

History, Actions, and Major Accomplishments of the Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council, January 2012

Per the requirements of Senate Bill 10-106, this report is being provided to update

- the House Health and Human Services committee
- the Senate Health and Human Services committee
- the House Agriculture, Livestock, and Natural Resources committee
- the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources committee

on the happenings of the recently formed Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council.

Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council

www.cofoodscouncil.org

Council Members:

Chairperson: Jim Miller, Deputy Commissioner, Colorado Department of Agriculture

Vice Chairperson: Ruth Stemler, M.S., R.D., Director, Share Our Strength Colorado

Jane Brand, R.D., SNS, Director, Office of School Nutrition, Colorado Department of Education

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, CN, 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 Services

Barbara Marty, Producer

Cynthia Torres, Director, Colorado Farmers' Market Association

Linda Yoder, Producer

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John Hickenlooper, Governor

January 31, 2012

The Honorable:

Gail Schwartz, Chair, Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
Jerry Sonnenberg, Chair, House Agriculture, Livestock and Natural Resources
Committee
Betty Boyd, Chair, Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Ken Summers, Chair, House Health and Human Services Committee

Dear Committee Chairs and Members:

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

The COFSAC has concluded a very busy first year, as you will learn from this report. With the dedicated service of the Council's members, we have made significant progress in analyzing Colorado's current food systems and the forces that influence them. Further, the Council can report it has created a path to better understand these systems and forces with the objective of enabling the Council to provide the General Assembly with recommendations on how better these food systems can alleviate hunger and improve Coloradans' access to healthier foods. The Council also will offer recommendations on how best to meet the challenge of obesity among all segments of our population.

Please give this report your fullest attention. On behalf of all the Council members, I look forward to working closely with you all on these most important issues.

Best regards,

Jim Miller

Deputy Commissioner, Colorado Department of Agriculture

Chair, Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council

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I. About the Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council

History & Purpose

The Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council (COFSAC or Council) was created through state legislation in 2010. Senate Bill 106: Creation of Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council was initiated by LiveWell Colorado and 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. Governor Bill Ritter seated the Council in late October 2010.

The Council 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.

Council Structure

The Council is composed of thirteen appointed members and two staff members. Three permanent subcommittees address priority areas- communications, economic development, and healthy food access- while several council members serve as liaisons to other relevant Colorado groups including the Farm-to-School Task Force and regional food policy councils. Interested members of the public may also apply to be Subcommittee members.

Council Appointments

Jane C. Brand, R.D., S.N.S.
Director, Office of School Nutrition
Colorado Department of Education
State Agency Representative

Mary Lou Chapman
President & CEO
Rocky Mountain Food Industry Association
Food Wholesaler/Retailer Representative,
2yr term

Amber Clay
Farmer, Bookkeeper
Agricultural Production Representative, 2yr
term

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

Karen Falbo, C.N.
Nutrition Program Manager
Natural Grocers by Vitamin Cottage
Nutrition and Health Representative, 3yr
term

Jim Isgar
State Director
USDA Rural Development
Rural/Community/Economic Development
Representative, 3yr term

Pat Kendall, Ph.D., R.D.
Associate Dean for Research
College of Applied Human Sciences
Professor, Food Science and Human
Nutrition
Colorado State University
Nutrition and Health Representative, 2yr
term

Julie Kerksick
Director, Office of Economic Security
Colorado Department of Human Services
State Agency Representative

Barbara Marty
Producer
Agricultural Production Representative, 3yr
term

Jim Miller
Deputy Commissioner
Colorado Department of Agriculture
State Agency Representative

Ruth Stemler, M.S., R.D.
Director
Share Our Strength Colorado
Anti-Hunger/Food Assistance
Representative, 3yr term

Cynthia Torres
Director
Colorado Farmers' Market Association
Food Wholesaler/Retailer Representative,
3yr term

Linda Yoder
Agriculture Producer
Agricultural Production Representative, 2yr
term

