

COLORADO FARM TO SCHOOL TASKFORCE

MEETING MINUTES, FEBRUARY 28TH, 2011

ATTENDEES

- Leo Lesh, Jane Brand, Wendy White, Susan Motika, Bernie Orsini (US Food Service), Jim Dyer, Jeremy West, Julie Moore, Krista Garand, Andrew Nowak, Ian MacGillivray, Kristin Tucker, Mark Lara, Wendy Peters Moschetti, Miranda Stovall, Julie K, Jewlya Lynn, Lyn Kathlene, Rebecca Kahn

CHARGE OF THE TASK FORCE

- Briefly, the charge of the Farm to School Task Force is to promote healthy foods, increase the use of local farms, build upon existing promising practices, and coordinate with other state wide food system advisory council.
 - **Handout:** The full language of the charge is in the Handout entitled Task Force Charge.
- The Center for Systems Integration (CSI) was selected to help staff the task force.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council (Wendy Peters Moschetti)

- This Council was created in the 2010 legislative session, as a companion bill to the Farm to School Task Force bill. A food policy council is a coalition of state, regional, and local level people involved in food systems. The coalition is meant to bring together all the members of the food system – seed to table.
- The purpose of the Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council:
 - Identify and use existing studies relevant to the food system and work with other task forces, committees, and/or organizations pursuing similar objectives. What do we know?
 - Collaborate with local and regional food policy councils in the State.
 - Develop recommendations regarding hunger and food access and promote “Colorado Proud”.
 - Develop recommendations for state, regional, and local governments, businesses, agriculturists, and consumers to build robust, resilient, and long-term local food economies.
- The difference between the Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council and the Farm to School Task Force is essentially one of scope. The Council is very broad, with a rich diversity of knowledge. For next several months they are really focusing on learning and education, to learn more about what the food system is like in Colorado, so they can get to a point later where the council feels like they can do something concrete.

Food Systems Assessment (Wendy Peters Moschetti & Jim Dyer)

- There is an ARRA funded partnership between CDPHE and Livewell to grow the school food boot camps, and bring them to more districts across Colorado. One of the goals is to: Modify urban and suburban land use policies in order to build a permanent farm to school program that supplies fresh and healthy food to Colorado’s students while benefiting Colorado’s agriculture economy. Discrete Tasks include Food Assessment Framework, Community & Professional Development for Healthy Eating & Active Living Planning, Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council staffing, and Farm to School Policy & Regional Networks.

- Criteria for recommending local foods: As local as possible (defining what local means is very difficult), as healthy and sustainably produced as possible, don't play one against the other, and carrying as much information about local agriculture as possible.
- Farm to school benefits: Provides fresh, healthy food choices for our children, supports local farmers and ranchers, helps local economy, reduces food miles and energy use, in time it should promote increased local production, season-extension/storage, value-added processing, stable markets for producers, educates the public through children, promotes local and high quality, sustainably produced food, challenges our cheap food policies, requires that we re-think our whole food system.
- **Colorado Farm to School Primer:** Provides a snapshot of the current food situation in Colorado, information about the current school food conditions in Colorado, a general Farm to School overview, a list of current Colorado farm to school efforts, information about how to build excellence in your farm to school program, and information on how to get involved.
- Regional sourcing can prove the local market; however, often you must go beyond local when the supply is lacking. We want to build in a preference that as soon as we get the local supply option, we prioritize using it. We don't want to just bypass the local producers!
- Resources are available at
 - www.healthycommunityfoodsystems.org
 - www.coloradofarmtoschool.org
 - www.swmarketingnetwork.org
 - www.farmtoschool.org

Farm to School Initiative (Lyn Kathlene)

- **Brief history of Colorado farm to school statewide efforts:** In 2005, a Farm to Cafeteria working group was formed to explore farm to school interest and opportunities. In 2006, there was a K-12 Food Service Directors farm to school survey done by CIPP-CSU. In 2007, there was a producer's direct marketing & farm to school survey, also done by CIPP-CSU. In 2009, we applied for USDA Specialty Crop Grant, which we were granted.
- **Colorado Farm to School Initiative:** Funded through a 3 year USDA Specialty Crop Grant (2010 – 2012). Besides marketing materials, curriculum materials, and the Colorado Farm to School website, three toolkits are being produced: School & Producer review instruments; "How to..." resources & fact sheets; and case studies of Colorado FTS activities. The toolkits are a living thing, rather like a "Choose Your Own FTS Adventure." <http://www.coloradofarmtoschool.org>
- **Other resources and efforts.**
 - Colorado Market Maker. Colorado has more producers on their Market Maker than any other state. And more hits on the website as well!
 - Case Studies. Some of the groups used in the case studies are represented here in the room, and you have given us wonderful information about the amazing things happening in Colorado.
 - On the National Farm to School website, anyone can go and populate the Colorado Profile with what's going on in Colorado.
 - The 2010-11 Food Services Director Summary is a survey.
 - New education standards have recently been released by the Colorado Department of education, so some nutritional education will start to happen soon.
 - Youth Farmers Markets.

