

Economic Development & Infrastructure Subcommittee North Carolina Local Sustainable Food Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Friday November 19, 2010

UNC-Wilmington Center for Marine Science

In attendance: Nancy Creamer, Jim Cummings, Ron Fish, Billy Gillette, Joy Hicks, Roland McReynolds, and Barry Nash

Acting Chair Barry Nash called the meeting to order and began with Working Group updates.

Working Group Updates

Infrastructure. The Working group is cooperating with Rob Hanfield, NCSU School of Management who will speak on supply chain management at the Subcommittee's January 25 meeting.

Regulatory Working Group. As mentioned in a prior Subcommittee meeting, the CFSA/NCFB Processing Survey may have results that are useful for the Subcommittee. Roland McReynolds, CFSA provided update. Their main goal is to capture baseline information about smaller growers conducting on farm processing. Roland noted that the breadth of processing activities is wide. Overall the survey shows that processing is a significant portion of their income—up to 25%, for most, up to 50% of total farm income for some.

Whole Farm GAPs Certification Program. Update by Roland McReynolds, CFSA. The group will contract with a post doctoral student at NCSU to work on this through Dr. Benjamin Chapman's group. The Local Food Advisory Council will draft a letter of support for this to the Tobacco Trust Fund.

Literature Review Working Group. Update provided by Barry Nash. The Working Group has a list of literature for NCSU students to review in the New Year.

Presentations

Feast Southeast/Southeastern North Carolina Food Systems Council

Leslie Hossfeld and Jane Steigerwald distributed a handout diagramming their organization's primary initiatives. The Food Systems Council includes 57 farmers and 45 chefs operating primarily white-tablecloth restaurants. Chefs display the Council's logo in their windows and on their menus. The goal is to network chefs and farmers and encourage the development of long-term relationships. The issue for chefs concerning local foods is buying what they want in the quantities they need. The Council also provides technical assistance for processing foods and direction on creating business plans. Three years of market research are available on their website (www.feastsoutheastnc.org), which was conducted by UNC-Wilmington and Duke.

Brunswick Catch

An overview of Brunswick Catch was given by May Moore, former school teacher and county commissioner. The organization was started in May 2009 with a goal of creating a commercial identity for local seafood. The other objective was to put a "fisherman's face on the seafood" and support a heritage that is disappearing in the southern coastal region of the state.

Brunswick Catch (www.brunswickcatch.com) is modeled after Carteret Catch (www.carteretcatch.org). Fishermen, seafood dealers (processors) and restaurants are the primary dues-paying members. Annual dues pay for advertising and promotions. They have elevated the visibility of their brand through tee shirt sales at community events and by being featured in local newspapers and magazines. They secured a deal with Lamar to place the logo on road signs on both north and southbound Highway 17. They have also been featuring the brand in Shallotte and in Holden Beach. They've had 600,000 hits on their website since last June.

Right now Brunswick Catch is negotiating with Carteret Catch, Ocracoke Fresh and Outer Banks Catch to create an umbrella organization that will promote local seafood and coastal fishermen across the state. Currently all of the "Catch" groups are promoting seafood on a local or regional level.

The group's most immediate need is education: Tell consumers when seafood in the southern coastal region is seasonally available and what businesses offer it. According to their consumer surveys, shrimp, grouper and flounder are the top-three favorites.

"Growing a Local Food Economy": The County Kilkenny Food Strategy 2010-2014

Overview given by Barry Nash, who was invited by the organizers of Savour Kilkenny Food Festival (http://www.savourkilkenny.com/web/?page_id=721) to deliver a presentation on raising the visibility of local seafood through branding and developing value-added seafood products. The focus of the Festival was to showcase the local food producers of County Kilkenny, located in southeastern Ireland, and share ideas for building a local food economy in the county. Kilkenny is rural, having about 300,000 residents and 4000 farms.

Ireland's economy is undergoing a painful restructuring due to a precipitous decline in the value of real estate and needs another growth industry to replace construction. The national government decided to focus on attributes of the country that can't be exported: local food production, history and crafts. Of these, the growth and promotion of local food can be tied to heritage and the arts, making Ireland a stronger destination for tourism. Ireland also plans to export select local products under the "Good Food Ireland" label.

In 2009, a group of Kilkenny food producers decided to showcase the county as major local food producer. During the last year, these individuals developed a blueprint for creating a viable local food economy. The County Kilkenny Food Strategy was unveiled in October. Based on research showing that artisan and specialty food businesses will double in employment during the next decade, Kilkenny plans to:

- Fund an artisan food school to educate entrepreneurs on the technical and commercial aspects of commercializing food for retail, wholesale and export markets;
- Establish a food producer's network to facilitate collaborative problem-solving among entrepreneurs and share information on market opportunities;
- Develop a supply chain for local food producers that both connects to and runs parallel to the current distribution chain that serves multinational food manufacturers and grocery chains;
- Target education initiatives and marketing to consumers to raise awareness of local food producers and encourage consumers to keep their Euros in the county, thereby supporting other local businesses;
- Establish a strong relationship between local food and tourism to make Kilkenny a destination for the Irish and foreign visitors;
- Most important, create a Food Development Team comprised of individuals having backgrounds in law, commerce and food manufacturing to implement the food strategy and manage developmental activities.

Outside Speakers

May Moore

Brunswick Catch

PO Box 949

Supply, NC 28462

www.brunswickcatch.com

910-253-4429

Dr. Leslie Hossfeld

GlaxoSmithKline Faculty Fellow in Public Policy and Public Engagement

Associate Professor Sociology

Director Public Sociology Program Southeastern North Carolina Food Systems

www.feastsoutheastnc.org

University of North Carolina Wilmington

601 South College Road

Wilmington, NC 28403

910-962-7849