



JANUARY 2012 TASK FORCE MEETING SUMMARIES

ACCESS TASK FORCE – JANUARY 10, 2012

In Attendance:

Amanda Edmonds, Mike Hamm, Bob Randels, Holli Hamel, Benn Kohrman, Eric Davis, Mike Perelli (for Stan Bien)

Jane reviewed the MFPC goal - “80% of Michigan residents will have easy access to affordable, fresh, healthy food, 20 % of which is from Michigan sources,” AND the charge to the committee, which is “to identify and support opportunities to make local food available to all populations in Michigan”.

Mike Hamm gave a Good Food Charter point of view on the goal and that MFPC’s niche is to engage agencies of government into the good food partnership. Mike explained that the 80% number was somehow once generated by MDA at the request of the legislature to define access. At that time MDA provided a number to the legislature of 40%. So 80% is twice that amount. Jane will research the origination of this 40% number within MDARD..

This initial meeting of the task force was full of lively, thought-provoking discussion and engaging dialog. The group agreed that a place to start is with the metrics we will need to use to indicate whether or not success has been met. For example, how do we define “easy access” and where does he 80% of residents or the 20% .

It was decided that we need to break our big goal into smaller parts that can be addressed. What can we measure now? Some of the conclusions were:

- To limit our scope to programs and resources related generally to in-home, family consumption of food, where metrics may be available, for instance:
 - Farmers markets, farm stands, gardens etc...
 - EBT sales at farmers markets
 - SNAP participation
 - School meals, summer food
 - Emergency food
 - Availability of retailers – food outlets
- Within this scope,
 - What are barriers?
 - How do we define “easy access”?
 - Can we create a new baseline of sub-metrics that will be indicators to help “move the needle” on our overall goal?

The Task Force concluded that we need to continue to decide how to break down our definition of access and create our own credible definition before we can move to the 20% of the food piece of the goal. Let's survey members individually to get input about what to include.

Eric Davis described the Michigan Benefits Access Initiative as a possible information resource for reaching people who may be eligible for public food benefits.

Bob Randels mentioned that he has approached by folks at MDARD about creating program for harvesting venison for hungry people and the food banks. The intent is to look at Michigan's deer population as a food source and possible help reduce the deer population which is too large in our state.

Jane referred the group to a directory of food programs and resources that MFPC is working updating, called Nourishing Michigan. It is a publication that describes how the many federally funded food programs are administered by government and private sector in Michigan, who is eligible, how the program operates, the economic value to the state etc... It is a good guide for getting an orientation to the billions of dollars in food program spending that occurs in Michigan.

Amanda Edmonds made a plea that as a task force, we should be concerned about Project Fresh. There has been some interest by MDCH in making the program electronic, requiring technology instead of paper coupons for redeeming benefits at farmers markets. There is a concern that this change would restrict the number of farmers, markets, roadside stands that could "sell" fresh and healthy foods to Project Fresh customers and limit access. We need to protect the purpose of Project Fresh. **We will ask Stan Bien to give an update on this issue at our February task force meeting.**

Ben Kohrman gave an update on a possible initiative that DHS may be undertaking along with the Governor called "No Kid Hungry". This is a partnership with national organization Share Our Strength. There may be the opportunity to create a statewide collaborative anti-hunger campaign. Ben assured the group that MFPC would be included in the planning or creation of such an undertaking due to the MFPC's collaboration with state agencies and the food system.

Ben also suggested we expand our Task Force membership to include representatives from the grocery industry, Michigan Nutrition Network and the Michigan Farmers Market Association.

NEXT STEPS:

1. Jane will survey members of the task force about indicators they think we should use to break down our goal into measurable pieces
2. Jane will do some research within MDARD to find the origin of the food access number of 40% used in the good food charter goals.
3. NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING is February 14th at 11:00am

FOOD BUSINESS TASK FORCE – JANUARY 17, 2012

In Attendance:

Dennis West, Auday Arabo

Not in Attendance: Diana Carpenter, Edward Deeb, Jim Herbert, Ken Nobis, Tom Kalchik, Mike DiBernardo, Ludia Guttierrez. Jane Whitacre met with Mike DiBernardo on Jan 20 to seek his input and perspective, which is included in this summary.

Jane reviewed the MFPC goal - "Michigan will generate new agri-food businesses at a rate that enables 20% of food purchased in Michigan to come from Michigan." AND the charge to the committee, which is "to identify opportunities for Michigan food businesses to be created and prosper by producing and selling more food".

With this small group, the task force chatted extensively about how to approach the big goal, starting with metrics. We agreed that the focus of his task force is on increasing the supply of produced food, not necessarily on farmers, which is a different task force. Dennis suggested we start with USDA/Economic Research Service for metrics and indicators about food processing and production. Jane explained to Dennis and Auday that other task forces were trying to break down their overall goal into smaller, more measurable pieces specific to Michigan. "How do we split out sub-categories of "agri-businesses?" For example, do we break agri-business" into categories such as retailers, wholesalers, processors, distributors to get industry specific data? Or do we break into categories based on other aspects of our food system?

