

# Ohio Food Policy Council

## Minutes

### August 11, 2008

The Ohio Food Policy Council met on August 11, 2008 at 1:00 p.m. at the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA), 8995 E. Main Street, Reynoldsburg, Ohio, in the Bromfield Administration Building's Auditorium A.

**Council members in attendance:** Casey Hoy, Sister Christine Pratt, Randy Hunt, Tim Sword, Tom Jackson, Joe Logan, Ellen Mee, Jennifer Scofield, Tom Price, Tim Leasure (for Melissa Stanford) , Ken Kopycinski, Elizabeth Lind, Bob Marx, Cecelia Torok, Paul Fraunholtz, Jeanne Carroll, Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, Shandell Jamal, Leslie Schaller, Mark Glasper (for Richard Mason), Bret Layman, Brian Williams.

**Council members absent:** Jim Chakeres, Dr. Ronald Copeland, Jack Fisher, Dr. Carol Goland, Dr. Hugo Melgar-Quinonez, Dr. Howard Sacks, Dave Wible.

Chairman Hargett called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm. After brief introductions the minutes for the June meeting were approved.

**Old Business:** The draft by-laws were tabled as an important provision related to removing members for repeated non-attendance was added. The Council will review the new draft for consideration at the next meeting.

A public listening session is scheduled for November 8<sup>th</sup> at the Northeast Ohio Food Congress, the Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission will be having their own listening session around local food issues at a conference in September and Amalie is working with two RC&D Council's and the Tecumseh Land Trust to set up a listening session in the southwest region of the state. **Council members are encouraged to identify locations, times and partners for listening sessions in the Northwest, Southeast and Central regions.**

**Model Food Initiatives:** Lori Panda, Senior Program Manager –ODA and Julie Fox, OSU Extension Specialist presented information on the state Market Maker program. The web based platform is “making connections that work” between producers and consumers, retailers and institutions around the state. They shared information via a PowerPoint demonstration and hard copies. After the presentation questions were raised as to how the word is getting out about the program. There have been some promotional activities but more outreach is needed. Julie will make sure that council members receive an e-mail with the PowerPoint for use in appropriate outreach venues.

- Future Model Food Initiative presentations may include innovations in distribution – Fresh Fork and Ohio Proud Distribution LLC.

**Council members were encouraged to share food systems innovations from around the state.**

Task Force chairs began to review their work over the past two months and present recommendations to the full Council.

**Food Systems Assessment Task Force:** Casey Hoy discussed the framework for a state level assessment which will include data on production, processing and consumption. **The full Council needs to set a goal or target for the Ohio food system.** This will help guide the assessment and progress of the Council. Best estimates currently are that we are sourcing less than one percent of total food consumption through locally grown and raised product. Kellogg Foundation has set a national goal for their work at a 10% local target. The Council will take up this topic at the October meeting.

The following recommendation was presented from the Food System Assessment Task force:

*Appropriate \$95,000 to assemble the disparate databases on food production, processing and consumption in the state, analyze the data and identify any information gaps to assist the Ohio Food Policy Advisory Council in establishing benchmarks for local food systems in the state.*

\*There was discussion on the work of the Healthy Food Access Task Force and action on their recommendations before the group came back to deliberate and act on the recommendation above. It was clarified that this recommendation is directed toward the 2010-11 budget. Tom Jackson moved that the council accept this recommendation; a second was presented by Leslie Schaller.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Healthy Food Access Task Force:** Lisa Hamler-Fugitt presented an overview of the work of this task force over the past two months. There is an opportunity to coordinate the work and recommendations of this task force with those of the Anti-Poverty Task Force created by the Governor. The following recommendations were then presented and deliberated:

**#1** *Utilize the Federal Farm Bill Fresh Fruit & Vegetable program in Ohio elementary schools and educate producers on the procurement process as a model to encourage the use of Ohio grown and raised agricultural products in schools throughout the state.*

Cecelia Torok gave the Council an overview of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program which has served 25 Ohio schools through the pilot. The program targets schools with the highest percentages of students in the free school lunch program. Expansion of the program through the 2007 Farm Bill will expand the program to 30 schools. Future efforts will work to reduce the per student costs to allow the program to reach more schools.

