



MEETING NOTES

COLORADO FARM TO SCHOOL TASK FORCE QUARTERLY MEETING

October 26th, noon – 4pm

Montrose County Extension Office, 1001 N. 2nd Street, Montrose, CO 81401

NEXT STEPS / ACTION ITEMS

For Core Team

- **Action Item:** Core Team will discuss and find a time to re-evaluate the roadmap to see if there are any changes or updates.
- **Action Item:** Add a Core Team update to the agenda for future Task Force quarterly meetings.

For Task Force

- **Action Item:** We need to get the Ask an Expert ball rolling, so Task Force members need to create a sign in and put up some questions you've been asked with an answer.
- **Decision:** We will move forward with the joint meeting with the Food System Advisory Council on January 24th.

For Dave Maynard and Julia Erlbaum

- **Action Item:** Julia and Dave create a very short fact sheet laying out the why and what of the FTS Distributor Model.

For Susan Motika

- **Action Item:** Susan is checking with the law school re: whether the federal standards are setting the floor and schools can impose higher standards.
- **Action Item:** Susan Motika could put together some notes about Mark Lara's vehicle grant for the San Juan Region distribution group.

For Jeremy West

- **Action Item:** Jeremy volunteers to print business cards for the TF.
- **Action Item:** Jeremy will raise the idea of an online marketplace to CSNA.

For Andy Nowak

- **Action Item:** Identify venue for end of year party. Provide Spark with potential dates.



For Spark

- **Action Item:** Put a downloadable version of the logo on the website with a super simple sign up process to let us know what FTS you're doing (Name, email, organization, 1-2 sentence about what FTS you're doing), and with a disclaimer regarding our right to ask inappropriate users to remove the logo from that use
- **Action Item:** Spark will work on the next draft of the FTS-TF renewal legislation for review by the legislative ad hoc subcommittee (Andy and Jeremy).
- **Action Item:** Spark will send out several dates for the End of the Year Celebration based on Andy and Jeremy's availability.
- **Action Item:** Add Illene Pevic to Pilots and Evaluation Working Group.

MEETING NOTES

New Task Force Members

- Dave Maynard of FreshPak Produce.
 - Dave is from a citrus growing family.
 - FreshPak does a lot of school business, with 350 schools that they currently deliver to. FreshPak has been working on making locally grown produce for schools for the last few years.
- Jim Ehlrich of the Colorado Potato Administrative Committee.
 - Tanya Fells resigned due to health, and she recommended Jim.
- Janet Palomina from Las Animas is replacing Mark Lara.

Temporary:

- Chris Chavez is sitting in for Wendy White today.
 - Chavez is a Business Development Specialist who has been with Department of Ag for a month
 - Chavez worked 26 years with in the federal government on small business development and communications.
 - First part of 2012 he worked with DU to develop their communications strategy for the presidential debate.

Roadmap

- **Action Item:** Core Team will find a time to re-evaluate the roadmap to see if there are any changes or updates.

Scheduling an End of the Year Celebration for Task Force members and Friends of the TF

- **Action Item:** Andy will identify and secure a venue. Andy and Jeremy will identify several dates.
- **Action Item:** Spark will send out date options.



INTRODUCTION TO PRESENTATION & OVERVIEW OF STATE/NATIONAL FTS (LYN KATHLENE)

- FTS-TF:
 - Locally produced food is more nutritious than food from across the world – the sooner after picking that food is eaten, the more nutritious.
 - The TF was legislatively mandated in Colorado and seated in 2010
 - Policy guidance and regulatory reform – so much of what we need to do to get farm to school going and keeping it sustainable is on the boring rules and policy side.
 - TF identified five major gaps in CO FTS:
 - Grant guidance, pilots & evaluation of FTS efforts in CO, policy guidance & regulatory reform, the need for an online information hub, and FTS outreach.
 - Map – there are 52 school districts doing some type of FTS effort right now. Some of those efforts might be very small, with just a tiny garden plot at a school, but that’s the way most efforts get going.

