct – WA, CA (mostly smaller districts where Food Service Director is “champion” of program and makes connections w farmers)
 - iii. Distribution – either wholesale (IL – CT and Testa) or with NPO as distributor Red Tomato in MA, or Forager model – Davis county CA
 - iv. Contract Growing – VT through VT Feed, IL – Seven Generations Ahead

5. Recommendations specific to legislation, based on other state legislation
 - a. Grants, funding for pilot projects
 - i. What IL HB5949 attempted
 - ii. VT H91 up to \$15k for each project from Dept of Ag
 - iii. WA HB2798 from Dept of Ed
 - b. Create “Farm to School Director“ Position
 - i. Within Dept of Ag –WA, IA and OK – and supported by Dept of Health, Dept of Ed, Dept of Human Services;
 - ii. OR HB 3601 has position housed within Dept of Ed – allocated \$95 k for position which includes:
 - (a) Assist school districts that participate in the USDA NSLP & B in utilizing Oregon food products and produce from school gardens;
 - (b) Promote food- and garden-based educational activities in school districts
 - (c) Provide information to school districts on how farm-to-school and school garden projects may help implement wellness policies mandated by the United States Department of Agriculture;
 - (d) Assist school districts in incorporating farm-to-school and school garden projects into wellness policies mandated by USDA
 - (e) Work with the State Department of Agriculture to develop farm-to-school related programs; and
 - c. Technical Assistance funds – to food service personnel (WA) or to farmers to increase markets through selling products to institutions
 - d. But IL has opportunity to take Farm to School procurement to the next level with the recommendations made by this task force – that would or could outline specific recommendations for
 - i. Production Committee: Determining supply – does IL have enough meat, dairy and produce to feed K-12 institutions, associating supply with economic impact on local farmers and economy; and
 - ii. Educating farmers on two-tier pricing – so that their products are affordable to school districts
 - iii. Infrastructure Committee: Setting up appropriate distribution channels, whether they are through institution-specific co-ops, or to provide economic incentives to broad line distributors and produce wholesalers to procure locally and offer such products to their institutional clients, or to encourage an NPO to pilot an effective contract growing model
 - iv. Consumer Access Committee: education within K-12 schools on agriculture, food systems, nutrition and health; also determine

desire by school districts across the state to purchase locally –
make the case that the demand is there and translate that into a
recommendation for pilot projects, funding to connect farmers to
schools