II. Summary of Key Meetings and Events in 2011

Full Council Activities

Governor Ritter appointed all council members in the fall of 2010. After gathering for an informal meet-and-greet in December 2010, the Council initiated its regular meetings in January 2011 and proceeded to meet nearly every other month. *All reports and summaries from meetings and events listed here are available at www.cofoodsystmscouncil.org.*

- At the first official meeting on January 27, 2011, Jim Miller, Colorado Department of Agriculture, was elected to chair the Council, and Ruth Stemler, Share Our Strength Colorado, was elected to vice-chair. Operating policies and procedures were reviewed and passed.
- A series of informational webinars on food systems councils and the state of food and agriculture policy was conducted for the Council in March and April 2011.
- A food systems orientation was held on March 24, 2011 for council members at Colorado State University with presentations on key elements and drivers of the Colorado agriculture industry; population health; existing and potential direct markets in the state; and, getting usable data into the hands of communities.

- An all-day strategic planning session was held on May 26, 2011 with a professional facilitator to define and co-create a visual of Colorado's food systems and to write objectives for a 2011 work plan.
- The Council developed three subcommittees to lead its efforts based on the May strategic planning: Economic Development; Healthy Food Access; and, Communications.
- On August 11 and 12, 2011, most members of the Council and one member of the Farm-to-School Task Force participated in a brief tour of some of Colorado's food systems, including stops, tours, and meetings in Summit County, the North Fork Valley, the Arkansas River Valley, Canon City, and Colorado Springs.
- In September, the Council composed a report to the Governor's office and the General Assembly (Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council's Report to the Governor's Office, the Commissioner of Agriculture, and the General Assembly for October 1, 2011) and a series of public communication tools.
- At the end of 2011, the Council initiated a comprehensive evaluation of year one in order to inform strategies for 2012.
- Hosted by the Economic Development Subcommittee, the Council held a Summit in Pueblo on December 16 2011 to hear from producers and producer support groups about key barriers and opportunities to expanding Colorado-based markets.

Subcommittee Meetings and Activities

In 2011, subcommittees met almost monthly starting in June. Most subcommittee meetings involved further orientation around specific issue areas, constructing refined work plans, gathering public input, and developing partnerships. Subcommittee work is presented at every full council meeting for group review and approval. More detail is available in the next section, *Major Accomplishments in 2011*.

III. Major Accomplishments in 2011

Economic Development Subcommittee

The Economic Development Subcommittee convened in the summer of 2011 to prepare for a series of listening sessions around the state concerning barriers and opportunities for expanding entry into Colorado-based markets. For a full list of subcommittee members see Appendix A.

Subcommittee Objective #1:

Understand Existing and Needed Infrastructure for Colorado Producers

Progress toward Objective

Summer Tour- All of the Economic Development Subcommittee members attended the Council's August 2011 tour of the state. Members visited more than 6 communities and met with and heard from producers, local food policy councils, elected officials, public health

professionals, and anti-hunger advocates. Discussions included needs, challenges, interests, and opportunities in growing local and regional food systems.

Economic Development Summit, Pueblo- On December 16th, 2011, Subcommittee and other council members convened a community listening session to better understand regional economic development opportunities and challenges. A goal was to learn about business models and market strategies that could open new or strengthen existing markets in the area and throughout Colorado. The Summit was attended by approximately 50 producers and producer support groups, primarily from the southeast region of the state. Kathay Rennels, Assistant Vice President of the Office of Community and Economic Development at Colorado State University, opened the Summit and welcomed attendees, and Bill Nobles, Southern Region Extension Director for Colorado State University Extension, moderated the day¹.

Collaboration with the Colorado Farm to School Task Force- In order to maximize communication and coordination across Task Force and Council activities, members of both groups began to formally attend one another's subcommittees in 2011. Each group has three standing subcommittees and each subcommittee has members of both the Task Force and the Council. Additionally, several meetings and conference calls have been convened with staff and leadership of the Task Force and Council to share current activities and proposed projects. Council members attend Farm to School webinars and meetings to discuss the importance of regional economic development of food systems to programs such as Farm to School.

