



Meeting Background Information

For the November 15, 2018 Local Food Distribution Work Group Meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 2

2018 FARM BILL UPDATE

Main Presenter: Wes King, Senior Policy Specialist with the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. Wes's bio from the [NSAC website](#):

“Wes has worked on sustainability and food policy issues for ten years. He staffs NSAC’s Marketing, Food Systems and Rural Development Committee. Before joining NSAC in 2016, Wes spent the previous six years at NSAC member organization, Illinois Stewardship Alliance, working on food access, farmers markets and working-lands conservation policy; and leading efforts to create a more risk and scale appropriate regulatory environment for farms and local food businesses. Prior to that he worked for the Illinois Environmental Council. Wes holds an M.A. and B.A. in Political Science from the University of Illinois.”

AGENDA ITEM 3

FINAL 2014 FARM BILL AWARDEES FOR FMPP AND LFPP: RECIPIENTS FROM THE REGION*

Background on multi-year awards that will be the subject of presentations. *This information is excerpted directly from the USDA grant award announcements located at the links below.* Interested parties are encouraged to access the full announcement to review awards by state, including in neighboring Mid-Atlantic jurisdictions.

2018 Farmers Market Promotion Program Funded Projects

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/2018DescriptionofFundedProjectsFMPP.pdf>

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

FRESHFARM Markets, Inc

Expanding Market Success for New and Emerging Mid-Atlantic Farmers Through Training and Multimedia Promotion

“For a good grower, establishing him or herself as a successful farmer at market requires both business acumen to promote him or herself physically at market, and virtually online. It also requires adept farming practices to grow a diverse, large supply to meet market demands. Through this FMPP project, FRESHFARM will run a 3-year cycle of developing annual cohorts of new and emerging farmers who receive training and education in business development and farming practices. After three years, FRESHFARM will have an established training process and greater revenue to reinvest into new and emerging farmers. For consumers, establishing a habit of shopping at farmers markets and increasing the amount they buy requires not only knowledge of available markets and products, but also a belief in the value of buying directly from a farmer at market. To build this knowledge and promote value, FRESHFARM will develop engaging messages and content regarding new and emerging farmers to disseminate broadly in the Washington, DC-area. A specific outreach focus will be to educate low-income residents about how to use nutrition benefits at market. The anticipated

outcome of this increased promotion and education will be more consumers familiar with new and emerging farmers and an increase in consumer purchases at Washington, DC-area farmers markets.”

MARYLAND

Crossroads Community Food Network

Building a Sustainable Farmers Market: Planning for Long-Term Food Access for Low-Income Crossroads Community Members

“Crossroads Farmers Market was founded in 2007 to bring local, nutritious, and affordable produce to an underserved area outside Washington, DC. Crossroads was the first farmers market in Maryland to accept federal nutrition benefits, and the first in the country to launch a “double dollar” incentive program to match the value of these benefits spent on fresh fruits and vegetables. Like any farmers market, Crossroads needs loyal customers and successful vendors to thrive. Over the course of the next three years, this FMPP Capacity Building grant project will tackle both sides of this equation to strengthen the long-term viability of the market and, by extension, ensure that low-income residents in the Takoma/Langley Crossroads have access to fresh, healthy food. Project objectives include increasing access to and consumption of local, fresh fruits and vegetables by expanding our nutrition education program at the market and by boosting market attendance and CSA participation; increasing market and CSA sales by diversifying our customer base; and helping more than 20 vendors, 75 percent of whom are socially disadvantaged themselves, build the capacity to expand their businesses into new markets. Key partners include local farms such as Vegetales R.L. and Montoya’s Produce. Updates and outcomes of this project will be shared with funders, supporters, and other stakeholders via various communication channels (e.g., website, social media platforms, e-newsletters, infographics/reports), and market data will be entered into the Farmers Market Coalition’s Farmers Market Metrics data portal.”

