Extension’s Roles in Building Capacity, Nurturing Food System Development, and Informing Policy

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As members of a community and process, how do we build capacity, nurture food system development, inform policy and empower a vision?
As an Extension Agent, Educator or Specialist,....

how do we prepare a fertile and mellow seedbed for education, collective action, and real change?
Roles of Cooperative Extension

- Educator
- Community Leader
- Connector
- Networker
- Nurturer
- Problem Solver
- Facilitator
- Convener
- Advocate
- Activist
Outline

- Eric – Intro and overview with example of Virginia Food System Council and SV Farm and Farm Work Group
- Crystal – Virginia Desert Task Force and Council’s Food Access Work Group
- Theresa – VA Food System Council, Virginia Farmers Market Association and 1890 Perspective and Priorities
- Nikki – Appalachian Foodshed Project
- Kelli – Appalachian Virginia Food System Network
- Caitlin – Heart of Virginia Buy Fresh Buy Local
Virginia Food System Council

- In 2007, Virginia Food Security Summit participants recommend that a work group be established to explore and evaluate the feasibility of establishing a state food policy council.

- In 2009, the Virginia Food System Council was formally established as a 501 © 3 organization.
Vision

- We envision a sustainable food system contributing to the health, economic vitality and social well-being of all Virginians.
Education and Informing Policy

- Worked with Delegate Ed Scott, VDACS, and Department of Education 2011 to develop a resolution to establish an annual Virginia Farm-to-School Week

- Virginia Farm-to-Table Plan shared with General Assembly members and key committee member

- Grow Virginia’s Economy! Take the $10 a week challenge to Eat Local Buy Local
Shenandoah Valley Farm and Food Work Group (SVFFWG)
Purpose

- Create a diverse and inclusive support network and community
- Increase community access to healthy local food
- Encourage major institutions to purchase 25% of their food from local farmers
- Promote environmental stewardship and sustainable farming practices
- Help producers and consumers realize the social, environmental, and economic benefits of a locally-integrated community-based food system
- Promote practical and innovative information sharing
Enhancing Food Access

Food Deserts in Virginia

Recommendations From the Food Desert Task Force
January 2014
Collaboration and Partnerships
A place-based food system that is resilient, accessible, affordable, and healthy for Appalachian communities.

A collaboration between NC State University, Virginia Tech, West Virginia University, and Community Stakeholders. Funded by a 2011 USDA NIFA-AFRI Grant (Award No. 2011-68004-30079)
Responsive to Regional Context

- Shifted from the idea of a cohesive region, linked by one assessment process
- State assessments evolved very differently
  - NC: formed a food security council, applied Collective Impact, sought to address gaps in food security
  - VA: supporting the development of the Appalachian Virginia Food Systems Council
  - WV: assessed where the local food system and emergency food system intersect
HEART OF VIRGINIA CHAPTER

The Heart of Virginia Chapter formed in April of 2012 and is an initiative of the Old Dominion Resource, Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council, Inc. which provides a 501 (c) (3) non-profit status and administrative support. The Old Dominion RC&D partnered with the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, local Virginia Farm Bureau offices, other local and state agencies, and private organizations.

BECOME A SUPPORTER

- Sponsor a Chapter
- Help make *Buy Fresh Buy Local* possible.
- Take the Challenge
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