Subcommittee Objective #2:

Advance Access to Financial and Technical Assistance Resources in Colorado

Progress toward Objective

Several projects have been leveraged as a result of various Council meetings and listening sessions to help improve producers' access to financial and technical assistance.

Funding Guide - Initial phases of a feasibility study to develop a funding resource guide was funded by the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union at the request of the Colorado Farmers Market Association to build resources for farmers markets and direct market producers. The intent of a feasibility study will be to build capacity amongst Colorado producers, producer support groups, food system industries, retailers, community coalitions, and funding organizations. Goals are 1) to increase awareness and transparency of opportunities, methods and timing for approaching different funding sources; 2) to increase confidence and therefore decrease confusion about funding processes; and 3) to support *advanced* planning for grants and funding opportunities.

Food Safety Competency - The Council member representing Colorado Farmers Market Association (CFMA) has heard repeatedly through Council activities that food safety competency is a barrier to market development by producers. CFMA worked with their fiscal agent, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, to support funding for a county-level food safety manual

¹ The information gathered at this Summit is currently being processed and will be used to inform 2012 work plans for COFSAC and to form recommendations for potential partner organizations. A full summary of the Economic Development Summit will be available on the website in February 2012.

to be used in conjunction with food safety workshops for small to mid-sized producers across the state in 2012.

Healthy Food Access Subcommittee

The Healthy Food Access Subcommittee convened in the summer of 2011 and quickly agreed on the need to establish a stronger internal understanding of food access issues in Colorado as well as the critical steps it will take to address those issues. For a list of subcommittee members please see Appendix A.

Subcommittee Objective #1:

Develop a Vision for Healthy Food Access in Colorado

Progress toward Objective

Listening Sessions- The Subcommittee convened a series of “orientation” meetings to better understand the State of Colorado’s food assistance programs, issues of hunger and food security, and issues of access to healthy foods. The Subcommittee convened several partner organizations, including Hunger Free Colorado, Denver Healthy Food Access Taskforce, Colorado Department of Human Services, and Colorado State University Extension Service. These orientations led to the facilitated development of a vision for healthy food access in Colorado.

Visioning- The Subcommittee quickly identified a need to establish a common understanding of what “healthy food access” means, and what it might look like in Colorado. Additionally, the Subcommittee decided to articulate what key steps could be taken in the state to fully achieve healthy food access for all Coloradans. The Subcommittee began a process in late 2011 to develop this vision with its key elements for achievement. The Subcommittee’s proposed vision statement is:

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

The Subcommittee will continue to refine the primary conditions required to achieve this vision in early 2012.

Subcommittee Objective #2:

Connect Federal Food Assistance Programs to Local Food Systems

Progress toward Objective

Funding for Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Infrastructure at Farmers Markets² - A funding partnership developed between Council members Colorado Farmers’ Market Association (CFMA), Share Our Strength Colorado, and the Colorado Department of Human Services. This led to a \$23,000 grant from Share our Strength (national) to improve education, outreach, and programs to increase access to farmers markets by people with limited resources and the collaboration between the following: the Colorado Department of Human Services,

² EBT machines allow recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps) to use their federal benefits at an approved retailer. EBT machines at farmers markets have been shown across the country to support easier access to fresh, healthy foods for those on food assistance programs.

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, USDA Food and Nutrition Services, No Kid Hungry Colorado, CSU Extension Nutrition Education, CU Boulder Department of Education, and representatives from CFMA member farmers markets. The grant also funds an evaluation plan for how market activities and programs can also better engage consumers around healthier eating behaviors in general.

Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program- CFMA is working with Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, CO Aging Services, CO Commodity Supplemental Food Program, Food Bank of the Rockies, and producers to implement the Bulk Purchase option for the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program in 2012. The final project plan is currently undergoing USDA review and revisions. Project planning will continue into 2013.

