

## **Task Force A Meeting Summary Monday, July 17, 2006**

Task Force Participants: Bob Craig – MI Department of Agriculture, Keith Creagh – MI Department of Agriculture (chair), Michael DiRamio – Food System Economic Partnership, Mike Hamm – MSU, Jim Herbert – Neogen Corporation, Bill Knudson – MSU Product Center, Terry Morrison – MI Food Processors Association, Dan Reeves – Associated Food Dealers of MI, Todd Regis – United Food and Commercial Workers 951.

Additional Participants: Susan Cocciarelli – Michigan State University.

The eighth Task Force A: Expanding Food-Related Businesses and Jobs meeting convened Monday, July 17, 2006 from 1:30 – 3:00 pm at Constitution Hall in Lansing. MDA Deputy Director Keith Creagh chaired the meeting and began the meeting with a welcome and a review of the agenda.

Mr. Creagh reviewed the most recent draft of Recommendation A5: Support for Food Processing, and opened the meeting up for discussion and comment on the draft. Task force participants made some revisions and slight modifications, and decided that the draft was ready to go before the full council for a vote, with the discussed revisions. Recommendation A5 reads:

### **Recommendation A5: Encourage and support new and existing food processing businesses, and investigate meat processing needs.**

- a) MDA and DEQ should assist existing and prospective food processors in navigating environmental and food safety regulations, obtaining necessary permits and achieving compliance.
- b) MDA should work with appropriate partners, such as the MSU Product Center, to convene a workgroup/conference to investigate meat processing needs in the state and to discern solutions that will meet the needs of farmers and processors in a cost-effective manner.
- c) MDA and appropriate partners should analyze and develop strategies to address challenges to existing meat processors including supply and capacity concerns.
- d) The state should develop economic policies that benefit food processors, such as incentives for using Michigan products and financing/capitalization for development, retention and expansion.
- e) MDA, MEDC and relevant stakeholders should explore new and emerging processing opportunities in the state, such as organic foods processing, as public demand for “niche products” continues to grow.

MFPC staff member Kristin Brooks explained that the goal of the next phase of this meeting was to give Task Force A participants an overview of the work of the council, and the work of the other three task forces. Ms. Brooks then presented to the task force participants information on the original executive order, and the goals contained therein. She explained how the recommendations from the council meet those goals and reviewed a chart showing those relationships. She reviewed the recommendations from the other three task forces.

Ms. Brooks then reviewed the Task Force A recommendations. They are:

- Rec. A1: Information and Collaboration Opportunities
- Rec. A2: Agricultural Processing Renaissance Zones (APRZs)
- Rec. A3: Supermarkets in Underserved Locations
- Rec. A4: Agri-Food Entrepreneurship
- Rec. A5: Support for Food Processing (DRAFT)

Ms. Brooks led a brief discussion of these five recommendations, and asked task force participants to rank the recommendations to help staff in determining the order in which they should be presented in the final report to the Governor.

Finally, Ms. Brooks explained to the task force participants that the future of the council and task forces is still under discussion, but that there are important tasks the council and task forces can work on in the future and MFPC staff is working to develop a plan to accomplish them. She promised to keep task force participants updated on the progress of the final report and on its delivery to the Governor.

Ms. Brooks thanked the task force participants for their work and time, and asked task force participants to complete an evaluation to assist in planning for the future of the MFPC. This is the final meeting of Task Force A for this phase of the Michigan Food Policy Council.