

IL Local and Organic, Food and Farm Task Force  
1/30/08

Task Force members in attendance:

Penny Roth, DHS and the Illinois Interagency Nutritional Council  
Bridget Holcomb, Illinois Stewardship Alliance  
Jim Slama, FamilyFarmed.org  
June Tanoë, America's Second Harvest, Kids Café Program  
Delyane Reeves, Dept of Ag  
Tom Grant, farmer, City of Carbondale  
Vicky Ranney, Prairie Crossing  
Jim Braun, Illinois Farmer and Consumer Coalition  
Allan Sexton, farmer  
Greg Christian, catering company, organic school project  
Dean Craine, Agri-Energy Resources, farmer  
Wes Jarrell, farmer, UIUC faculty  
Warren King, consultant  
Tom Spaulding, Angelic Organics Learning Center  
Jack Erisman, farmer  
Chuck Paprocki, Dayempur farm, Shawnee Ecological Farming Association  
Gerry Kettler, Consumer Affairs Director for Niemann foods, Director of Niemann Foods Foundation  
Carrie Edgar, University of Illinois Extension  
Debbie Hillman, Evanston Food Policy Council  
Bryan Sharp, IL Farmers Union, farmer  
Keith Bolin, farmer  
Therese McMahan, DCEO  
Johari Cole, farmer  
Stan Schutte, farmer

Task Force Members joining by conference call:

John Vanek, Harvest Food Group  
Erika Allen, Growing Power, Chicago Food Policy Advisory Council  
Donna Lehrer, farmer  
Chris Eckert, farmer  
Chris Dennis, City of Chicago (sitting in for task force member Mary Ellen Caron)  
Kim Wasserman, Little Village Environmental Justice Organization

Other attendees:

Amy Lemeris, masters student at SIU with Dr. Leslie Durham  
Dayna Conner, community food activist in Carbondale area  
Chris Miner, Marketing Promotions Department, Dept of Ag

Called to order by Director Hartke at 10:20 a.m.

Welcome by Director Hartke  
Suggested we start all meetings on time  
Introduced Dept of Ag employees Chris Minor and Delyane Reeves  
Stressed the importance to meet the goal by Sept 30, and strive to make the report  
“thorough, concise, and precise.”  
If we need any assistance he will try to accommodate us.

Director Hartke facilitated Selection of Chair and Secretary  
Director Hartke opened the floor to nominations for Chair  
Jim Braun nominated Wes Jarrell  
Chuck Paprocki nominated Jim Braun (Jim Braun declined the nomination)  
Jim Slama seconds the nomination of Wes Jarrell  
Jack Erisman moves to close nominations  
Keith Bolin seconds  
Ayes have it  
Wes Jarrell is elected Chair of task force

Director Hartke opens it for nominations for Secretary  
Debbie Hillman nominates Bridget Holcomb  
Seconded by several individuals  
Jack Erisman moved to close nominations  
Tom Spaulding seconds  
Ayes have it  
Bridget Holcomb is elected Secretary of task force

Wes Jarrell began discussion of goal and what the end product will look like  
Suggested that the detailed work will take smaller groups, but important to have a larger conversation about the goals and the end product  
Delayne Reeves stated that the Dept of Ag needs to have the report one month in advance of deadline to get through legal team  
Jim Braun offered that the idea behind the timing is to get it do legislation session, but the end point can be considered flexible  
Wes Jarrell stated he is optimistic that we can get it done in time, need to defer to Dept of Ag

History of how this task force came about  
Jim Slama stated that through his work from Sustain he connected with Vicky Ranney and found that 97% of organic food in IL is grown from outside of the state. Sustain then conducted a feasibility study on promoting local and organic food, and found that Debbie Hillman and Jim Braun were independently looking at ways to promote local and organic food in IL, Debbie Hillman connected with her representative, Julie Hamos, who then championed the legislation establishing the task force. HB1300 passed overwhelmingly in the house the first time, unanimously in the Senate, and unanimously with an amendment when it went back to the House. The goal is to create a legislative package that will make IL a leader in local and organic food.

Debbie Hillman stated that the reason Julie Hamos became involved is that she sees the economic and social justice that can come from a healthy food system. The substance of the bill is that it is promoting economic development. Primary focus is the food system, but the land also provides everything else for us: fiber and forestry products, etc. Debbie Hillman also commented on the history of the coalition, and said she continues to get calls from people who are interested in joining the coalition. The coalition is a grassroots group grew out of promoting the legislation, and after the legislation passed we semi-formalized the coalition into the IL Food and Farms Coalition.

Delayne Reeves asks that task force members check the contact sheet to make sure that the information is correct.

Jim Slama pointed out other political connections that helped this task force come to be, including Sen. Collins and Steve Frankle in Gov's office.

Wes Jarrell stated that the message that comes through is: it's ours to lose at this point! We have support (although no money). Need to focus on what needs to be in the final report to see this through.

Wes Jarrell asks if there is any previous task force experience among the members. Therese McMahan is on a task force for youth dropouts.

Tom Spaulding stated that other states have done similar things, i.e. Michigan [www.mich.gov](http://www.mich.gov) Michigan Food Policy Council

Jim Slama added the Red Tomato Report, Organic Harvest, and the larger feasibility study it is based on

Delayne Reeves will post information such as this on Dept of Ag website, and Bridget Holcomb will collect information

Jim Braun stated our overarching agenda is how to build an IL field to fork food system. The primary objective was to find individual components that are lacking. We need expertise from everyone at this table and beyond.

Greg Christian stated that it's going to be hard to have a map done in 7 months that will be relevant in 10 years. This should be considered a first chapter of the story with an ask at the end. Stories are important, and we should tell a story about where we are and what we need to get to chapter 2.

Debbie Hillman then passed along what Julie Hamos said: we should try to get people engaged really quickly during this meeting with concrete ideas. Suggested that we think about the report like this: Identify problems (this is a list), identify solution, identify obstacles, collect personal stories.

Wes Jarrell added opportunities to this list, and suggested we can probably get a great acronym out of this!

Tom Spaulding suggested we also need a vision statement, for bringing pieces together with a longer term goal in mind. In addition to report, he hopes the task force will consider how to continue to engage the process. Forums? Public meetings? Home

parties? If nothing happens from the legislature, we will still have collected the grassroots and opportunities will come out of there.

Jim Slama read part of legislation that highlighted the policy and funding request to come out of the task force, and stated that we will need to build a strong constituency to support this.

Therese McMahon suggested we should go from the mission of making IL a leader in local and organic foods. For that we will need to identify markets.

Jack Erisman pointed out that although we want to be a leader, we're at the back of the pack, despite having many resources necessary to be at the forefront.

Wes Jarrell then moved to a brainstorming visioning exercise of going around the room and having each member state how they would like to see the food system change with our effort:

- Look at inputs: locally grown grain, fodder/feed for protein consumption
- Skill and will – need more people!
- Farmer training – growing new farmers
- Research – plant and soil research with an ecosystem base
- Seamless transition from farm to retailer shelves
- More farmers
- Develop a role for extension to play
- Reach out to other farmers who are in conventional ag
- Real market with real financing – stable and financeable
- Access for all – food security, food availability, and that we look at all sectors of the population
- Awareness and ongoing education about local and organic
- Opportunities for new farmers, funding and training beyond gateway training – long term
- New market development
- Value-added enterprises
- Organic processing that could send to food deserts and export beyond the state
- More farm preservation opportunities
- Awareness and access, youth and families in more isolated areas in the state
- Have consumers commit to buying IL
- Try to help people who have a farm but have to work/live in the city
- Outreach to urban markets for fruits and vegetables for opportunities to buy locally
- State agencies increase support and expertise to help farmers interested in processing and value-added
- Regional packaging, processing and distribution centers
- Access to farmers markets all year round
- Access to gardens in schools
- Education: consumer, producer, legislator
- Centralized information on organic transitioning, how to begin a farmers market
- More resources provided for beginning steps for processing