PRESENTATION: *STARTING A FARM TO SCHOOL JOURNEY. FOLLOWED BY Q&A (J. WEST)*

- Background: District 6 in Weld County
 - 13th largest in Colorado with about 20,000 students, a Staff of 150, and a budget of 7.6 million.
 - 60% of students have Free and Reduced Lunch.
 - District 6’s goal is to participate in every program that the Department of Education offers – the National school breakfast, fresh fruit and veg, and the after school snack program.
 - District 6 works with a number of districts to bid together to get better prices.
- Over four years went from purchasing one crop from one farm to purchasing over 30 crops from 5 local farms
- Salad bars – two years ago we had salad bars that had no produce – it was ketchup packets and napkins and forks. Now it’s fresh produce.
- 10 things to think about when implementing an FTS program:
 1. Find out what’s local in your area.
 2. Start small. Greely started with 1 crop of cherry tomatoes. You don’t have to do it all at once!
 3. Visit the farm. Jeremy grew up in a city, so going to the farm was eye opening for him.
 4. Train staff. When Greely started to bring in whole fresh produce, they had to train their staff on how to cut up heads of romaine.
 5. Avoid excessive administrative work. (See start small. Also start with low hanging fruit, like using ordering from a vendor that sources locally)
 6. Develop a plan / menu generically. (To help you switch menus up when the growing season throws you a change)
 7. Market the program. Put up pictures of the farms and farmers, signs explaining where the food comes from.



8. Collect data. Track what you're buying, track what you're using. This helps you look for ways to replace items with locally sourced items.
 9. Look for opportunity buys. Seconds and excess crops work for things like sauces – it doesn't have to look pretty.
 10. Consider full year crops. Potatoes, onions, beef and proteins, carrots, beets, greens. Also consider putting up crops in the summer for use in the winter.
- This year Greeley estimates purchasing about \$700,000 worth of local food.
 - With grant support District 6 revamped a building to be a food hub and central production kitchen. Greeley uses it to do minimal processing and store food for other smaller districts. The building had huge walk in carousel ovens sitting dormant for 15 years, and they still work! The food hub saved District 6 a lot of money.

CO FOOD SYSTEM ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE (JANE BRAND)

Handout: Comparison of TF & Council

- Proposed Joint Meeting: Jan. 24 2013.
- Latest report is posted on <http://www.cofoodsystemcouncil.org>.
- Recently there was a very successful and networking filled Health Food Access Subcommittee Summit
- There is some cross pollination and sharing between the Council and the Task Force.

FARM TO SCHOOL INFORMATION HUB (JULIE MOORE)

- Go to www.coloradofarmtoschool.org to look at the site!
- **Action Item:** We need to get the Ask an Expert ball rolling, so Task Force members please create a sign in and put up some questions you've been asked with an answer.
- The Department of Agriculture is going to be responsible for managing the site once Spark finishes loading the content.
- Question: Do we want to let school districts and other FTS participants use the logo freely?
 - **Chris:** Just letting everyone use the logo freely might be a mistake – a missed opportunity to get schools to be accountable if “joining” an FTS program has any criteria.
 - **Discussion:** Do we really think that anyone in the schools will use the logo inappropriately? Not really, although non-schools who have something to sell to schools might use the logo. We should put a disclaimer there to the effect that we reserve the right to ask inappropriate users to remove the logo from that use.
 - Farm to School is a big continuum from very small to very large.
 - Need some branding of farm to school. (Rebecca: propose putting something up like: Are you doing anything farm to school related? Here's a definition in case you're not sure what you're doing meets the case.... Want to use the logo? Fill out this very simple form and get the logo free.)
 - **Decision:** Yes, agreed. Perhaps put a downloadable version of the logo on the website with a super simple sign up process to let us know what FTS you're doing (Name, email, organization, 1-2 sentence about what FTS you're doing).



- **Action Item:** Put a downloadable version of the logo on the hub website with a super simple sign up process to let us know what FTS you're doing (Name, email, organization, 1-2 sentence about what FTS you're doing), and to allow us some level of recourse for inappropriate use), and with a disclaimer regarding our right to ask inappropriate users to remove the logo from that use.
- **Action Item:** Jeremy volunteers to print business cards for the TF.
- Question for the TF: Should there be a marketplace on the website? For now, no – too many complex issues involved. CSNA might be the right place to do this. Jeremy will raise it with them.
- **Action Item:** Jeremy will raise the idea of an online marketplace to CSNA.

UPDATE ON FTS FOOD HUB AT FORT LYON (LYN KATHLENE)

Handouts: Feasibility study, HIA proposal

Feasibility Study

- FTS-TF has secured funding to begin a feasibility study for the food hub at Fort Lyons!
- The Colorado Coalition for the Homeless is going to spearhead the effort there.
- Timeline.
 - Residential treatment program skeleton crew will be up and running with 50 residents by the spring of 2013. Ultimately looking at having 500 residents and 2500 beds. There are a lot of services that need to get into place in Las Animas before they can ramp up to full numbers.
- Best case scenario, food hub might start in 2014 or 2015. We will identify initial steps that we may be able to take before 2014 to let us test a few components.
- Baca County, a very small school district that is in a serious food desert, is interested in getting more local products into their schools. One charge of the feasibility study is to do some outreach to find more places like Baca County that could be impacted by a food hub at Fort Lyons.

