



Michigan Food Policy News

January 2012

About MFPC:

The MFPC was created by executive order 2005-13. It brings diverse, food-related stakeholders together to recommend programs and policies to the Governor. It gives stakeholders a forum to identify policies that harness the potential of Michigan's food system to aid in communities' economic development, provide children and those in need greater access to fresh and healthy foods, and support stewardship of our finite land and water resources.

Vision

Michigan is a state with a thriving food system and industry, well-nourished, healthy people and strong, diverse food economy.

Mission

The Michigan Food Policy Council cultivates a safe, healthy and available food supply for all residents while building on the state's agricultural diversity to enhance economic growth.

Unique purpose

The purpose of the MFPC is to focus on the role of government, at all levels, in supporting and improving Michigan's food system through education, policy change, public engagement, innovative problem solving and private-public sector partnerships.

2012 TASK FORCES Team Up and Get to Work



THANKS FOR THE HELP! In addition to members of the Michigan Food Policy Council, some 20 other experts are taking action to address MFPC goals on strategic task forces.

As 2012 is upon us, the members of the Michigan Food Policy Council have begun the real work. "What do we do?", "How do we do this?", "What does success look like?" "Who is going to be in charge?" "Who is going to pay for it?" are the initial questions when we look at the four big goals for MFPC this year.

"The Michigan Food Policy Council structure is a bit hard to explain," says Jane Whitacre, Director.

"It may be easier to say what we are not. We are not a project, we are not a non-profit organization, we are not a state agency. Simply put, the MFPC is a leadership group hand-picked by the Governor from Michigan's food system. It has been assembled to advise, convene, connect people, inform and identify policies, programs, resources and initiatives that can support the Governor's health, wellness, and economic goals." "Whew, that's a mouthful!"

In addition to council members, experts and food leaders from many areas of the food system are also contributing. This will be of great value to the Council, given the scope of the giant goals we have taken on. Each task force has been given a charge to identify two short term and one

long term strategy that will make a difference. For example (and these are fictional):

- ⇒ creating a food hub collaborative for Michigan is an example of an initiative that could make strides toward generating more local food purchases for institutions.
- ⇒ Setting a goal to ensure that every county in Michigan has 3 farmers markets that accept E.B.T. sales (bridge card) could be a way to increase access to fresh and healthy food and increase sales for farmers.

Carrying out any recommendations from Task Forces will need to include some of the What, Who, Where, How and Whys.

2012 TASK FORCES AND THEIR GOALS:

INSTITUTIONAL FOOD TASK FORCE: Michigan institutions will source 20 percent of their food products from Michigan growers, producers and processors.

FARMER TASK FORCE: Michigan farmers will profitably supply 20 percent of all Michigan institutional, retailer and consumer food purchases and be able to pay fair wages to their workers.

FOOD BUSINESSES TASK FORCE: Michigan will generate new agri-food businesses at a rate that enables 20 percent of food purchased in Michigan to come from Michigan.

ACCESS TASK FORCE: Eighty percent of Michigan residents (twice the current level) will have easy access to affordable, fresh, healthy food, 20 percent of which is from Michigan sources.

Local Food Council Blooms— Mid-Michigan

Randy Bell, of Michigan State University Extension in Ingham County joins us to tell us about the development of another exciting local food group that has emerged in Mid-Michigan.

MFPC QUESTION 1: What is the name or your local food council and how did it get started? Please give a little history.

RB: Our efforts to establish a food council has its roots in a comprehensive community health assessment process undertaken in Eaton, Clinton and Ingham counties in 2007. The results of a citizen survey identified “improve safety of food,” “improve quality of food” and “access to healthy food” as ranking 3rd, 4th and 7th on a list of 25 concerns that were “essential and very important” to respondents. As a result, the Land Use and Health Resource Team, which conducted the assessment, invited MSU Extension to take the lead in organizing a community-based action team to formulate a community response. Thus, in the fall of 2008, work began to establish a food council.

In our organizational development, we burned through a lot of time and energy deliberating about a name. Frankly, it became a distraction. It was decided that since we were a food system workgroup, that we’d use that name for the time being until the time appeared right to revisit our name. Since then, we’ve addressed questions about our geographic reach and purpose which, now decided, may lead us to again open up the name conversation.

MFPC QUESTION 2: Who are the members?

RB: Our membership includes people with the experience and perspectives of urban farmers, food bankers, educators, community health professionals, resi-

dents, AmeriCorps volunteers, school food providers, community organizers, elected officials, gardeners and more. One of our goals is to build a strong core of people from every sector of our community-based food system, including people who traditionally have been excluded from food system deliberations

*I’m amazed at how similar the issues are that are emerging from local council development efforts such as food access, community gardens, school food, and food entrepreneurship”
Randy Bell MSUE, Ingham County*

and decisions.

MFPC QUESTION 3: You seem to be working on a very specific organizational structure with by-laws, terms of membership etc.... Why is this so important to your group?

RB: How a group makes decisions and who gets to decide is all about belonging and feeling empowered to make positive changes. Our hope is to create an environment for “inclusive decision-making.” What this embodies is that all members share in important decisions about their food, not just a “board.” By having a structure for membership and decision-making, we are saying to people, “We value your participation and perspectives and invite you to join a larger effort.”

MFPC QUESTION 4. What are the goals/ needs / priorities you plan to address?

RB: Early in our formation, we conducted outreach to traditionally excluded audiences. Some of the issues that emerged from this outreach were Food Policy & Systems, Economic Development & Markets, Community Gardens & Gardening, School Food and Nutrition & Health.

MFPC QUESTION 5: What kind of help is your food council going to need as you initially evolve? Can you think of any ways that MFPC or other local councils around the state could help?

RB: Honestly, our goal of inclusiveness and openness to people traditionally shut out of decision-making about food issues is something that’s “easier said than done.” Local and regional food councils that become, or devolve into closed groups populated only people paid to do this kind of work are likely to fail. I’m willing to bet that most of the communities working to create food councils are (or will) struggle with this challenge. There’s no reason that we can’t learn from each others’ experiences and avoid pitfalls. More and more food councils are holding local conferences and events, as we are in Lansing. Addressing food security, justice and democracy are critical and these events are a good venue for examining and addressing these issues.

MFPC QUESTION 6. What value do you see, if any, in developing a statewide, local food policy network?

RB: If the network is cognizant of the fact that each and every local or regional food council has many similarities AND differences, I think it can work.. I’m amazed at how similar the issues are that are emerging from the council development efforts such as food access, community gardens, school food, and food entrepreneurship. One common asset we all have is the Michigan Good Food Charter. Since the Charter identified strategies through 2020, it can be a very helpful guide as food councils decide what they want to do.... and when. I do believe a network of councils can help keep us connected about common issues, challenges and opportunities.

For more information, about the Mid-Michigan Food System Workgroup contact:

Randy A. Bell
Extension Educator for Community Food Systems, Ingham County MSU Extension

Come on! Take a Risk; A conversation with Keith Creagh

With so much happening in Michigan's food and agriculture industry everyone is trying to determine what works and what doesn't. How do we measure economic impact of local food? How do we define and measure food access? When is the investment worth the return? Some things can be measured in dollars, some in pounds, some in people. But some things are complicated and we struggle how to evaluate programs based on numbers we can gather...

As the MFPC Task Forces are now at work, they are seeking ways to identify progress. In many cases, we are looking for numbers and data that has never been collected. In some cases, the data collection is possible but complex and costly. How do we balance our effort to be entrepreneurial and being "DOERS" against planning, measuring and evaluating, which in many cases takes more effort than the work itself? Where do we draw the line of risk taking?

We asked Keith Creagh, Director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and Chair of the Michigan Food Policy Council for his insight.

Question: *Albert Einstein said "Imagination is more important than knowledge" How do you feel about that statement?*

KEC: We certainly need both, but the balance is what's necessary. We may be limiting our imagination by only using traditional production practices, marketing, and the products we grow. There are many different ways to look at food and agriculture. I also like to refer to Thomas Edison who said "Success is 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration." *The work is where things truly get done.*

Question: *Farmers are entrepreneurs. They learn by doing and trying things. Is there a culture of doing that exists in agriculture that differs from other industries?*

KEC: *Farmers face many unpredictable variables such as markets, weather, insects, diseases—all that requires them to adapt, a strength of any entrepreneur. In other industries, you often work for someone else. Farmers are self-employed, small business owners and have a more direct stake in the outcome. The doing, reviewing, revisiting, and re-doing is ingrained in agriculture.*

Question: *On a scale from 1-10, (1 is a risk taker, 10 is not) how would you gauge your personal comfort level with risk-taking?*

KEC: *I'd say I'm a 7.5 as Director of MDARD, though I'm never willing to put the industry at risk. Our governor has an entrepreneurial spirit and in order to reinvent Michigan, has encouraged us to take more risk—not be foolish, but be willing to stretch and occasionally fail. He says "Be bold, aim high", and I like that.*

Question: *What advice do you have for the MFPC Task Forces and folks who are helping work on our goals about taking a risk, or trying something new?*

KEC: *My advice: 1) set lofty goals, 2) try new, innovative things, 3) don't let "perfect" get in the way of progress 4) remember its about the journey, not just the destination.*



**"DON'T LET
PERFECT GET IN
THE WAY OF
PROGRESS"**

Keith Creagh,
MDARD Director

FOOD HUB UPDATE from Director Creagh

The CS Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at MSU has agreed to be a co-convenor, key partner, and resource for Michigan's food hub initiative. This will mean a wealth of resources for our group, including research, education and outreach. We welcome the talents of Director Mike Hamm, and Senior Associate Director Rich Pirog. In addition, Marty Gerencer of Morse Marketing Connections LLC, who presented on Regional Food Hubs and National Food Hub collaboration at our first convening, will be working closely with us and helping to plan the upcoming meeting.

We continue to work with our federal partners to discuss funding opportunities, as well as explore various state options. In the meantime, MDARD is committed to providing technical support to food hub projects (e.g., food safety training, traceability, licensing, etc.) to help strengthen your efforts. If you have a specific need, please contact Jeanne Hausler at hauslerj@michigan.gov or 517-373-9790.

MDARD and the CS Mott Group at MSU met early this month to solidify our partnership around food hubs, and are in the process of establishing a leadership team to help coordinate meetings of our food hub group and coordinate projects. To help Michigan's effort align with national food hub efforts, we plan to call our effort the Michigan Food Hub Community of Practice (think 'learning network') so that it aligns with a newly created National Food Hub Community of Practice that includes USDA-AMS. This link should also help increase our chances of receiving USDA funds and technical support for our Michigan work.



Michigan Food Policy Council

Our Mission:

Michigan Food Policy Council cultivates a safe, healthy and available food supply for all residents while building on the state's agricultural diversity to enhance economic growth

Governor Appointed members of the Michigan Food Policy Council

- Auday Arabo of West Bloomfield: president of Associated Food and Petroleum Dealers, Representing Food Retailers
- Eugene H. Barnes of Detroit: board member of Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, Representing Urban Agriculture
- Patricia Cantrell of Beulah: owner of Regional Food Solutions, Representing Sustainable Agriculture
- Edward Deeb of Bloomfield Hills: president Michigan Food & Beverage Assn., Representing Restaurant Sector
- Amanda M. Edmonds of Ypsilanti: executive director of Growing Hope, Representing Community-based Urban Development
- Lydia Gutierrez of Dearborn: owner of Hacienda Mexican Foods, Representing Food Processors
- Michael Hamm of Mason: chair of C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at Michigan State University, Representing Higher Education Institutions
- James Herbert of Lansing: CEO/chair of Neogen, Representing Non-food Manufacturers
- Kenneth Nobis of Saint Johns: president of Michigan Milk Producers Association, Representing Michigan Agricultural Organizations
- Todd Regis of Lansing: vice president of United Food and Commercial Workers 951, Representing Organized Labor
- Michael Rowe of Portage: food service director for Bronson Methodist Hospital, Representing Hospitals, Healthcare Systems, and Public Health Organizations
- Dennis West of Marquette: president of Northern Initiatives, Representing Rural Development
- Wayne Wood of Marlette: president of Michigan Farm Bureau, Representing Michigan Agricultural Organizations

Upcoming MFPC Meeting dates

Monday, 2/6/12, 10 a.m. until 12 noon
Monday, 6/21/12, 10 a.m. until 12 noon
Monday, 10/8/12, 10 a.m. until 12 noon

Meetings to take place at Greenstone Farm Credit Services Office, 3515 West Rd, East Lansing, MI 48823 (thank you!)

Contact: Jane Whitacre, Director
Phone: 517-243-3987 Email: whitacrej@michigan.gov
WEB: www.michigan.gov/mfpc

Thank you to Brenda Smith for proof-reading this newsletter

THANK YOU to these MFPC Task Force Participants

- Randy Bell, MSU Extension, Ingham County
- Stan Bien, MDCH, WIC Director
- Bill Bobier, MDARD
- Elaine Brown, MDARD
- Jane Bush, FSEP, Farmer
- Cheryl Danley, MSU
- Eric Davis, United Way SE Michigan
- Mike DiBernardo, MDARD
- Diane Golzynski, MDCH
- Holli Hamel, Allen Neighborhood Center
- Rich Harlow, MDARD
- Jeanne Hausler, MDARD
- Tom Kalchik, MSU Product Center
- Kathy Fedder, Neogen
- Ben Kohrman, MDHS
- Ben Kudwa, Michigan Potato Industry
- Natasha Lantz, Marquette Food Co-op
- Colleen Matts, MSU
- Terry McLean, MSUE, Genesee County
- Dru Montri, MIFMA
- Marla Moss, MDE
- Rich Pirog, MSU
- Brad Purves, MDC
- Robert Randels, Food Bank of SC Michigan
- Evan Smith, Cherry Capital Foods
- Terri Stangl, Center for Civil Justice

JOIN THE ADVENTURE!

If you would like to join an MFPC Task Force, please contact Jane Whitacre, MFPC Director



Find us on
Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/MFPC.PAGE>