The goal of the recommendation as presented was to use this program to encourage use of local fruits and vegetables and expand the idea of local procurement to other Ohio schools

and encourage the utilization of recent Farm Bill amendments allowing schools to use a geographic preference in the procurement process.

The recommendation was modified to read as follows:

***Utilize the Farm Bill Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program in Ohio elementary schools. Educate producers on the procurement process as a model to encourage the use of Ohio grown and raised agricultural products including fruits, vegetables, protein and dairy products in Ohio schools. Encourage the Department of Education to advise school districts regarding local purchasing directives in the procurement process.***

Joe Logan made a motion to accept the revised recommendation. The motion was seconded by Brian Williams.

The recommendation passed the Council unanimously.

***#2 Expand and fund the Ohio Food and Agricultural Clearance Program to 17 million dollars per year/ 34 million per biennium to provide wholesome, Ohio grown, fruits, vegetables and protein items to Ohioans with income at or below 200% of the Federal poverty level.***

The 200% of the federal poverty level is being used by the Anti-Poverty Task Force and other groups working to address hunger in the state. There was some discussion about the utilization of the program in the past and current needs as identified in the gap analysis conducted by the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Food Banks.

According to Lisa, these funds are not general revenue funds but are a combination of Title 20 funds and TANF funds. All of the foods used in the Agricultural Clearance program are Ohio grown products. With the “shelf stable” products used in the Ohio Food program, Lisa estimated that about 80% of those processed foods are Ohio products.

To promote consistency dairy was added to the list of foods to be provided.

The recommendation was modified to read as follows:

***Expand and fund the Ohio Food and Agricultural Clearance Program to 17 million dollars per year / 34 million per biennium to provide wholesome, Ohio grown, fruits, vegetables, protein and dairy items to Ohioans with income at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.***

Casey Hoy made a motion to accept the revised recommendation. The motion was seconded by Jennifer Scofield.

The recommendation passed the Council unanimously.

***#3 Access all available federal funds through coordination and collaboration and provide sufficient state resources to expand nutrition education and promotion efforts for the following programs:***

Food Stamp Program, Food Stamp Nutrition Education, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, Child Nutrition Programs, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, Food Distribution Programs, Commodity Supplemental Food Program.

Jeanne discussed the opportunities for more collaboration in this area. The state has a State Nutrition Action Plan (SNAP) that can serve as a guide for nutrition education and promotion in the state.

Tom Jackson made a motion in support of the recommendation. Leslie Schaller seconded the motion.

The recommendation passed the Council unanimously.

***#4 Support food policy changes that provide food stamp categorical eligibility and provide simplification to reduce barriers and provide access to all food assistance programs.***

Jeanne shared the Department of Job and Family Services has already begun the process of seeking a federal waiver to make the process more efficient and effective through categorical eligibility. Making these changes in the program will provide more food assistance to those in need as well as bring more federal resources into the state.

Lisa Hamler-Fugitt made a motion in support of the recommendation. Joe Logan seconded the motion.

The recommendation passed the Council unanimously.

**Agricultural Viability Task Force:** Brian Williams reviewed the work of the task force that has focused initially on one of three structural guidelines for their work- Community and Political Viability. This area involves economic development in rural areas, connecting farms and the larger community, including agriculture in community and economic development, farmland preservation, institutional buying, government engagement and policy reform.

Brian then presented the recommendations from the Agricultural Viability Task Force:

***#1 Support the expansion of funding for the Clean Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program.***

Brian mentioned that there is support from the Governor and bi-partisan support in the legislature for the continuation and expansion of the Clean Ohio program.

Lisa Hamler-Fugitt made a motion in support of the recommendation. Brian Williams seconded the motion.

The recommendation passed the Council unanimously.