- Get back some of the processing we lost
- More farmers, more training – ramp up the scale that some organizations are already doing
- More training within our land grant universities
- Involve community organizations
- Food local area networks – “food hubs” that have processing and distribution capabilities
- Get rid of the notion of “designer food,” make good food more accessible to everyone
- Increase support for infrastructure on smaller farms: harvesting equipment, etc.
- Map out resources that are already available
- Identify and expand current markets and provide assurance in safety
- State identity for pr efforts
- Processing for poultry
- Investment needed for equipment for getting into farmers markets – coolers, etc.
- Access to larger market information: who wants what and how much?
- Wholesale quantity and quality food at wholesale prices
- State ID: know where the food comes from
- Caterers that feature local foods, have access to local foods
- Take some land out of base for alternative crops without losing subsidies
- Communication that fosters trust with conventional farmers
- Staff for task force – funding!
- Risk management for farmer in the local and organic markets
- Look at the effects of commodity subsidies on local and organic production
- Farmland preservation – finding a balance between needs for development and food
- Creating productive areas that are overlooked now
- Increased awareness in protecting marginal areas that could be used for food production
- Transparent, viable marketplace for local foods
- Change in perception that the cheapest food is the best
- Change in environmental impact statements – farmland is now considered vacant
- Preserve ag zoning for local and organic production
- Food access and availability of high quality food
- Work with transitional farmers
- Connection between urban and rural
- Community gardens, taking people out to rural areas and getting their hands dirty
- Education of local lenders to the benefits of supporting local and organic ag
- Create value-chains
- Promote safety of our food and water
- Education of land use
- Check and balance on statewide basis for zoning
- Leasing opportunities for farmers
- Need educators – especially farmers

- Work closely with conventional farmers
- Educate legislators and business owners on the economic benefits of buying locally
- Mutual respect of current food system – we do not want to obliterate the current food system nor do we want that reputation
- Liability insurance
- Promote good, local food
- Local food corridors, i.e. I 57 initiative
- Permeate entire population of IL with an awareness of agriculture
- Healthy rural communities
- Institutional purchasing – state and private institutions
- Review of institutional barriers to small producers
- Find ways to encourage municipalities to have individuals to small-scale production for home use
- List the misperceptions about what small farmers do and how we do it

Wes Jarrell then opened up ideas for committees

Suggested four to five committees, perhaps 5-8 people on each committee

- Production: farmers, farmland
- Infrastructure
- Food Access
- Public education and awareness
- Economic analysis
- Financing
- Funding the task force
- Legal impediments
- Food safety
- Integration and prioritization committee
- Writing
- Red team – external review committee

Economic analyses that already exists: Ken Meter, Bruce Swanson, CFAR, ongoing research from Pam Horwitz

Some of these ideas for committees are expertise that is needed on all of the committees. Also, we do not want to “type-cast.” For example, we do not want to put all the farmers in one, separate committee.

Task force agreed that it is an option to bring in outside experts for this work, also opportunity to build constituencies across the state.

Discussion of current funding and opportunities:

- Land of Lincoln Ag Coalition has some funding opportunities,
- Jim Slama has staff time and website funding,

- Bridget Holcomb has staff time,
- Dept of Ag has dedicated some resources

Tom Spaulding pointed out that the task force appointment is two years long. What do we do after the report is done? If we don't have a stated role, do we want to make one up? Do we want this to be something that perpetuates? Then suggested that we do a review after one year, and consider along with our recommendations what we want the future of this task force to be and who should be at the table.

Suggestion for committees at this point in the task force process:

Production

Infrastructure

Consumer Access

Education

Economic Analysis

Funding (select small group)

Wes Jarrell then allowed people to sign up for committees.

Jim Braun then went through some of the original brainstorming/visioning ideas to determine if these committees covered the issues and concerns members had brought forth. Most fit into committees while some were cross-cutting issues that all committees would address.

Wes Jarrell then formed committee breakout groups to select chair/co-chairs and note-takers, and have the committees list what resources and data they would need.

Committees and members:

Production

Tom Spaulding

Allan Sexton

Donna Lehrer

Debbie Hillman

Johari Cole-Kweli

Dean Craine

Infrastructure

Warren King

Bridget Holcomb

John Vanek

Jim Braun

Tom Grant

Greg Christian

Vecky Ranney

Bryan Sharp

Delayne Reeves

Consumer Access

Erika Allen

Penny Roth

Jim Slama

Therese McMahon

June Tanoue

Chuck Paprocki

Education Committee

Stan Schutte

Mary Ellen Caron

Carrie Edgar

Economic Analysis

Keith Bolin

Jack Erisman

Wes Jarrell

Task Force Funding

Erika Allen

Tom Spaulding

Therese McMahon

Task force agreed to have monthly meetings on the last Wednesday of every month.

Adjourned 3:05 pm.