Comments / questions that arose:

- How do we determine if agribusinesses are sourcing Michigan made ingredients and products?
- Do businesses have a way to communicate business-to-business to source their food for production?
- Who knows where food is sourced?
- What does the MSU product center know about this?
- Processors are often the nucleus for knowing who grows the raw products and ingredients needed for processing. In many ways the supply chain starts with them. It would be helpful to have an active Michigan food processors association to help serve as a resource about things that can be measured as we pursue our goal.
- Are there opportunities to align the services of the various government agencies to streamline business development? Agencies such as MEDC, local economic development MDARD, USDA Rural Development?
- Access to capital is a huge barrier right now.

It was decided that we need to break our big goal into smaller parts that can be addressed. What can we measure now? Options may be:

- Institutional purchasing
- Processors
- Retail
- Wholesale

Within these areas,

- o What are barriers?
- o How do we define “easy access”?
- o Can we create a new baseline of sub-metrics that will be indicators to help “move the needle” on our overall goal?
- o How much food purchased in Michigan is from Michigan now?

At the February meeting we will decide which aspects of agri-business to focus on and what measurables exist to assess progress

NEXT STEPS:

1. Jane to complete a meeting summary
2. Get more folks to attend next meeting
3. NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING is February 21, 2012 at 11:00am

FARMER TASK FORCE – JANUARY 19, 2012

In Attendance:

Bill Bobier, Natasha Lang, Eugene Barnes, Jane Bush, Jim Goodheart, Evan Smith, Jane Whitacre
Evan Smith volunteered to chair the task force – thank you Evan.

Jane reviewed the MFPC goal - “Michigan farmers will supply 20% of all Michigan institutional, retailer and consumer food purchases.” And also, the charge to the committee, which is “to identify and support opportunities where Michigan farmers can sell more of their locally produced food in Michigan.”

The task force engaged in lively and thought-provoking discussion about the challenges of their goal. What can be done at a high level / policy level?

Comments / questions that arose:

- What units of measurement could we use to determine if farmers are producing more and that supply for local food is being met? Sales? Pounds? Per-capita consumption versus per capita consumption? Jane Bush suggested USDA/ERS and NASS.
- Should we imply focus on a scale that is meaningful to small and medium sized producers?
- Is there a way to brand local product so consumption can be measured?
- How do retailers keep track of Michigan product sales? Do they? Can they?
- Can the Pure Michigan Brand be used for food products?

Natasha shared that the Marquette Food Co-op used a point-of-sale system with bar codes that allows them to track sales of individual Michigan produced products. The group was interested in learning about it and how other retailers do that. Natasha agreed to write up a short description of how their POS system works. Maybe a pilot project could be done to explore this?

The group talked about the need to have a better connection / association / that represents small – medium sized farms and that they are not easily accessible for information sharing, training and

education purposes. Processors used to help in this role but since there is less processing, there seem to be fewer points of aggregation and gathering for farmer access.

Bill Bobier shared his research about per capita production versus per-capita consumption and his effort to identify crops where there is a gap in Michigan. We identified several “opportunity crops” such as chicken, some varieties of potatoes, carrots, cucumbers, yellow onions, lettuce, romaine, and cabbage. Perhaps an “Opportunity Crop Campaign” could be done to encourage production of specific crops and fill this supply gap? Maybe specialty crop block grant dollars could be sought to support such a thing? Maybe connecting farmers better to schools for planned production of fruit and vegetables?

NEXT STEPS:

1. Jane to complete a meeting summary
2. Invite more folks to attend next meeting such as someone from Farm Bureau, Sysco or Gordon Foods
3. NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING is February 16, 2012 at 10:00 am

Local Food Policy Council Network Task Force – January 10, 2012

Present: Rich Pirog, Terry McLean, Randy Bell, Jane Whitacre, Cheryl Danley, Patty Cantrell, Jeanne Hausler (not present – Diane Golzynski)

Rich Pirog facilitated the meeting. He and Terry McLean co-chair this task force.

Jane Whitacre explained the charge of the task force – underlining that the task force can go beyond providing recommendations to the council, it has the green light to take actions toward achieving the goals

The following four short-term goals and accompanying strategies were identified and discussed during the call. “Short-term” = between now and the June 21 MFPC meeting. It was decided that long term goals need to be identified but can’t be specified right now (next meeting topic).