- Farm to school activities are much more than just about getting the local farmer connected to the food service director. There is a great interest in figuring how to do farm to school.
- The biggest barrier to farm to school efforts by far is cost.

Other Key Activities – Colorado and Nationally (Lyn Kathlene)

- **LiveWell Colorado** – Coordinates the Cook for America, is conducting Culinary Boot Camps to train cafeteria workers how to work with fresh foods, running a school meal assessment program with three districts per year, and training Mobile Chefs as part of Cook for America who provide on-site workshops, one-on-one consultations, evaluations and trainings.
- **Real Food Colorado** is looking at the feasibility of a of a Northern Colorado regional food hub to facilitate farm to school efforts. They are establishing a local database on their website.
- **The farm to school Federal environment**, including the Child Nutrition Reauthorization – the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, FTS competitive grants, , organic foods competitive grants, increased reimbursements rates, revised USDA meal guidelines, and stronger school wellness policy requirements
- **San Luis Valley Mobile Harvests**

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

1. Agreement that:

- a. Decisions will be made by a unanimous, minus one vote of all who are present.
- b. Voting may occur by email.
- c. Task Force members may abstain from decisions if they are not able to participate due to their organizations rules.
- d. Visitors will have a visitor designation, such as a name tag. They can be at the table. Visitors can participate when called upon or during a comment period.
- e. Ground Rules include: Be respectful, disagree constructively, agree to disagree, seek first to understand, don't cross examine, come prepared, stay focused, participate fully, be timely, and cell phones on vibrate.

2. Decision Rules, Visitor Rules, and Ground Rules are adopted by unanimous vote of those present.

DEVELOP THE ROADMAP

- This Task Force is one of many efforts working on elements of farm to school. This is an opportunity to connect the efforts, fill in gaps, and build them up, but it can't happen in a silo.
- This road-mapping method ties you to the change you want in the world, so that you can change your approach part way along if you find that your activities aren't getting you to the precondition.

First Track

- **Mandate:** Identify funding sources / grants for school districts to offset costs of locally grown foods.
- There are some grant opportunities or grants already in progress. These led to the mandate about creating/expanding FTS Pilot Programs. The FTS school group is helping us disseminate tools through their toolkit, which contains resources to help the pilots.
- Prior to diving into expansion to pilots, you need the funding.

Second Track

- **Mandate:** Identify, design, or make available FTS training programs for local farmers and ranchers.
- Producers will need all the orange notes in this track – trainings, Colorado Proud, the Northern Colorado Food Assessment, Food Hubs, Market Maker, guidance on food safety, tools for communities to engage in the Food System Assessment.
- The mandate tells us that producers have many needs. We are aware that there are many things going on to help address these.

Third Track

- **Mandate:** Provide assistance to school food services to establish internal processes that accommodate the use of locally grown foods.
- The orange notes all relate to the mandate, and help us get to the point that school staff can handle and process fresh food, as well as the other 3 preconditions.
- Comment on green precondition about menus: this is part of the school's responsibility. Schools need to menu things that are in season, and use menu rotation. For schools to be successful they need to understand the Colorado growing season or resources in the state.
- **Decision:** Add a green precondition that says that school menus reflect seasonal availability.

Fourth Track

- **Mandate:** Help schools improve their facilities.
- There is an educational piece needed: what does it take to process farm fresh foods?
- There is a precondition that schools or school districts have adequate storage and food prep facilities.
- A precondition that does not currently develop from the orange notes we have up (e.g. the Livewell Boot Camps and School Meal Assessment) is to get schools to the point where students, policy-makers, administrators, and others understand and support Farm to School. It is critical for that to occur, but the orange notes don't lead to it.

DISCUSSION

- Third and Fourth Tracks. These represent two roads for schools to get where they need to be. To get to the vision, schools will need established methods, safe food handling requirements, train their staff to be able and willing to handle and process fresh food, and have adequate storage on site.
- Question regarding role of processors and food hubs – extent to which processing outside schools is acceptable. Suggestion that it may be a necessary step on the road to Farm to School statewide. Discussion of facilities issues in schools more broadly as well, including freezing and flash freezing.
- Preconditions to the vision: Farm to a school able to do processing, Farm to a food hub to school, Farm to a processor (outside the food hub) to school, all of which are transparent and fair.

WHO IS ADDRESSING THE PRECONDITIONS?

- There are a number of preconditions that have substantial work underway already.
- Precondition: Helping schools and producers find each other. Groups working on this: Market Maker, SW Marketing network
- Precondition: School leadership is on board. Groups working on this: ARRA Food Systems, Legacy Foundation Trainings, statewide associations like CASB and CASE.

- Precondition: Farm to Local Food Hub to school. Groups working on this: Real Food Colorado, Northern Colorado Food Hub.
- Precondition & post-condition: Create a sustainable food system. Information to identify the gaps, demographics, food security, funding precondition, creating a sustainable food system. The bigger piece – farm to school is a step before or a part of a sustainable food system. Groups working on this: North Colorado Food Assessment, ARRA Food Systems.
- New Precondition: Students, policy makers, administrators and community understand value of farm to school. Groups working on this: Colorado FTS Initiative – develop and disseminate tools for schools, USDA FTS schools and producers, HEAL, Marketing with school leadership at annual association meetings, Colorado Foundation for Ag.
- Preconditions: School staff have skills and motivation to prepare fresh food. Groups working on this: ARRA Food Systems- tools for schools to help them...the primer, Freshen Up, Food Safety.
- Precondition: Producers are producing what schools want/need. Groups already working on this: Colorado FTS, SLV Local Foods.

FINAL DECISIONS AND GAPS

- **FTS Task Force Strategy – Create an Information Hub:** An information hub can't be this group's charge, because this group is not permanent. So maybe it's helping someone else be the information hub. Should the Colorado Farm to School Initiative be the information hub? Their funding ends in September of 2012. Where does the information hub live permanently? Colorado FTS's role is to develop toolkits of how school districts of different sizes can do farm to school. This Task Force is supposed to report to the Governor and legislature – is it for them to decide where the information lives.
 - A peer network, beyond a toolkit, is a very effective way to drive the value and teach people how to do farm to school. Could the information hub be a source of creating that peer network – a place to find your peers?
- **FTS Task Force Strategy – Build/Enhance a Pilot Program:** We need to identify the gaps, and figure out how to implement a pilot program (or build up an existing one) so that we have measurable metrics for the pilots – what happened to the economy in the community, what happened to the obesity rate? How many jobs did we create? A lot of partners are educating, informing, providing TA, etc. We need to push it to food directors. Farm to school as a value can be the answer to some of those bigger picture issues. Every school in Colorado wants to close the achievement gap and improve test scores.
 - We want to be able to prove the value of farm to school more broadly. To prove that, there may already be work out there with demonstrated the value, or it could come from our pilot programs, with measures across a variety of issues like obesity, economy.
 - What would pilots accomplish toward our preconditions? The purpose of a pilot would be to measure a farm to school program. If there was a school that wanted to do farm to school, and we used the TA we have in this room, it would provide more of a jump-start.
 - Food hub – there is some consensus that the hub could be implemented to allow schools that are too big or small to do farm to school on their own. Someone needs to track that data – the flow of purchasing, etc, to help schools do farm to school that haven't had the structure in place to do it before.
 - Value in piloting different models (food hubs, direct farm to school). Seek funding to do pilots supporting multiple models, with an evaluation of what the pilots accomplish.

- **FTS Task Force Potential Strategy – Build Executive Leadership:** We must look at the gaps where this Task Force can exercise leadership. We should also challenge our own agencies. What re-direction of funding would be useful? How are we building public will from where we sit? Addressing farm to school addresses a number of issues. How to push this back into everyone's systems and agencies. Working on the strategies for that is the role of the agency people on the Task Force.
- **FTS Task Force Acknowledged Gaps:** The majority of the preconditions have work happening. The funding one and the refrigeration one don't seem to have work happening.
 - Precondition: Schools and school districts have adequate funding to engage in farm to school. One strategy is to assess all the funding streams and look at what the funding can be used for to see if there are uses not being allocated to. Another strategy is to create the database of funding. Another strategy is to talk to your funders.
 - Precondition: School or school districts have adequate storage and food prep facilities. This is a supply and demand problem. How do you find adequate money for storage and preparation if you don't know the supply exists? We have an increased need for fresh foods in the schools due to federal legislation. Could we utilize CNRA as platform to encourage farm to school?

ROLES, NEXT MEETINGS, AND IMMEDIATE ACTION ITEMS

- Establishing an information hub – connect with other groups to see if they want to be part of it.
- CSI will be the workforce of information gathering – the Task Force will guide CSI to gather the information it needs. Eventually it will be necessary to have subcommittees.
- CSI will draft an action plan and ask for feedback.
- Meet again in early May, in the San Luis Valley, coordinated with the help of Mark Lara.