



**COLORADO FOOD SYSTEMS
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Annual Report to the Governor,
Commissioner of Agriculture, and the
General Assembly**

October 1, 2012

Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council

www.cofoodsystmscouncil.org

Council Members

Jane Brand, R.D., S.N.S., School Nutrition Director, Colorado Department of Education
Ron Carleton, Deputy Commissioner, Colorado Department of Agriculture
Mary Lou Chapman, President & CEO, Rocky Mountain Food Industry Association
Amber Clay, Farmer and Bookkeeper
Patricia Daniluk, M.S., R.D., Nutrition Services and WIC Director, Colorado Department of
Public Health & Environment
Karen Falbo, C.N., Nutrition Program Manager, Natural Grocers by Vitamin Cottage
Jim Isgar, State Director, USDA Rural Development
Pat Kendall, Ph.D., R.D., Associate Dean for Research, College of Applied Human Sciences,
Colorado State University
Julie Kerksick, Director, Office of Economic Security, Colorado Department of Human
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Barbara Marty, Producer
Andrea Rouge, Director, Cooking Matters
Cynthia Torres, Director, Colorado Farmers' Market Association
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Staff is funded and managed by LiveWell Colorado



October 1, 2012

Dear Governor Hickenlooper, Commissioner Salazar, and members of the General Assembly:

On behalf of the Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council (COFSAC), it is an honor to present to you the Council's second annual report on the Council's activities and preliminary findings pursuant to Senate Bill 10-106.

COFSAC has embarked on a series of activities in the last year in our attempt to assess the current state of Colorado's food systems and the factors that influence them. Council members, with the assistance of subcommittee members and dedicated members of the public, are in the process of developing recommendations to: (1) increase Colorado market access by Colorado producers; (2) increase healthy food access for all Coloradans; and (3) increase the capacity of local and regional food systems coalitions. The Council will offer these recommendations in the annual January 31st, 2013 report.

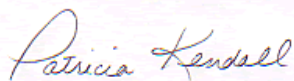
In the meantime, we are providing this report of activities and preliminary findings for your review. On behalf of all the Council members, we look forward to working closely with all of you on these important issues.

Best regards,

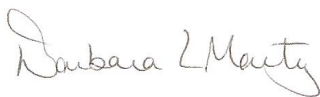
The Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council Interim Leadership Team, consisting of:



Patricia Daniluk, M.S., R.D.
Nutrition Services and WIC Director
Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment



Patricia Kendall, Ph.D., R.D.
Associate Dean for Research
College of Applied Human Sciences, Colorado State University



Barbara Marty
Producer



Per the requirements of Senate Bill 10-106, this report on the happenings of the Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council (COFSAC) is being provided to update Governor John Hickenlooper and his office, Commissioner of Agriculture John Salazar, and the State of Colorado's General Assembly.

History

The Council was formed in 2010 when Governor Bill Ritter signed into law Senate Bill 106: Creation of Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council. Senate Bill 106 was sponsored by Senator Bob Bacon (D-*District 14*) and Representative Marsha Looper (R-*District 19*). The creation of the bill was based on recommendations included in the Food Policy Blueprint, a report commissioned by LiveWell Colorado in 2009, and on a September 2009 report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, which included the development of food policy councils as a key strategy for increasing community food access. COFSAC submitted a report on October 1, 2011, which outlined COFSAC activities from December 2010 through August 2011.

Mission and Purpose

COFSAC is charged with fostering a healthy food supply available to all residents while enhancing the state's agricultural and natural resources, encouraging economic growth, expanding the viability of agriculture, and improving the health of our communities and residents. Senate Bill 106 specifically outlines the following purposes and duties:

- Purpose A.** Identify and use existing studies of the food system and examples of best practices, whenever possible;
- Purpose B.** Work with other task forces, committees, or organizations that are pursuing initiatives or studies similar to the purposes and duties outlined in this article and develop relationships with other task forces, committees, or organizations to collaborate on similar efforts;
- Purpose C.** Develop local food recommendations that promote the building of robust, resilient, and long-term local food economies;
- Purpose D.** Develop recommendations regarding hunger and food access;
- Purpose E.** Collaborate with, serve as a resource to, and receive input from local and regional food policy councils in the state;
- Purpose F.** Collaborate with the department of agriculture in promoting the marketing program known as "Colorado Proud", which helps consumers, restaurants, and retailers to identify and purchase Colorado food and agricultural products; and
- Purpose G.** Develop recommendations for actions that state and local governments, businesses, agriculturists, and consumers can take to build robust, resilient, and long-term local food economies.

