

FARM & FOOD SUSTAINABILITY PLAN COMMUNITY MEETING
JULY 12, 2012
BANDY'S HIGH SCHOOL

WHAT ARE ENCOURAGING TRENDS?

- Financial support for new farmers
- Government: USDA/private lenders
- Farmers markets
- Local foods interest
- Niche markets (beef, eggs...)
- Producers advocating for the industry
- Youth interest in agriculture
- Biofuels interest
- Interest in Ag (This Plan!)
- Ag District
- Farmer's market
- Reduce tax for Ag land
- Co-op between farmers
- Hybrid crops – increasing soy beans
- Curb, farmers – small scale (corner) markets
- Mobile markets (fruit/veggies)
- More interest in modified/genetic organic foods
- High density small plot gardens
- Agri-burbia (replacement for golf courses)
- Want organic foods
- Farmers markets
- Co-op
- Slowing of farmland loss
- People interested in local grown produce
- More small farms
- Increase in healthy eating equals increase demand for fruit & vegetables
- People want to know where their food is coming from & what is in it
- More Ag Advocacy groups

WHAT ARE LIMITATIONS?

- Media advertisement for community meeting –radio, newspaper
- Limited land
- Not knowing the right representative
- Processors
- Working to build partnership – policy
- Market fluctuation
- Undercutting other farmers for capital/farmland
- Market for fresh food/meat

- Grant access
- Too much risk – crop insurances
- Getting to market
- Too much red tape – policy
- Lack of understanding from public
- Not enough local fruits & vegetables to meet demand
- Hard to get started in Ag – from scratch, land, experience, money, etc.
- Food safety/regulation issues with fruits & vegetables makes growing them difficult
- Might be difficult to get money
- Cumbersome regulations/or changes to keep up with
- Average age of farmer is increasing
- Death taxes/inheritance regulations
- Increase in contract farming
- Disconnect from family farm
- Farms/land isn't keeping growth pace with population
- General public & children lack of appreciation for agriculture
- Start up costs/investment for new producers
- Lack of land/availability
- Difficulties in qualifying for present use(length of ownership)
- Organic foods not always as attractive as fertilized
- Organic costs more labor intense
- Market in past not large for fruit & vegetables
- Present use acreage should go down – value of \$1,000 should stay & eliminate 3 year time period
- Liability
- No market for eggs & produce
- Pest control
- Transfer from one generation to the next
- Risk/reward
- Clearing house of information “One Stop Shop”
- Financing/venture capital start-up cost assistance
- Lack of adequate education
- Over “burdensome” regulations
- Short growing season – lack of good soils/rain
- Conventional vs. “organic/alterative” agriculture debate
- Livestock/animal slaughter facilities (lack of)
- Production schedule/planning fruit & vegetables limitations
- Labor
- Lack of understanding of potential economics
- Greenhouses (lack of)
- GAP certification



WHAT ARE OPPORTUNITIES THAT WE NEED TO EXPLORE?

- Model small vegetable gardens – school campuses
- Education – elementary, high school
- High intensity vegetable gardens – public owned land/facilities “under utilized”
- Farm to market – curb- farmers, schools, MDI, Sam’s Club, market restaurants
- Community plots – vacant plots/lots
- Market to food deserts – geographic distribution
- Capitalize on public awareness of improving quality of health through healthy eating
- Make the term “Green” school mean more than energy conservation
- Educate public on benefits of healthy local fields and foods
- Larger 4-H opportunities
- Co-op – so public could join; pay X dollars per month & get whatever is in season
- Adjust present use requirements if can prove land has been in agriculture
- Educate public on importance of food source and what it takes to be a farmer
- Need promotion – love your farmer; get people/drivers to pay attention to farm vehicles; move slower
- Need weekly article on importance of food production & road policies; widen roads but stripe or make larger shoulder (ex: Sherrills Ford Rd)
- Work on local/state level to change federal laws that won’t allow for sale of non-perfect food (ex: eggs w/double yokes)
- Have a place like Shiloh in Iredell County (Amish)
- More FFA in school; younger kids interest in agriculture
- Grants for equipment availability
- Value-added products; canning veg.
- Partnership with local grocer
- Advertising local foods
- Introduction of new technology to farmers
- Awareness of needs of availability
- Mentoring/educating new farmers
- Programs to use farmland – matching willing; farmers with people who have land
- Greenhouse vegetables
- Continuing farmland preservation programs to be sure there is farmland to farm
- Value added/processing plant –produce & meat
- “Ag in the classroom” and others to educate the next generation – future careers
- Social media/technology
- Basic education for all ages kids to adults on where food comes from
- County Agriculture Day @ Fairgrounds
- Agriculture Career Day
- Community supported agriculture
- Redefine/improve regulations affecting agriculture enterprises
- Expand agriculture education to more schools & teachers – Ag in classroom
- Local animal processing facility
- Local foods marketing coop/facility (meats, crops, fruits, vegetables) (we have the customers)
- Children/youth interested in our County – interest in agriculture
- Internships on farmers (youth or adults)

- Career opportunities on agriculture

OPPORTUNITIES IN-DEPTH DISCUSSION

Value – Added Facility

- Need meat processing facility. Closest beef is Mays in Taylorsville or Caldwells in Lincoln County for pork.
- County should explore grant possibilities of a private/public grant to build facility.
- Brand Catawba County meat/produce.
- Need central processing/marketing facility.
- Promote programs like Sam’s “Club of the Community” or encourage stores to have “Catawba” corner of products. Make list of stores with these programs.
- Explore helping expand existing processing facilities and allow people to invest their money to promote a local business.
- Explore local food possibilities with Sam’s Club.



Mentoring – old to young famers

- Getting more hands-on opportunity – “you got to live it”
- Trust building – Getting to know others first, personalities; one-on-one; honesty-being earnest to work ; willing to work hard
- Having one person go around (that is trusted in community) and learning the little “secrets” from older farmers.
- Connecting in local farm supply/areas to understand the importance of agriculture
- Attending educational meetings
- Cross training within trade
- Involvement of other agencies – i.e. – USDA

Awareness of Public

- DMV instruction book on how to drive with agriculture equipment
- School-age education
- Farm Day – example of what goes on at farm
- Health/organic push helps promote agriculture
- Know what is in food
- Focus on the farmer- paper articles

Education – Young People/Schools

- Agriculture in every school

- Educate teachers on what is available in agriculture area
- More participation in agriculture in the classroom and other similar programs
- Ag Awareness Month
- Take advantage of local opportunities , i.e. educational farms
- School system wide Ag Day for kids
- Take “farm” to schools
- Develop programs that are fun that kids want to participate in
- How to save money eating local
- Send flyers home with kids
- Highlight Ag in newspapers
- Some sort of Ag contest in schools – Farm city Week or Ag Awareness Week
- Mass media video of local farms to show at schools

Local food Co-ops/CSA/Community Plots

- GAP Certification
- Managing entity – central facility
- Transportation
- Capital/funding – grants
- Central location
- Regional (Unifour)
- Scheduling – predictability
- Shared equipment