

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

Illinois Local and Organic Food and Farm Task Force
July 2, 2008
Meeting

Wes called the meeting to order at 10:20

Introductions of guests and Task Force members

Task Force members present:

John Vanek
Jim Braun
Greg Christian
Carrie Edgar
Warren King
Debbie Hillman
Vicky Ranney
Bill Olthoff
Jim Slama
Dean Craine
Allan Sexton
Bridget Holcomb
Wes Jarrell
Erika Allen
Leslie Durham
Chuck Paprocki

Guests:

Mike Sands
Terence Mitchell
Robin Schirmer
Phil Rovang
Greg Sutton for Therese McMahan
Gretchen Knapp
Dagmar Budikova
Karen Lehman
Elise Benveniste

In addition, special guests from Urbana attended the meeting: Mike Martin, high school agriculture teacher in Urbana came with five students at the invitation of Wes Jarrell.

Minutes from June meeting were approved

Agenda review

Dinah Ramirez will not be able to join us due to illness. Gretchen Knapp and Dagmar Budikova were asked to do a short presentation during the lunch hour.

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

Coordinators' report

Most of the listening sessions have been completed, with two more listening sessions possible at Angelic Organics and a Spanish listening session in Chicago. Debbie and Jim Braun are willing to do more if people have suggestions for other locations. Of the 15 already held around the state, at least 430 people have attended including 23 task force members and various public officials such as the Mayor of Urbana and State Rep Lisa Dugan. Debbie and Jim Braun commented that they are not only seeing help for the work of the task force, but these sessions are also gathering community members together resulting in some informal groups working on these issues. Jim Braun commented that he is working with UDSA in Illinois to come up with a list for all the grants and loans that are available to farmers and small businesses in the state. He has also networked with someone from the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago who is willing to help as we go forward.

Debbie and Jim Braun recently met with Rep Julie Hamos. Julie reiterated that she wants to be involved with this processes as we get to crunch time. Julie would not give any figures on what funding amount she believed was possible to get through the general assembly. She also commented on her previous negative experiences with pilot projects since too many of these projects die after the initial funding of the pilot project. Jim Braun suggests that we coordinate what we recommend with what Julie believes is possible. Wes added that the Task Force should start at what we want and then ask for her input, since we are never going to get more than we ask for. While members need to be realistic, we should not limit ourselves at this point since we are a Task Force and we need to develop the best report that we can. We weren't charged to write what's legislatively feasible, but a report that is a blueprint for where the state should head from a long term, holistic approach. We should also not expect that everything we recommend will be acted on in the first year. In addition, many of the recommendations coming out of the committees are not aimed at legislative changes, but at changes on other levels. This will give the report context and provide a broader framework than just legislative recommendations.

Mission statement

As a Task Force, we need to find a mission statement that no member strenuously objects to. Although the language is not what each of us would ideally have, mission statements never are. However, members are asked to bring up major concerns. Wes brought up that we need to not only focused on economics, and we need to insert other dimensions of local and organic food systems into the first paragraph. Another requirement of mission statements is that they are as short as possible. Debbie and Jim Braun brought up their concern that bridging the urban-rural divide be included.

Warren King moved that we accept the Wes Jarrell draft as the mission statement of the Task Force

Vicky Ranney seconds

Debbie offered an amendment to include "for present and future generations" to the core value of responsibility.

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

Bill Olthoff offered an amendment to include commas after healthy and local and to remove “and vitality.”

Erika Allen offered an amendment to change “fairness” to “fairness and justice” and to change “stability” to “equity.”

Vicky Ranney offered an amendment to start each of the core value statements with the word “it.”

Motion carries as amended, mission statement passes as follows:

The mission of the Illinois Local and Organic Food and Farm Task Force is to create a plan and funding strategy to facilitate the growth of an Illinois-based food and farm system that creates jobs, promotes overall economic and community development, and enhances healthy, local, and organic food availability throughout Illinois.

The core values of this system are:

Economic Vibrancy: It creates urban, suburban and rural economic development and jobs by encouraging Illinois farmers to raise more food and farm products for Illinois markets and encouraging Illinois citizens to purchase more Illinois-grown food and farm products.

Fairness and Justice: It fosters long-term economic and social equity among Illinois families, farms, businesses, and communities.

Accessibility: It makes Illinois food and farm products available in every rural, suburban, and urban community at reasonable prices.

Health: It produces healthy, flavorful food and products that enhance community health.

Responsibility: It promotes respect for Illinois individuals, cultures, and natural resources for present and future generations.

Final Report

While we are charged with making recommendations to the General Assembly, those recommendations need to come from a blueprint of the food and farm system that we describe in our mission statement. Jim Braun suggested that have a two part report that first has recommendations for the general assembly and secondly presents a blueprint for everything that is needed beyond the state legislature. Other members commented that the report needs to have justification with the recommendations. As discussed earlier, the report is the first step towards the goals we have outlines. It has to be useful to the legislature, but it should have benefits to everyone. We need to have a foundation that looks many generations ahead and focus on ideas that will perpetuate themselves within the system. To further this discussion of the final report there was a sense that members need to have a draft of the report to respond to beyond the components presented from the committees.