Meetings & Events from Sept 1, 2011 to Oct 1, 2012

- All three subcommittees (Communications, Economic Development, and Healthy Food Access) met nearly every month to discuss subcommittee business.
- The full council met quarterly, with meetings in September and December of 2011, and in January, March, and June of 2012.
- In order to develop an understanding of economic growth opportunities and barriers in Colorado (Purpose E), the Economic Development Subcommittee hosted a series of listening events around the state, including the following:
 - Economic Development Summit in Pueblo in December, 2011
 - A break out session during the Governor's Agriculture Forum in February, 2012
 - A break out session during the Colorado Farmers' Market Association's Annual Meeting in March, 2012
 - Urban Agriculture Listening Session in Denver in May, 2012
 - Food Safety Round Table in Loveland in June, 2012
 - A break out session during the Colorado Farm Bureau's Mid-Summer Meeting in Grand Junction in July, 2012

More information about these events is available on the website:

<http://www.cofoodscouncil.org/event-summaries-and-reports.html>

- COFSAC leadership has held meetings with and has formed additional partnerships with key food systems stakeholders, including the Colorado Cattlemen's Association, Colorado Livestock Association, Beef Council, Colorado Farm Bureau, Rocky Mountain Farmers' Union, Colorado State University, Colorado State University Extension Services, University of Colorado-Boulder, LiveWell Colorado, and Hunger Free Colorado, (Purpose B).
- COFSAC members and Colorado Farm to School Task Force members continue to sit on each of the other's subcommittees (Purpose B).

COFSAC Leadership

Former Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture and Chairperson of COFSAC, Jim Miller, retired from the Department of Agriculture and from COFSAC in May, 2012. New Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture, Ron Carleton, was appointed to COFSAC in July, 2012.

Former hunger and food security representative and Vice Chairperson, Ruth Stemler, retired from Share Our Strength Colorado, in March, 2012. New Colorado Director of Share Our Strength, Andrea Rouge, was appointed to COFSAC in June, 2012.

Patricia Daniluk, Pat Kendall, and Barb Marty, subcommittee chairs, are serving as the interim leadership team until a new chair and vice-chair are selected in November 2012.

Targeted Activities of the Council

The three subcommittees formed in 2011 continued to carry out the majority of COFSAC activities in 2012. A list of subcommittees and their members is available on the website: <http://www.cofoodscouncil.org/subcommittees.html>. The activities below summarize the work of the Communications, Economic Development, and Healthy Food Access Subcommittees.

Local and Regional Food Systems Coalitions Inventory and Assessment

The Communications Subcommittee embarked on the mission of engaging more Coloradans in the work of COFSAC, as outlined in Purposes B, C, E and G of the enabling legislation. The members conducted an online survey with all known food systems groups in Colorado and conducted follow-up interviews with key leaders of selected organizations. The subcommittee's goals were to: (1) enhance dialogue between COFSAC and local and regional food systems groups; (2) identify gaps; and (3) develop recommendations for future projects.

The survey was sent directly to fifty-two identified groups to capture basic information about their respective organizations, including mission, activities, partners, and needs. A link to the survey was also included in several partner organizations' newsletters. Targeted groups that did not fill out the survey within two weeks were sent several follow-up emails. In the end, thirty-nine Colorado food systems groups completed the survey.

Thirty-eight survey respondents indicated a willingness to take part in an additional telephone interview. These groups were then prioritized for interview based on the degree to which their activities took a comprehensive food systems approach and involved diverse stakeholders. To date, key leaders of twenty organizations have been interviewed. All interviewees reviewed their final interview notes and were provided opportunities for editing or refining the notes.

The Communications Subcommittee is in the process of analyzing the results of both the survey and the interviews. Results and recommendations will be provided in the January 31, 2013 report. The information collected will also be used to update the Local and Regional Food Systems Coalitions page on the COFSAC website. The current Local and Regional Food Systems Coalitions Directory can be viewed here: <http://www.cofoodscouncil.org/regional-and-local-food-systems-coalitions.html>

Economic Development Listening Sessions: Opportunities and Barriers for Colorado Producers to Reach Colorado Markets

The listening events listed above, (page 5), were designed to provide subcommittee members an opportunity to hear directly from farmers, ranchers, food processors, and

agriculture support groups about various business models and market strategies that could potentially open new or strengthen existing markets within the state (Purposes B, C, E, and F). Following the events, the Economic Development Subcommittee prioritized the following findings:

Food Safety

Producers expressed concern about the appropriate measures needed to meet food safety requirements, especially given differences in regulation across various jurisdictions. Producers reported that this maze of requirements and the difficulty in sorting them out effectively creates a barrier to enter into markets. They believe that the increased availability of and access to producer-focused education could better enable them to understand these requirements and encourage more movement into direct Colorado markets. They also believe that increased consumer education and outreach efforts on food safety issues would further enhance everyone's understanding of food safety.

