

Economic Development & Infrastructure Subcommittee

Progress Report

April 2011

Charge to Subcommittee from Legislature

- Sec. 106-832 (4) In depth **analysis** of potential **impacts of production of local sustainable food on economic development.**
- Sec. 106-832 (5) and (6) ...information and engagement center/issues regarding the **identification and development of solutions to regulatory and policy barriers**
- Sec. 106-832 (7) ...**strengthen infrastructure and entrepreneurial efforts**



Concepts/Organizational parameters

- **Define success to Subcommittee members**
 - Dialogue/networking
 - Direct existing and new resources
 - Focus on deliverables: Talk is cheap
 - Focus on the things that can be done
 - Create an environment where local entrepreneurs can thrive

Organization

- **Assessment Work Group** *Roland McReynolds*
 - To inform the work of the Council with data
 - USDA expects consumer demand for locally grown food in the U.S. to rise from an estimated \$4 billion in 2002 to as much as \$7 billion by 2012. What can/will that be in NC?
- **Regulatory Work Group** *Ron Fish*
 - Identify regulatory barriers to local foods farmers and entrepreneurs
- **Literature Review Work Group** *Barry Nash*
 - To create a reference of work by other groups to inform the work of the Council
- **Infrastructure Work Group** *Debbie Hamrick*

Meetings

(5/27/10, 7/22/10, 8/18/10, 9/9/10, 11/19/10, 1/25/11 and 4/1/11)

□ **JC Raulston Arboretum**

- NCDA&CS Food & Drug Division, Jim Melvin and Anita MacMullan
- NCDENR DWQ, Coleen H. Sullins and NCDENR Env. Health, Mike Kelly and Larry Michaels

□ **UNC-Wilmington's Marine Science Center**

- Feast Southeast/SE NC Food Systems Council, Leslie Hossfeld and Jane Steigerwald
- Brunswick Catch, May Moore
- “Growing a Local Food Economy”: The County Kilkenny Food Strategy 2010-2014, Barry Nash

□ **NC Farm Bureau**

- Robert Handfield, NCSU, Supply Chain Management Basics

□ **Eastern Carolina Organics & RAFI**

Recommendation successes

□ **Agricultural Task Force Liaison**

- Roland McReynolds, Council member, is liaison to the North Carolina Agricultural Task Force (ATF) that is headquartered within the Division of Soil & Water Conservation
- The ATF is a voluntary working group that advises and makes recommendations to the Soil&Water Conservation Commission.
<http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/swc/agtaskforce>)

Recommendation successes

□ **GAPs for Small Farms (in Process)**

- Support the state's small fruit and vegetable farmers by working with the North Carolina Fresh Produce Safety Task Force and its partners to develop an All-Farm GAPs (Good Agricultural Practices) pilot program
- This effort is being led by Roland McReynolds and Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
- Why? Lack of data derived from working farms on what the real barriers are. Knowing more about barriers and potential economic impacts can inform design of an evidence-based, practical system for small farms who are trying to reduce public health risks and meet market demands for employing GAPs.
- Results will be “open source” and reported as they are developed. 12 small farms, each w/less than 20 acres
- Using a patchwork of funding sources such as Specialty Crops Block Grant funds, NC School Nutrition Program and are applying to Tobacco Trust Fund to complete funding

Successes

- **HB 162 On-farm processing wastewater**
 - Effort led by NC Farm Bureau with NCDA&CS, Carolina Farm Stewardship Association and many others
 - Unanimous bipartisan support
 - Poster Examples:
 - Kathryn Spann, Prodigal Farm, farmstead goat dairy
 - Debbie Stikeleather, Iron Gate Winery
 - Now: Implementation, outreach to farmers



Success--Regulatory Clarification

- White paper titled “Requirements for the Producer/Grower 20,000 Poultry Exemption” issued in August 2010 by NCDA&CS Meat & Poultry Inspection Division that clarified existing rules.
- In process: NCDA&CS working with NCDENR Environmental Health on guidance for producers of small amounts of certain wastewater and septic systems

Discussion topics

□ Infrastructure Work Group

- Focus on points in the chain that increase margins and income for farmers
- Focus on distribution and processing infrastructure to help complete the distribution chain from farm to fork
 - Are these 2 focus areas in alignment? What is more important? The farmer/farm or the market/distribution?
 - In NC local foods, is infrastructure following the market or leading?

Discussion topics

□ Ideas we've had

■ Listening sessions

- Meetings and round tables to listen to local foods farmers with goal of isolating regulatory and policy barriers
- Catalog the issues and prioritize for potential action

■ **A place for local foods community to find information**

- Work to develop and/or access a comprehensive regulatory reference so that local food business entrepreneurs and farmers may quickly surmise which regulations/governmental entities pertain to various types of local foods businesses/farms.