GOAL 1 - Development of a Michigan food policy council directory

Strategies

- Cheryl has begun collecting some information on existing and aspiring councils based on a June 2011 meeting she convened– task force members are directed to send Cheryl additional local food policy council contacts, Cheryl will compile into simple table and send to Jane
- Randy and Jane will meet to discuss how to define a local food policy council and whether it is necessary for a local council to do policy work to be included in the proposed network

GOAL 2 – Identify and make available resources that will assist local food policy councils

Strategies

- Jane / Jeanne will be finalizing the food policy council guide in the next weeks and making the resource available to those groups identified in the directory (Goal 1) and others as well.
- Task force members will collect examples of food policy council by-laws and articles of incorporation, as well as other potentially useful food council resources and send them to Jane. Jane will work with Diane to begin a Library of resources that can be posted on the MFPC website.
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GOAL 3 – Hold an initial gathering of current and aspiring local food policy councils to determine value, purpose, interest, and goals for a state-wide network of councils

Strategies

At next taskforce teleconference, we will discuss the options of:

- Piggybacking the convening on to the June 14th Good Food Charter meeting
- Piggybacking on to the June 21 MFPC meeting
- Convene a stand-alone event

GOAL 4 – Develop a set of membership requirements and structure for a network of councils

Strategies – to be discussed at next task force call. Jane and Randy will put together some initial membership requirement suggestions.

Other points of discussion:

1. It is important that we approach the creation of a network based on the needs and interests of the local food groups. We need to build from the grass roots, not “top down”.

2. We identified that the following communities have food groups in place right now, those which could be our “charter members”:

Detroit

Washtenaw County

Macomb County

Flint

Mid-Michigan

Southern Clinton County

NW Michigan

EASTERN Upper Peninsula

Kalamazoo

Battle Creek

Grand Rapids

3. An important, broader goal for a statewide network is to build alignment with the Michigan Good Food Charter

Terry McLean will set up the February, 2012 task force meeting for mid-February

Institutional Purchasing TASK FORCE – JANUARY 23, 2012

In Attendance:

Kathy Fedder, Michael Rowe, Marla Moss, Brad Purves, Betti Wiggins, Todd Regis, Ben Kudwa, Colleen Matts, Jane Whitacre

Jane reviewed the MFPC goal - "Michigan institution will source 20% of their food products from Michigan growers, producers and processors AND, the charge to the committee, which is "to identify and support opportunities where Michigan schools, hospitals, correctional facilities and public food programs to procure Michigan produced foods."

Members of the the group began by sharing information about their purchasing work. Betti Wiggins of Detroit Public Schools, feeds 45,000 children daily. Brad Purves, MDOC feeds 43,000 inmates daily, Marla Moss reported that average daily participation in October of 2010 was 860,000 kids in the public schools across the state. In Michigan, \$258 million was spent on school lunch and \$77 million spent on breakfast last year.

Lengthy conversations about experiences and goals of the individuals programs took place. How do we measure? Can we break our goal own into smaller bites? More questions than answers....

Comments / questions that arose:

- Marla: I think purchasing 20% locally will be difficult for schools, mainly due to the time and effort it takes to look or the producers.
- Betty: Food is paid for by many sources and isn't necessarily locally grown even though it might be purchased via a Michigan vendor.
- Colleen Matts: asked Mike Rowe what his hospital's purchasing of local foods was. Mike said it is hard to say, maybe close to 20%.
- What is the definition of "LOCAL" How do we even know if we are sourcing Michigan made ingredients and products? Can this include Michigan sourced?
- Mike mentioned that hospitals have unique challenges for procurement such as open menus. He said it is a lot of extra work to find farmers and the pouts they need.
- Mike also described the "4 Star" program that Michigan Health and Hospital Association leads. Hospitals can earn stars for categories of attainment such as or pediatric meals, labeling nutrition info in cafeterias, buying local foods.
- How do we work more with the distributors and food serviced companies to source food for schools and hospitals? Sysco, Gordon Foods and Van Eerden are working on local procurement.
- Betty was asked about her asparagus project. She explained that Keith Creagh connected her directly to the Michigan asparagus Association and they are negotiating volume, price and product right now. This might even require additional farmer production - planned production. What other foods could we do this with? Betty mentioned potatoes, acorn squash as a few.
- Kathy Fedder reminded us that fresh frozen is another alternative to fresh that could allow additional foods to be sourced. Many products are fresh frozen and stored and therefore, could be more available during the school year.

- Colleen explained that though the Farm-to-School work, three surveys re now being one:
 - o Census survey about local foods

- o SE Michigan survey about interest in local foods
- o Survey of farmers about interest in selling to institutions. Barriers etc...
- Todd mentioned that it would be very useful to get a “directory” of farmers, products and processors to be able to match them up with institutional purchasers.

Next Steps:

1. Jane will write up meeting summary
 2. Jane will invite additional folks to participate in task force (university, Michigan Health and Hospital Association).
1. NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING is February 27, 2012 at 11:00am