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

Presentations

Dagmar Budikova, Director of GEOMAP: Institute for Geospatial Analysis and Mapping
GEOMAP was opened in November for outreach, training and support to faculty and community members with a focus on the environment and sustainability. These tools allow the integration of science with geographic elements. At its base, GIS has the ability to produce maps and see relationships, and has ability to integrate attributes and use in decision-making process. Remote sensing is the capability of scanning an area for a geospatial model.

Gretchen Knapp, Research Associate, Institute for Geospatial Analysis and Mapping
GIS can provide information for the Task Force. For instance, GIS can help develop asset maps on any level, help put together data collections that aren't currently available, and help support decisions on where to locate distribution points, new processing centers, etc. This tool can also help match consumers to producers since many producers are looking at ways to decrease their food miles and increase efficiency. GEOMAP charges for services dependent on the size of the project. If the data was already in place it is possible that the institute could do the work for free. They are currently working with Land Conservancy on mapping local foods that could serve ISU for their local foods commitments as the schools works towards having cafeterias using local foods. This mapping project started within the county, expanded to a five county region, and will expand to all of Central Illinois. In response, Task Force members spoke about the possibilities of having maps to show how much acreage in Illinois is used for production other than commodities. This could be used as a tool for showing how much land would be needed for meeting local foods contracts.

Elise Beneviste, Masters Student in Regional Planning from UIUC

Elise highlighted grants and loans available for local food systems. The information from her presentation can be found here:

<http://asap.sustainability.uiuc.edu/groups/localfood/lrproducers/grantsloansguide/view>

She referred to an IEPA matrix called A Guide to Federal, State and Regional Loan and Grant Programs that can be accessed here:

<http://www.epa.state.il.us/water/cafo/cafo-loan-matrix.pdf>

She also created a spreadsheet of what she called Illinois Food Systems Change Organizations, which can be found here:

<http://asap.sustainability.uiuc.edu/groups/localfood/lfsreports/spreadsheet/view>

Food systems are not widely considered part of planning because the culture and the economy of agriculture are seen as separate from cities. This divide is being bridged through a recent paper, but it is a long process. Karen Lehman suggested that we could create a pool of people that have received many of the grants and loans that Elise highlighted to help others in the state learn how to create successful applications. Karen has herself received three Community Food grants, which is more than the entire state of Illinois. In general, Illinois is at the bottom of states receiving federal grants. There is an initiative to try to increase this through the Illinois Entrepreneurship Network which

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

provides small business consulting for entrepreneurs. Some of the people involved are Extension employees, and Extension could be a hub for work specific to food systems entrepreneurs and advocates. The largest reason that Illinois is not receiving more funding for food systems work is because of the disconnect between these programs and the people who could be applying for them. Some matching sessions are already provided. For example, Community Food Security Coalition helps show how to write successful grant applications.

Reports from committees

Production: has refined some proposals and still has a few holes they are currently working on.

Infrastructure: has some writing to do and has completed all of the interviews except one on dairy. They are still following the draft outline of the report that the Task Force has been working on. Recommendations are about done and will now need to look at where there is overlap with other committees and link recommendations to funding sources when possible.

Consumer Access: has a 47 page document that they pared down to 11 pages of recommendations. The next step is to take those recommendations and couple them with the current situation and obstacles and generate funding recommendations.

Education: will work on a public education recommendation, and beyond that they will be working with other committees.

Economics: has hired an intern, Michael Biegel, to bring together existing data and do some projects on impacts of doubling local food consumption. They are working with having Dixon Springs Agricultural Research Center as the center of a feasibility study on the I-57 initiative. They hope to include an economic example of an incubator program, and as many real-world examples as possible.

Other discussion

We should be open to considering what other state agencies we could connect to. Looking at other states, the most successful have been organizations that get buy-in from multiple state agencies, including tourism.

Some people have problems with the Illinois Fresh label since it is widely inclusive, including food companies that do not use local products but are headquartered in the state. However, many labeling campaigns featuring local products are already in place in many parts of the state, and many more are in the works. Individual communities are creating local label campaigns and Illinois Stewardship Alliance is coordinating Buy Fresh Buy Local chapters.

The Vision for Agriculture report used a methodology for calculating GDP and other indicators. We could use a complementary methodology. In calculating the present market share of local foods, we could survey distributors since they know what they are

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

sourcing within the state. However, this would not cover farmers markets, CSAs, and other direct marketing.

As a Task Force, we need to make the distinction in the terms local and commodity. Commodities are interchangeable, and local products have regional identity. Beyond that, we need to be scale-independent as much as possible. We can take scale into account if there are other negative aspects, for example, farms can be too small to be profitable, large companies may apply undo pressure on smaller producers, etc. The focus is the change of custody of the products, and giving farmers more options for markets. This is especially an issue with organic and other value-added agriculture products having to be sold to the conventional market because they don't have access to diverse marketing, marketing, or consumer education.

Local government can have a role in local food systems work, and Phil Rovang suggested to the committees that recommendations be included for what local governments can do. In Illinois, there are a few coalitions of county boards/supervisors, but no statewide coalition.

Writing committee

The writing committee aims to have a first draft by July 30th to send out to the Task Force before the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned 2:55 p.m.

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT