



Agriculture-Food Production Cluster

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Fruits and Vegetables Sub-committee Co-chair: Mary Pat Carlson (Farm Market
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Dairy Sub-Committee Co-Chair: Amber Hewett (amber.hewett@charter.net)

Ag Cluster Co-Chair Meeting Notes

March 18, 2013 - 11:00 AM

Conference Call

On the call: Toni Sorenson, Andy Barta, Mary Pat Carlson, Amber Hewett, Jennifer Brown, Connie Loden
Vital Economies: Neil Gamroth, Jim Haguewood

Toni stated that at the last meeting, from the fruit and veggie side, tried to get caught up regarding the mapping processes. She asked if there are things that were heard repeatedly mentioned, regarding the industry that warrant attention in moving forward.

Some suggestions for areas of focus moving forward:

1. Hops
2. Representatives to serve on the Energy Cluster to become connected to what they are doing that involves Manure and Whey – Digesters
3. Dairy – Involvement in the Ag Education Center development committee
 - a. CNG - Fertilizer
 - i. Manure Have a list of CAFOS in the region and can we survey these regarding their interest in a cooperative digester. What is the supply side? 1. Big enough to make their own or 2. Too expensive to haul the manure. 3. Some use their own supply for other uses. 4 currently have digesters up and running – several others are planning on installing some. Also of value to have a handle on the amount and value of the whey. May be available from DPA. Any information on where the co-op digester might be – not
 - ii. Whey – similar to manure regarding CNG and fertilizer potential
 - iii. Discussion took place regarding the Fertilizer NPK potential. Andy indicated that those who have digesters that this could be a potential – however, thought that the farms that do not have the digesters, he doubted that they would be interested due to the transportation of the manure. Andy did indicate that he thought the opportunity for the fertilizer would be fairly strong.
 - b. Farm Supplies – Not discussed.
4. Local Foods
 - a. Organic – or come up with an organic alternative that is not as difficult to become – BUZZ- Marketing word to apply to “almost” organic?
 - b. CSAs- Neil indicated that he would like more information regarding CSAs. What is the market and demand – supply side regarding fresh local foods . There are some strong partners in the state that could give us some additional information regarding the CSA information. UW-Ext / Dairy Innovation Center.
 - c. Green House Potential - Need a good idea of the usable greenhouse capacity in the area – Potential Data Sources: UW –Ext – Farm Service Agency

5. Legislative Advocacy for the Ag Research Station – see notes below

Other Discussion on the Local Foods – Fruits & Vegetables:

Mary Pat – wondering about more direction to focus on – than just research tasks. Might value from access to the Information Neil has gathered on demand and interest in receiving the local foods / warehousing / distribution.

Warehouse – distribution seem to be stumbling blocks with the Local Foods – not only for increased markets locally, but also the Milw. / Madison / Chicago areas.

Andy -Green Bay was cold storage plant that is being shut down – and may be a potential warehouse. Mary Pat indicated that there are a couple of good models in the Madison Area – Ext and Food Network in Madison – might be good to connect with them – if we could get our produce to these places then we could use the system which is already in place.

Neil mentioned: Dave Steeburg – Pigley Wiggly was very interested in sourcing these products locally. Opportunity for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, along with the value added specialty products, being connected into warehousing and distribution that allow it to expand the markets and helped to meet the demand.

Summary and actions for moving forward:

1. Dairy Sub-Team
 - a. Explore Fertilizer concept further
 - b. Survey - manure and whey - digesters and potential for co-op digesters
 - c. Andy indicated he can look into the Maple Leaf Farms
2. Fruits and Vegetables & Local Foods
 - a. Valuable to identify the number of CSAs and the hoop houses (Greenhouses)
 - b. Neil sending the information on the demand side – warehousing – distribution that he currently has
 - c. Get Involved in the Legislative Agenda – for Ag Research Station and support of reinstating Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin – on the agenda for Door Kewaunee County legislative Days – May 15-16 in Madison – members can be a delegate – can provide information regarding contacting legislators on the issue as well. Suggestion to use wording that indicates “As supported by the Lakeshore Industry Cluster Initiative Ag Cluster” - would be valuable - Support for the Ag Research Station would also be very valuable for the research regarding hops and some of the other products and issues the industry may see as opportunities. The Research Station is important in many ways to the future potential action in the cluster. Also on the legislative agenda would be support for the reinstatement of the Buy Local Buy Wisconsin funding
 - d. Add Greg Hines into the active group – Glacierland R C & D would be good to get involved more actively. Mary Pat will also send Hines and NRC contact in Washington, who is from Kewaunee County. (Bobbi) to Connie for adding to the group.

Actions for planning next meeting: (In addition to those items above in Summary for moving forward)

Dairy

1. Have Leadership Team meet to work on fleshing out some action steps regarding survey and the summary above for Dairy.
2. Connie will send out date poll (doodle poll) for Amber, Andy and Toni. Once date is set – Andy and Amber will also invite a couple of the key dairy people that would be good to have engaged in the

development of the survey so they have a good understanding of what is intended in this effort and support it with others.

Fruits and Vegetable:

1. Connie Will send out a Doodle poll for dates to Toni and Mary Pat for a small group to discuss action plan around the legislative advocacy. Again they will extend a couple of key invitations. And create action plan from there – and taking it to a larger team.