

June 21, 2010

Minutes

Health, Wellness, Hunger and Food Access Of North Carolina Sustainable Food Advisory Council June 4, 2010 (Teleconference)

Call began 9:30 am

Online: Chair Alice Ammerman, Dr. Lynn Harvey, Earline Middleton, Diane Beth, Nancy Creamer, Jim Melvin, Gary Gay, Tommy Fleetwood, Joy Hicks, Jim Cummings

The Chair, after introductions and a brief statement of the business of the Subcommittee, began the discussion with:

A. Information and discussion on the Farm-To-School Program with Gary Gay, Director of the Food Distribution Division with NCDACS.

The Farm-to-School Program is getting fresh locally grown produce from the farmers directly to the schools.

The program is accomplished through joint efforts of the Food Distribution Division and the Markets Division. Food Distribution surveys the schools to determine the quantity the school can use. Food Distribution then works with the Markets Division to locate the farmers to procure the product. Food Distribution picks the product up from the farmers and delivers it to the schools. The Department then bills the school for payment.

This program has been received very well. The schools prefer purchasing locally grown produce and the farmers benefit by having yet another outlet for their product. The competitive procurement (bids) offers value purchasing for the school systems.

According to Gary Gay and Tommy Fleetwood:

- \$ 800 K in sales in 2009 (a record amount of sales)
- Send a calendar to all schools listing what is available
- Growers submit bids to the Division
- Product comes from farmers that are GAP certified
- All vegetables labeled with name of farm
- 1/3 to 1/2 schools participate
- Work with F-to-S Cooperatives (25 growers)
- 100 farmers sell product, must be NC grower and product grown in NC
- Food Distribution is not allowed to deliver to individual schools
- Demand is not a limiting factor, farmers can meet

- GAP certification is not a limiting factor
- Weather related shortages occur but schools can switch to commercial sources for that product
- USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant funds available to assist farmers with GAP certification: \$600 for the audit and \$200 for water analysis
- Why school systems may not participate:
 1. School systems that do not have central warehouse facilities are at disadvantage
 2. Schools can purchase like produce items at lower cost from outside North Carolina
 3. School systems at times prefer a greater time frame in which to organize and submit orders to purchase product

Questions from Subcommittee members:

1. How can we expand to pre-schools and universities?
2. How can we encourage more participation from school districts?

There was further discussion on GAP certification; the process, who sets the rules, who audits, what are barriers to F-to-S. Dr. Creamer suggested that this might be a full Council issue.

A recommendation was made to explore full funding NCDACS with additional Food Distribution staff and other identified needs to expand the Farm-To-School Program.

Diane Beth volunteered to look at examples from other states.

Action Items:

- 1. Meet with Child Nutrition Group at conference on October 21, 2010 to highlight the F-to-S Program**
- 2. Survey schools on participation in the Program**
- 3. Look at GAP certification issues that might impede a grower's participation**

B. SNAP-ED Funding Opportunities:

SNAP helps put food on the table for some 31 million people per month in FY 2009. It provides low-income households with [electronic benefits](#) they can use like cash at most grocery stores. SNAP is the cornerstone of the Federal food assistance programs, and

provides crucial support to needy households and to those making the transition from welfare to work.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture administers SNAP at the Federal level through its Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). State agencies administer the program at State and local levels, including determination of eligibility and allotments, and distribution of benefits.

The Food Stamp Nutrition Connection was established in 2001, by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Food and Nutrition Service](#) with the goal of helping Food Stamp Nutrition Educators find the tools and information they need to provide quality nutrition education for low-income audiences.

On October 1, 2008 the Food Stamp Nutrition Connection became the SNAP-Ed Connection.

SNAP-Ed Connection is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Food and Nutrition Service](#) and maintained at the National Agricultural Library's [Food and Nutrition Information Center](#) (FNIC) in collaboration with the [University of Maryland](#).

There was discussion by the members on the issues of maintaining/documenting match and the tremendous challenge this presented in participating in SNAP-ED.

North Carolina at one time had \$23 million budgeted for SNAP-ED.

Senator Purcell introduced legislation to coordinate: S 1151, S1284

Action Item:

1. Determine what other states are doing to participate in SNAP-ED and meeting the match/documentation requirements

C. Update on the Farm to Fork Public Health and Food Access Disparities Working Interest Team and potential coordination of efforts with this group

- Subcommittee from this group to update Local Food Subcommittee

D. Review and Consideration of relevant Obesity Task Force Recommendations

- Recommended that the Food Banks express support for the various Task Force recommendations

E. Food Banks:

A group outside the NCSLFAC is assessing all food banks across the state and will present this report to the Council when complete.

(No Action Item presented)

F. Workings of the Subcommittee:

Brief discussion on what members of subcommittee could do between meetings to move action items forward and also what is purpose and what are the parameters of the business of the subcommittee.

(No Action Item presented)

Meeting adjourned.

Minutes taken from notes by Joy Hicks and Jim Cummings