HIA Proposal

- We submitted a Health Impact Assessment Grant to the Pew Foundation, and the good news is that we fit their desired goals to fund a HIA in the middle of the country (outside the coasts), and to fund a HIA of a type that hasn't been done before. Also, just yesterday we go several follow up questions to our application, which is promising.
- Robert Wood Johnson Update: FTS-TF core team met with a Colorado Robert Wood Johnson team member (Shale Wong) on Nov 2nd, and Spark will meet with her again on December 12th

FTS EVALUATION: PILOT UPDATE (ANDY NOWAK)

Handout: Evaluation Toolkit draft

- The Evaluation subgroup conducted 3 interviews (one with Krista Garand, one with Kara Sample from Jeremy's district, and one with DPS) to understand what they are currently measuring re: FTS, what they'd like to be measuring, and whether they would participate in a pilot. The evaluation team got overwhelming support. Jewlya and Liz are starting to gather different tools for this evaluation process.



- We will be testing this toolkit on these three school districts in November, and report back to the TF at the next Quarterly Meeting. Once the 4 school districts go step by step to figure out what they want to measure, we identify the tools. It is a very straightforward method – identify the information you want to know, and then we help the districts figure out the questions to ask to gather that information well.
- Eventually this process will help us get common measurements about farm to school efforts in Colorado. The process is being reviewed and supported by Julie Graves at CDPHE. Illene Pevic is also interested in joining the work group.
- **Action Item:** Add Illene Pevic to Pilots and Evaluation Working Group.

FTS DISTRIBUTOR MODEL (DAVE MAYNARD, JULIA ERLBAUM)

- Dave Maynard and Julia Erlbaum have been discussing how a distributor can assist with the missing links for FTS purchasing programs. Dave and Julia are looking at ways to benefit the local producers, buyers, and distributors. They want to develop a model for Farm to School Distributors that other distributors would want to use.
- Dave and Julia are looking to start a transitional program (education and tools and opportunities to sell) for producers who are already working with schools, to help producers need to get to the point where they can work with a wholesaler that sells to schools. This is a tool to provide current producers infrastructure and TA support. The intent is not remove the immediate contact producers have with the schools they're working with, but to enable producers to expand buyers, with the help of a distributor. The distributor (FreshPak) will get to build relationships with more producers.
- Transitional Program uses current food safety measurements, and does not interrupt the ability of producers to sell directly to school districts.
- Example: Hospitals wanted to buy more local produce. Issues were volume, price and distribution. Hospital said to Cisco – we need you to source locally. Cisco was having trouble finding enough local producers that could provide what Cisco needed, so they started (with lots of other groups) a program to help local producers sell to distributors.
- FTS Distributor Model plan here in Colorado is NOT to have distributors take the place of the direct relationship between producers and schools, but help the producers expand their market options.
- **Action Item:** Julia and Dave please create a very short fact sheet laying out the why and what of the FTS Distributor Model.

POLICY WORKING GROUP UPDATE

FTS Food Safety HFHP presentation (Lyn Kathlene)

- National Network of Public Health Institutes & Healthy Farms, Health People Coalition is working on these four things:
 - Food Safety and Colorado Schools: A Review of Agricultural Policies & Practices Related to Farm to School (This is the long wonky version)
 - Just the Facts Please: Guidance to Ensure Safe Food in Colorado Farm to School Programs
 - Prezi presentation of Just the Facts Please



- Prezi template for other states

CDPHE new releases (Susan Motika)

- A Farm Food Safety Toolkit: A Nationwide Survey.
 - What are states doing with smaller farms and producers since FSMA exempts them from the federal FSMA standards?
 - Third Party Audits
 - State Marketing Agreements
 - State Food Safety Statutes
 - Commodity Specific Food Safety Standards
 - Farm Food Safety Information Hubs and Guidance Documents
 - Hands-on Education
 - Funding and Cost-Sharing Programs
- Question: Can schools require additional food safety standards?
 - Answer: Susan believes that they do have that authority – the federal standards are setting the floor and schools can impose higher standards. We are checking with the law school for further confirmation/clarity.
- Patty Clocker, Environmental Health Director, at CDPHE
- Apparently Secretary Vilsack is saying that Colorado and the Task Force in particular is thinking in new and innovative ways about Farm to School.
- **Action Item:** Susan is checking with the law school re: whether the federal standards are setting the floor and schools can impose higher standards.