Communications Subcommittee

The Communications Subcommittee has been working since the spring of 2011 to centralize information about the Council, who it is, what resources it provides, and more. For a list of Subcommittee members please see Appendix A.

Subcommittee Objective #1:

Engage Coloradans in the Work of the Council

Progress toward Objective

In order to promote the work of the Council and create a public face for the Council, the Communications Subcommittee has developed a wide variety of communications tools and processes, including the following:

Logo Contest- In order to create a brand image for the Council, a logo design contest was held during the fall of 2011. A student at Colorado Mountain College created the selected design, with a professional designer providing the final polish.

COFSAC Website- The new website, www.cofoodscouncil.org, serves as a primary source of information regarding the history and actions of the Council, including public reports, quarterly newsletters, meeting schedules, member profiles, and bill information. Visitors to the website are also able to submit comments to council staff.

Promotional Flyer- A one-page full color flyer was developed to distribute at public events. This flyer gives a brief overview of the charge of the Council and points to the website for additional information.

PowerPoint Presentation- A general PowerPoint presentation was created and is available to all Council members to be used during partner meetings. This presentation is continually updated to reflect the charge of the Council, its current activities, and its accomplishments.

Quarterly Updates- Approximately every three months, the Communications Subcommittee releases a public update through the Council email list, partner networks, and the website. These updates provide a general overview of council activities and refer engaged readers to the website for additional information.

Public Summaries on Activities and Findings- A public summary of the Council Summer Tour was compiled and released through email networks, on the website, and highlighted in the quarterly updates. Similarly, a public summary of the Economic Development Summit in Pueblo will soon be released.

Subcommittee Objective #2:

Build Capacity and Coordination with Local Food Systems Groups

Progress toward Objective

Local and Regional Food Systems Coalition Inventory- A common desire among local and regional food systems groups is greater connectivity to other groups with similar interests in the state, as well as greater involvement in state activities. The Council has supported this desire by inventorying existing groups and organizations in Colorado that are addressing food systems issues. This inventory is available at <http://www.cofoodscouncil.org/regional-and-local-food-systems-coalitions.html> , and is updated monthly. Interested members of the public can download an email list of all the registered groups to use for their own communication purposes.

IV. Major Findings from 2011

The summary list below presents a synthesis of community desires and opportunities that the Council has heard and identified over several listening sessions in 2011. Key issue areas are categorized by the type of action that may be needed to move the issue forward; for example, if the issue may require further research, policy advocacy, or more training or education. In reality, all of the issues identified will require research, education, and advocacy to truly advance them; this list presents the most common desires expressed by stakeholders.

This summary will help direct some actions of the Council. Further, the Council members hope that other Colorado organizations and leaders will consider the following findings when reviewing their own work plans. As the Council continues to listen to communities' needs and priorities, and vets the findings with organizational leaders, the Council will compile additional reports with recommendations for suggested action.

Research/Assessment

- The capacity of Colorado's production to meet Colorado's dietary needs
- Understanding the return on investment of local and regional food related industries
- Opportunities and barriers of crop production on public lands
- Support for season extension infrastructure including feasibility in Colorado's microclimates

Education/Technical Assistance

- Clarity on food safety rules and regulations
- Increased opportunity for food safety training and safe food handling education
- Education, business planning support, and access to land for beginning farmers
- Increased access to financial resources and technical assistance for food systems program development
- Best practices and capacity building assistance for local and regional food systems coalitions

Market Development

- Consumer education to support regional and local food systems
- Increased labeling and marketing of Colorado products and expansion of Colorado Proud
- Continued promotion of Colorado's food based industry through tourism development and storytelling
- Local and regional transportation and distribution infrastructure
- Increased access to existing markets, development of new markets
- Promote value added processing of Colorado's agricultural products