Future Harvest, Inc., Cockeysville, MD

Amazing Grazing: Stepping up supply and demand for grass-fed meat, dairy, and other local, pasture-based products in the Chesapeake region

“Since 1998, Future Harvest, Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture (FHCASA) has provided education and outreach to advance agriculture that is profitable, protects land and water, and serves communities with fresh, nutritious food. The proposed project – in collaboration with Mountains-2-Bay Grazing Alliance, Central Farm Markets, Maryland and Virginia Extension, Maryland Farmers Market Association, and many grazers – seeks to increase supply and demand of locally grown food. To optimize impact, this project will focus on pasture-raised meats and other products produced in the Chesapeake region. The recipients have three objectives: 1) increase number of grazers trained in direct-to consumer marketing; 2) increase number of consumers informed about how and where to buy local grass-fed products and why it’s important; and 3) increase pasture-based product sales for area grazers. To accomplish these objectives, the recipients will launch a multi-faceted consumer education campaign, starting with updating the Amazing Grazing directory of producers, then piloting a Go Grassfed Buying Club program, launching a wide-reaching multi-media campaign promoting grass-fed, and holding tasting events at popular farmers markets and festivals. For producers, the recipients will incorporate direct-to-consumer (DTC) marketing training for grazers into FHCASA’s Beginner Farmer Training Program and Field Schools, expand the Grazer Mentorship Program, collaborate on an annual Grazers’ Summit, and more. During the project, consumer-oriented activities should reach about 300,000 consumers via events, social media, and press outreach. Producer programs will directly reach 1,500 area grazers. The Go-Grassfed Buying Clubs will initially serve 25 families.”

2018 Local Food Promotion Program Funded Projects

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/2018DescriptionofFundedProjectsLFPP.pdf>

MARYLAND

Wholesome Harvest Co-op, Frostburg, MD

Implementing the Local Food Future in Northern Appalachia

“Wholesome Harvest Co-op (WHC) established a cooperative grocery store and commercial kitchen in Frostburg, Maryland. This project will support educational opportunities for farmers to market their goods through various media platforms, and for community members to learn how to shop, cook, and eat more healthy and sustainable diets. WHC will develop new market opportunities for local farmers and will benefit the local economy by generating jobs and revenue that will remain within the region. It is expected that farmers in the region will have increased knowledge of the WHC and will sell some of their agricultural products through the store. Project staff also anticipate a market expansion for the farmers, in that their raw and prepared or preserved products will be purchased by increasing numbers of people who become members or simply shop at WHC.”

VIRGINIA

Virginia Polytechnic Institute State University (Virginia Tech), Blacksburg, VA

Catalyzing Agricultural and Educational Resources to Move the Local Food Value Chain Needle in the Shenandoah Valley and Northern Piedmont Regions of Virginia

“The Shenandoah Valley and Northern Piedmont Regions of Virginia are fortunate to have agricultural, cultural, and educational resources to catalyze and strengthen Virginia’s food system from farm-to-table. Despite growing demand and support for local food systems, barriers to sustainable success remain for farmers and food businesses, including limited or unwieldy value chain coordination, logistical hurdles, lack of transparent market signals, and inadequate scale and fit between producers and buyers. This project will increase promotion of local and regional foods produced and marketed by small and mid-sized farms and food businesses such as produce auctions, farm stands/markets, aggregators, and distributors, with shared goals of improved market share and economic health of communities. The objectives are to 1) increase promotion of small and mid-sized farms and food businesses to appropriate market channels, 2) advance producer-buyer relationships through directed promotion, educational training, concentrated vetting, and networking activities specific to scale, 3) enhance the distribution and delivery of local foods from farm to schools across the region, 4) measure potential for market differentiation based on soil health and water quality farming practices, and 5) evaluate gains in market access, share, and logistics of regional value chain coordination. The outcomes include establishing a minimum of 60 value chain connections, 2) a minimum of 180 farm businesses participating in Market Ready Meet the Buyer experiences, and 3) a 4 to 8% increase in sales of local foods.”