2013 Legislation (Lyn Kathlene)

- DORA did their sunset review and decided the FTS-TF should be continued. We've been talking with Rep. Sue Schaeffer about possible legislation – she has set aside a bill re: the TF. In your packets you have the first version of the new legislation.
 - FTS TF wants to increase the TF's parent representatives from 1 to 2, add a teacher, and a Colorado producer.
 - TF wants to work with agencies already doing data collection, but this could cause a fiscal impact if not worded exactly correctly. Perhaps we need a more general wording.
 - TF wants to include formally in the legislation that the TF can write grants and bring money in. We already have that ability, but adding it officially makes it easier for us to do more of it.
 - TF requesting a 5 year extension to 2018.
 - TF requesting every-other-year reports to the legislature.
- Handout: How the State of Colorado Supports the Development of a Robust Local Food System. This document is makes clear the important differences between the FTS-TF and the CFSAC so that the legislature is not tempted to collapse us together.



- **Action Item:** Spark will work on the next draft of the FTS-TF renewal legislation with the ad hoc legislative subcommittee (Andy and Jeremy).

FUNDING UPDATE

TCHF & Gates application (Jeremy & Lyn)

- FTS TF has turned in the The Colorado Health Foundation (TCHF) application. Susan and Lyn met with the Gates Family Foundation – that was an introduction that Kelly Dunkin of TCHF made. Beth (of Gates) said she'd heard a lot about the TF and had wanted to meet us for a while. Outcome was that Beth said that we should apply outside of the funding cycle, in January.
- Background: At the 2011 TF meeting with Hillary Fulton at TCHF, and she asked some tough questions, which made us regroup and really think through a few important ways to explain our work. At our next meeting with TCHF they asked if we'd ever thought about a multi-year application, so that's what the TF did with our latest application.
- **Action Item:** Add a Core Team update to the agenda for future Task Force meetings.

Three year work plan (Jeremy & Lyn)

- TF created this to show TCHF that there is other support for the TF – counting all the in-kind contributions of TF member time. Hillary was really appreciative when she received it.

Trust Regional Convenings (Andy & Julia)

- Julia Erlbaum is doing another annual meeting in January.
- Applying to TCT at the end of the year (through CHF), a multi-year application, to have regional convenings across the state.

Other Updates

- Sustainability of FTS statewide – need to think about how do we institutionalize a coordinated FTS program in Colorado? That's a big project, but it would be a really good use of this group's time.
- Special Projects: A small pot of money that we can offer to communities that have some money for a FTS effort but who need matching funds.

NEXT MEETING

- Joint meeting with the Food System Advisory Council? Our idea would be to overlap with them a little in the middle of the day, have our own business in the morning, and then they would have their own business in the afternoon. We are aiming for January 24th for that meeting, in the Front Range.
- **Decision:** We will move forward with the joint meeting on January 24th.

COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

Local Food Issues in San Juan Region Distribution (Maya Silver, Holly Conn)

- Non Profit called Gunnison Valley Foodshed Alliance.



- Focused on sustainable economies.
- Local farms first program. Online farmer's market where customers order from the farmers.
- In our case, we pick it up, aggregate it and deliver it to a single location where the buyers pick it up.
- FTS serving two schools in Gunnison County. We started by talking to the Food Service directors and asking how we could help. We started by meeting them at the farmer's market, we would pick things out, take wagons back to the school on a Sunday. Then by word of mouth we developed a network of people who would regularly make the rounds. Then one day someone found one hair on one apple, and the whole system was shut down.
 - In Gunnison County, great distances separate farms from schools. Also no small producers, so we source from Delta. We also don't have a lot of large scale farms in Delta County, so we piece together from small producers.
 - There are a lot of people to communicate back and forth between.
- Long term solution: A single reliable delivery service that can serve multiple farms and schools with institutionalized, communicative roles.
- We've gotten a small amount of money from a grant, and the schools serve one locally sourced lunch a month. We offer \$250 to our district every month to pay for that. We market that day, and the parents often come to lunch that day.
- We tried to mimic the system that the schools are already using – they order from a piece of paper, and the truck shows up. Our challenge is to work with the schools and farmers for a while to get them used to working with each other, and then start introducing ways to streamline the process.
- We see ourselves as the beginning stage of an eventual food hub, not just for schools.
- The farmers set their own prices for the online marketplace.
- **Action Item:** Susan Motika could put together some notes about Mark Lara's vehicle grant for the San Juan Region distribution group.