***#2 Staffing at the Ohio Department of Development for a full time agricultural economic development professional to work on agricultural issues other than energy.***

Chairman Hargett emphasized that this recommendation would not take away from the important role of agricultural economic development work in alternative energy but that this recommendation would bring agricultural and food systems development on par with energy.

Casey Hoy made a motion in support of the recommendation. Leslie Schaller seconded the motion.

The recommendation passed the Council unanimously.

***#3 A revolving loan fund/grant option for farmers who donate easements in the state farmland preservation program.***

This recommendation would allow land owners who apply to the Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program a second option. They could choose to donate the full value of the easement and instead receive a grant (of approximately 30% of the easement value). This would allow the land owner a greater tax deduction and financial resources to reinvest in agricultural viability.

Other potential benefits would be those of connecting farmland preservation with farm profitability, stretching the state's limited farmland preservation resources, retention and expansion of Ohio's agricultural industry and potential job creation.

During the discussion around this recommendation it was discussed that additional information, and process is necessary before the idea can move forward.

Lisa Hamler-Fugitt asked if an amendment had been drafted, a fiscal review had been conducted or if the Department of Taxation had analyzed the potential implications. None of that process has begun.

Lisa Hamler-Fugitt made the following motion:

*The Agricultural Viability Task Force begin the process of review to examine the feasibility of creating a revolving loan fund or grant option for farmers who donate agricultural easements to the state farmland preservation program.*

Randy Hunt seconded the motion.

The recommendation passed the Council unanimously.

**Market Connections Task Force:** Dave Wible, Chair of the Market Connections Task Force was unable to attend. Amalie Lipstreu gave an overview of the work of the task force over the past two months. The group has identified the major areas of focus that will guide the work of connecting producers and consumers in local food systems and helping farmers market their products. Amalie then presented the short-term recommendations of this task force.

*#1 Direct resources (\$50,000) toward improving the Market Maker program. Specifically, conduct outreach to encourage more Ohio producer participation and work with Ohio institutions to get more detailed data on those that are interested in doing local procurement and develop relationships with those institutions.*

Tom Jackson suggested that further development and promotion of Market Maker should involve continuing support of the administration. Sister Christine stressed that many of these efforts involve economic development and job creation.

Leslie Schaller made a motion in support of the recommendation. Sister Christine Pratt seconded the motion.

The recommendation passed the Council unanimously.

*#2 The state appropriate \$500,000 to the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Marketing Division to support a comprehensive public education and marketing campaign for Ohio grown and raised products.*

Council members expressed concern that \$500,000 stretched over two years was not adequate to create a successful marketing campaign. It was felt that a successful marketing campaign was critical to any efforts to grow the local food system in the state. After some deliberation the recommendation was modified to read as follows:

*To create and retain jobs and leverage existing investment, two million dollars should be appropriated to the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Marketing Division to support a*

***comprehensive public education and marketing campaign for Ohio grown and raised products.***

Tom Jackson made a motion in support of the recommendation. Joe Logan seconded the recommendation.

The recommendation passed the Council unanimously.

*#3 Review existing resources that can be directed toward agricultural businesses focused on local food systems. These include low/no interest loan programs, grants and possible tax incentives.*

Chairman Hargett expressed support for the utility of the recommendation. There was some discussion around what the goal for reviewing the resources would be, who would be involved in putting this information together and where the information would be housed.

The goal for bringing this information together with contact information is promote the utilization of existing business support programs by the food and agricultural sector. The agencies involved in compiling the data would be the Department of Agriculture, Department of Development and USDA. Information would be housed at the Department of Development with links to the information provided through the Department of Agriculture and state USDA offices.

The recommendation was modified to read as follows:

***Create a directory of existing low/no interest loans, grants and tax incentive programs available for agricultural businesses focused on local food systems to be housed and maintained at the Ohio Department of Development.***

Randy Hunt made a motion in support of the recommendation. Joe Logan seconded the motion.

The recommendation passed the Council unanimously.

The next Ohio Food Policy Advisory Council meeting was scheduled for Monday, October 6<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm. at the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 pm.