

Land, People and Natural Resources Subcommittee  
Recommendations for 2011 Annual Report

- I. Increase institutional purchasing of local food by adopting legislation that includes one or more of the following:
  - A. Establish state/local government NC food purchasing goals (e.g. 20% by 2020)
  - B. Explicit government purchase preference for NC products over non-NC products when prices are equal
  - C. Creation of a vendor list that indicates state/nation of origin
  - D. Requirement to give NC vendors opportunity to match lowest/winning bid for government purchases
  - E. Consider limiting government food purchasing to regional foodsheds for certain products when available
  
- II. Establish a consumer education program (or build on an existing one) aimed at household and institutional buyers that addresses multiple issues supporting local food :
  - A. Positive Economic impacts (e.g. multiplier effect)
  - B. Positive Environmental impacts
  - C. Food security
  - D. Food safety

Recognizing the scarcity of resources, this effort could be a collaborative one involving multiple government agencies (e.g., NCDA, Cooperative Extension, etc.) and NGOs.

III. Research and document existing local and regional processing and aggregation infrastructure (by product, volume, etc.), including a comparison of production and processing/aggregation capabilities with existing and projected demand to identify gaps and opportunities. This could be a collaboration between NCDA and Commerce.

IV. Research and document existing infrastructure or programs for producer cooperative purchasing, processing, distribution, insurance, etc., and explore additional opportunities. This effort could be led by NCDA

V. Regarding the issue of farm labor:

A. Perform a thorough review (and modification, if warranted) of teen labor laws and create a guide for farmers to successfully employ teen labor without violating labor laws

B. Provide producers assistance with mediation, arbitration, or settlement (or state assistance in partnership with nonprofits e.g. Grange, Farm Bureau) on labor issues.

VI. Increase the access to and availability of capital for agriculture-related businesses.

A. Develop a method to incentivize private lenders to loan to farmers (Examples: Golden LEAF, Tobacco Trust Fund, NC Rural Center could establish a loan guarantee for agriculture (including production, processing and distribution), would ensure private lenders would be made whole if default occurs)

B. Develop a clearing house of sources of capital for agriculture

C. Ask university to prepare various “proof of concept” papers for agricultural businesses to influence lenders to extend credit

VII. Eliminate unnecessary regulations and record-keeping requirements

A. Review data gathering requirements. Look for opportunities for paperwork reduction, limit data collected/required to that which will actually be used to determine compliance, and simplify recording keeping requirements

B. Gather input from farmers across the state regarding burdensome regulatory issues

VIII. Government should indemnify farmers for losses due to food safety recalls where the producer wasn't at fault and can show he suffered economic losses (e.g., USDA livestock indemnity program)

IX. Enact legislation ensuring public and private utility extensions minimize negative impacts on agricultural land.

X. Enact legislation protecting farmland in condemnation proceedings, to the extent practicable.

XI. Evaluate current requirements for participation in the present use value program and explore opportunities to encourage and support non-traditional agriculture.