Labor and Regulations (David Harold)

- David Harold of Tuxedo Farm is here to talk about his challenges with labor and regulations. Tuxedo Farms is very diversified – growing sweet corn, onions, beans, beef, organic vegetables.
- Through Tuxedo Corn Company, 1500 acres per year of sweet corn.
- Tuxedo Farm has about 120 seasonal employees for sweet corn harvest. 80-90 of them are H2A visa workers from Mexico. The sweet corn harvest starts in July and goes until about the middle of September. Tuxedo Farm also harvests onions starting in late August into September or October. That's the bulk of the operation as far as seasonal labor goes. There are also year round employees on the beef and other veg side.
- Onions and hand-picked sweet corn is very labor intensive. Tuxedo Farm has been using an H2A or an H2B program for 11 years. AEWB is a minimum wage imposed by the Department of Labor on what you can pay an H2A visa person. Tuxedo Farm advertises (by law) to American workers at the same time as we advertise in Mexico, so that there is an opportunity for US workers to get those jobs.
- The state checks out all the application details, like whether housing and hot water are provided, etc. The state certifies it, that goes to Homeland Security, HS certifies the visa, producer goes to a consulate and



does paperwork, and then they send all that information to an agency to check for known terrorists. Then some or all of the workers do an interview, they get their visa, and the producers bring them here. The producers pay for their transportation to and from Mexico, visa fees, housing, first week wage guarantee, guarantees a ¾ contract unless crop failure or act of God (no finding cheaper labor). The Department of Labor sends out state employees to look over our shoulders and talk to the workers. Every now and again Colorado Legal Services interviews them and provides free legal services in the event of wrongdoing.

- Question: Do you have repeat employees?
 - Response: Yes, quite a few. The training is intensive. Brothers, wives, kids, cousins. We brought 91 people this year, and only 5 of them were new. 80-90 percent have been coming for 5-10 years.
- The Dep't of Labor and USCIS doesn't know who is brought in until pretty far along in the process.
- The wage is \$10.43 per hour. It is the same wage offered to US workers. If someone from far away in the US is hired, Tuxedo Farm pays their travel and housing. Hiring someone who can go home each day – someone local – saves the housing and travel costs.
- Tuxedo Farm doesn't like the bureaucracy of the program, but by now we're used to the hoops we have to jump through. It could be streamlined, but the program is working for us.
- When we do the required local marketing, anyone in the US can see the job offer online. We're also required to advertise locally.
- Earliest date to apply is 75 days before your date of need, which you don't always know exactly. We invariably end up in a crunch for getting things squared away.
- In general the US workers don't really want the work, are terrible at it, and I wish they wouldn't apply, although there are a few who are local and come back every year and are good. I want to give US workers a chance, but not at the expense of the foreign workers who really can do the work very well.
- Question: It sounds very federal bureaucracy-heavy. Have you talked with Congressional reps?
 - Response: No – what are they going to do in an election year?
- Housing is expensive. We built a dormitory. \$350,000 for 48 people. It sits empty for 9 months of the year, and we pay taxes on it of course. But the alternative – finding places to rent every year – is worse.
- If you have even one H2A worker, you have to pay every worker, H2A or not, the same amount. You are not allowed to have 30 US workers at \$16 and the rest H2A at \$10.43.
- One solution that was proposed last year is to work with the ski industry to extend the length of contract to 6 months, 3 months picking corn and 3 months working in the ski industry. It would be more attractive to the workers.
- Question: What's keeping you from mechanizing the harvest?
 - Response: The variety of corn and the fact that we'd rather give the people the money. They're good people. We're pretty content to do it the way we're doing it!

Teens on Farms (Cassandra)

- Teens on Farms are strong believers that non farmers can do a lot to help farmers. We need our agricultural land to stay in production. We're trying to keep local land in agriculture production.
- Farming is hard work, but kids of 14-18 need meaningful work. Working on farms can be rewarding and can teach very meaningful lessons to kids.



- The Teens on Farms program is about connecting teenagers to farmers in the North Fork Valley (only in the North Fork Valley for funding reasons). We negotiate with farmers so they pay what they feel is a fair wage for the work each kid does – we pick up the rest so that the kid gets a reasonable wage. We teach the kids how to work hard. The outcomes have been tremendous. This year we processed \$28,000 in payroll. We want to expand to other regions to help farms stay in production. Teens on Farms picks up the workers' compensation, and the farms need to have liability. Generally Teens on Farms likes the kids to get paid \$7.50/hour (minimum wage), but the farms usually pay more in the \$5/hour range.
- Age limitations: 14-18.

ADJOURN