Policy/Regulatory

- Support the economic viability of local/regional agriculture and direct markets in order to increase the competitive edge of local and regional producers
- Balance food safety regulations and cottage food industry development
- Increase access to labor markets and streamline temporary agriculture labor programs
- Maximize federal food assistance programs in general, and specifically to access healthy, Colorado-produced foods

V. Moving Forward in 2012

Moving forward in 2012, the Council will continue the work of its subcommittees, refine work plans based on the priority issues presented above, and inform and build new partnerships in order to implement changes based on these priority issues. To build on momentum and address priority issues raised, specific planned activities in 2012 include:

Break-out Session at Governor's Ag Forum- Several members of the Council will host a breakout session during the Governor's Ag Forum in order to present the Council's mission and charge, and to vet, refine, and add to findings from the Summer Tour and the Economic Development Summit.

Continued Presence at Agriculture Events around Colorado- The Economic Development Subcommittee is dedicated to maintaining a presence at agriculture events around Colorado in order to continue to collect information regarding economic development opportunities for Colorado's producers and to further inform partner organizations.

Resources Page on Website- Access to additional resources and information is a constant theme at Council listening activities. For this reason, the Communications Subcommittee will work toward the development of a resources page on the Council website, as well as the development of a Food Systems Toolbox (a virtual web tool) through a partnership with LiveWell Colorado. As part of the Food Systems Toolbox, the Council will oversee the development of tools that will inform capacity building opportunities and development of regional and local food systems coalitions.

Local and Regional Capacity Building- Working from the foundation of the inventory of local and regional coalitions already developed, the Council will initiate additional communication with local groups to identify and implement means for coordinating across local groups, developing more connections between local and state groups, and other opportunities for increasing training, resources, and communication.

Coordinating a Healthy Food Access Vision- The Healthy Food Access Subcommittee is continuing to define key conditions required to achieve their comprehensive vision for healthy food access in Colorado. The Subcommittee will use these identified conditions to analyze where specific issues are being addressed in Colorado, and identify gaps that remain to advancing their vision. This analysis will inform specific strategies of the Subcommittee. The Subcommittee will disseminate the vision and condition statements to partners across the state in order to coordinate activities at the local and state level regarding healthy food access.

Support for and Coordination with the Farm to School Task Force- The Council will continue to coordinate activities and messaging with the Task Force through coordinated meeting scheduling, presentations and webinars to discuss key areas of collaboration, and on-going sharing of information and resources, as well as mutual support for emerging recommendations and requests.

VI. Appendices

Appendix A: Subcommittee Membership

Name	Affiliation
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	
Chair-Barb Marty	COFSAC, Producer, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
Linda Yoder	COFSAC, Producer, Colorado CattleWomen's Association
Cindy Torres	COFSAC, Colorado Farmers Market Association, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
Jim Isgar	COFSAC, USDA Rural Development
Bernie Orsini	Farm-to-School Task Force, US Foods
Bill Stevenson	Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS	
Chair- Patricia Daniluk	COFSAC, CO Dept. of Public Health and Environment
Jane Brand	COFSAC, Farm-to-School Task Force, CO Dept. of Education
Mary Lou Chapman	COFSAC, Rocky Mountain Food Industry Association
Julie Kerksick	COFSAC, CO Dept. of Human Services
Karen Falbo	COFSAC, Natural Grocers by Vitamin Cottage
Ruth Stemler	COFSAC, Share Our Strength Colorado
Cindy Torres	COFSAC, Colorado Farmers Market Association, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
Lisa Walvoord	LiveWell Colorado
COMMUNICATIONS	
Chair- Pat Kendall	COFSAC, Colorado State University
Jim Miller	COFSAC, CO Dept. of Agriculture
Amber Clay	COFSAC, Farm Bureau
Wendy White	CO Dept. of Agriculture
Allison Hastey	CO Dept. of Public Health and Environment
Christi Lightcap	CO Dept. of Agriculture