Market Access

Across all regions, business types, and listening sessions, the subcommittee heard a need for increased access to new and existing Colorado markets. Discrepancies between where food products are produced (typically rural areas) and where food products are purchased in great quantities (urban, city centers) require efficient and effective marketing channels that cater to regional producers and regional markets. As producers are able to better access these markets, more markets will need to develop in order to facilitate continued growth and business development. Furthermore, the gap between common producer risk management practices and institutional risk management requirements needs to be addressed in order to make institutional markets more accessible.

Food and Farming Business Development

In order to accommodate an aging farming population, additional investments in beginning food and farming business development and education are needed. These education efforts should focus on business planning in order to facilitate sustainable businesses and develop producers' ability to apply for financial assistance. Growers, value-added producers, and agriculture supporters expressed great concern about liability insurance in terms of access and affordability. The concern has been heightened by Colorado's new cottage food industry legislation. Additional technical assistance and support for grant and loan applications are also widely requested.

Healthy Food Access for all Coloradans

The Healthy Food Access Subcommittee has focused on promoting understanding of food access issues in Colorado and considered critical steps that stakeholders can take to address these issues. Through a facilitated discussion process, the Healthy Food Access Subcommittee has developed a vision for healthy food access and twelve key conditions necessary to achieve this vision in Colorado:

All Coloradans can readily obtain and consume safe, culturally- and age- appropriate, nutritious food every day to achieve optimal health.

The following conditions must be in place to reach this vision:

- Federal policies prioritize and support healthy food access
- Land use policies promote healthy food access
- Federal, state, and local resources support direct markets
- Public institutions procure, provide, and promote healthy food
- Retailers that provide healthy food exist in every community and are readily accessible
- Federal food assistance programs are utilized to their full potential
- Food banks and pantries consistently provide nutrient-dense foods
- Food safety education and awareness exists throughout the state
- Coloradans have the skills and knowledge to purchase, prepare, and consume healthy foods
- Nutrition information is available, accurate, and reliable where people make food choices
- Pricing, promotion, and placement encourage healthy food choices
- Programs, policies and strategies are assessed for impact on a consistent basis

This vision and the key conditions will be presented, vetted, and further explored with more than eighty Colorado leaders from the fields of nutrition, anti-hunger, public health, food retail, and agriculture during a Healthy Food Access Summit. This daylong summit on October 2nd is co-hosted by the subcommittee and LiveWell Colorado and supported by a grant received by LiveWell Colorado from the Rose Women's Organization. The subcommittee intends to engage all participants in a comprehensive approach to strengthening healthy food access. Results of the summit will assist the subcommittee in identifying the most pressing opportunities and most significant gaps to improve healthy food access for all Coloradans (Purposes A, B, C, D, E, and G). The summit will also help to guide future recommendations put forth by COFSAC in its January 2013 report. The vision and key conditions can also be downloaded at:

<http://www.cofoodscouncil.org/healthy-food-access-vision.html>

The Summit agenda is available at: <http://www.cofoodscouncil.org/healthy-food-access-summit-2012.html>



Additional 2012 Achievements

- The partnership between COFSAC members Colorado Farmers' Market Association, Share Our Strength Colorado, and the Colorado Department of Human Services to enhance the use of EBT at farmers markets continues. The group meets regularly with multiple non-profit and agency partners, including USDA's Food and Nutrition Services and Colorado State University Extension Services, to improve education, outreach, and programs to increase access to farmers markets by people with limited resources. The partnership aims to enhance efforts of EBT use at farmers markets. Evaluation, outreach and training with local human services, as well as additional EBT technology and best practice development are part of the process. From 2011 to date in 2012, the number of farmers' markets able to accept SNAP benefits has increased by 19%. The partnerships' Share Our Strength grant has been extended through 2013 to continue this collaborative process.
- COFSAC provided support to the Colorado Environmental Health Association (CEHA) to expand food systems and food safety work to include agriculture perspectives at their annual conference. COFSAC supported a successful national grant application for CEHA to pursue this work.
- COFSAC has identified needs to increase access to and use of funding and financing for food systems projects. As a result, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union has funded two successive projects to develop tools to ease access to funding and financing for food systems projects in Colorado. Case studies will be completed in early 2013 that will highlight successful methods for securing funding, whether through foundation grants, traditional financing, community investment, or a hybrid approach.

Next Steps

The work of the COFSAC through the end of the year will focus on analysis and the development of recommendations relevant to the mission and purpose of the council. As mandated by Senate Bill 10-106, detailed reports will be submitted to the House Health and Environment Committee; the Senate Health and Human Services Committee; the House Agriculture, Livestock, and Natural Resources Committee; and the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee or their successor committees by January 31, 2013.