



Agriculture-Fruits and Vegetables Cluster

Co-chairs: Toni Sorenson (GreenStone Farm Services-Sorens-Valhalla Orchards antonia.sorenson@greenstonefcs.com)

Andy Barta (Rio Creek Feed Mill - agbarta@riocreekfeedmill.com)

Fruits and Vegetables Sub-committee Co-chair: Mary Pat Carlson (Farm Market Kitchen - mcarlson@farmmarketkitchen.com)

Dairy Sub-Committee Co-Chair: Amber Hewett (amber.hewett@charter.net)

Ag Cluster Fruits and Vegetables Co-Chair Meeting Notes

April 4, 2013 - 9:00 AM

Conference Call

On the Call – Mary Pat Carlson, Toni Sorenson, Jennifer Brown, Jim Haguewood, Dena Mooney, Connie Loden

Mary Pat updated that Greg Hines has been contacted to participate and he indicated a strong interest, however, no time right now to participate regularly. He would like to be included on the list to keep getting the information to stay in the loop.

1. Legislative Action for Research Station / Participation in Legislative Days May 15-16

Toni talked with a number of the growers regarding the Research Station and Legislative days and they did not seem very interested to get involved with this - Mary Pat also got the same response. More interested in energy working towards getting the funding cuts restored with the Buy Local Program targeted at the food initiatives – and not just general Buy Local initiatives.

Jennifer indicated that support for restoring the funding for Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Grants is on the issue agenda for legislative days. Also opportunity to speak on this at budget hearings – Green Bay – April 8. Funding for Buy Local campaigns that is being eliminated – \$200,000.

Wisconsin Local Food Network – has done some work to identify speakers for these hearings.

Bridget Holcomb with Michael Fields group – Lambeau Field on April 8 - Claire Thompson would have some suggestions. - Connecting into the Michael Fields communication would be appropriate as they are coordinating comment/speakers - Sheboygan Co EDC – might be worth contacting (John Rogers) Mary Pat will reach out to some contacts in Sheboygan County. Could we connect into the County's Buy Local Group. Door County would be appropriate contact regarding the Buy Local in Ag -- Mary Pat would get in touch with Sam regarding this. Dick Skare and Victoria would also be good to make contact with - Connie can connect into Michael Field's initiative to get connected into their Talking Points – Mary Pat has copy of email that indicates suggestions and includes info on testifying.

1st Step

A **Press Release coming from the cluster group** would be valuable and could play a role. Mary Pat would put together bullet points to send out through the networks of EDCs etc. **Connie - will connect with Bridget also on the Names of those who will comment.** Also to get info from Bridget regarding time frame for written comment opportunities. And also see if they have Sample Letters to use for this

2nd Step –

Legislative Days – Legislative visits on May 15 (would be the most important day to attend if wanting to have legislators hear information on why these budget investments are important - Agency visits on May 16/ Diane Lupke would be a good one to bring into a smaller. Encourage Delegates to participate would be helpful .

UW- Extension is quite connected in this as wellMary Pat will connect with Dean and Claire.

Other topics that have been discussed as potential areas to work on:

Local Foods - CSA assistance

Green house opportunities

Warehousing – co-op distribution

Mary Pat made some contact regarding what the breadth of Hoop houses and CSA operations. Mary Pat shared a paper regarding – Door Co Local Food Network and Cultural Tourism – to look at, suggestion was to compile this information on a 5 county area.

3rd Step

Develop a White paper on a 5 County Area similar to the paper written on Door County.

Purpose to gather the information to guide us for future action - Diane Lupke might be a good person to lead this action – Connie will explore if she might be interested. Maybe a survey would be helpful in gathering the information that would go into this.

Jim Haguewood- You have adopted some regional goals and to connect how each of these actions can be linked back to the goals.

Planning for larger Cluster meeting – Goals & Objectives Action Plan / Who else needs to be invited

Toni indicated it would be helpful to have a larger group meeting to get buy in and that this can lead to a survey that would help us gather information – with cluster participants helping to encourage completing of survey.

Next Meeting – April 17 – 12:30-2:00 PM Fair Grounds – with Conf Call Capabilities.

Jennifer will contact Fair Grounds in Luxemburg to see about meeting date for this.