



Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

Environment & Production Subcommittee
July 7, 2022 1:00pm-2:00pm

1. Welcome

- Updates
 - a) Beth Brewster the Carroll County Public Schools Director- this is year 7 for summer processing of local produce (15-20 thousand pounds of produce is processed). Benefits include employees having additional income during summer months, while providing local food to schools during the school year. 16 – 18 farmers participate in this effort.
 - b) Lee Babcock- Created Fredrick Fresh Online in response to COVID-19. Frederick Fresh has been in operation for two years with over 500 members, receiving about 100 orders per month for pick-up at four different locations. The council is looking for a partner to assist or lead the management of this effort.
 - c) Leslie Sessom-Parks- There is one grant in play, in which a new 5-10 year sustainability plan is being developed for Farm to School Grant in Maryland. Currently applying for additional funding under the local foods for schools initiative.
 - d) Steve McHenry- Listening sessions were held to determine whether restarting the Maryland Farmers' Market Association is feasible, 6 sessions completed. The Maryland Farmers' Market Association once ran Maryland Market Money as its primary program. Overall it was determined Maryland Market Money will need a nonprofit organization to run fundraising. In terms of providing other services to farmers' markets, a need was identified to provide a full time position for technical assistance. Suggested placement for this position is in the Maryland Department of Agriculture, or University of Maryland Extension. A



possible recommendation will be to explore development of a position to support farmers' markets at one of the suggested agencies.

2. Group Discussion

- Work Plan for Recommendation development
 - a) Google document was developed with E&P parking lot items, all subcommittee members are editors for this doc.
 - b) Reviewing Parking lot Items ("parking lot items" refers to issues or recommendations that were suggested, but not included in the Nov 1st Report for various reasons). Below are "parking lot items" specific to the E&P subcommittee's objectives and goals:
 - 1) 1A: workshops or seminars (in person or virtual) at community centers, farmers markets, food pantries, schools, etc. on preparing the types of local food available in Maryland Note: [resource document](#) created. Also note the resources [available at UMD Extension](#)
 - 2) 2B. Integrate recommendations from the Maryland Healthy Soils Initiative into considerations to Food Resiliency and regenerative agriculture practices. See [Meeting Minutes](#) from the June 23th meeting with guest speaker: Ed Huling. See [Meeting Minutes](#) from the June 9th meeting with guest speakers from MDA and other members of the MD Healthy Soils Initiative Committee
 - 3) 1A. Better define the terms "local" and "regional" for the purposes of state food policy. See [resource document](#) created. See [Meeting Minutes](#) from the April 14 meeting which discussed the local and regional definitions
 - 4) 2B. Mitigate the carbon footprint of Maryland's food system and address climate change impacts on farmers, regional and local food systems, including how to plan for adaptation based on intense rainfalls/droughts, high prices of fossil fuel inputs, sea-level rise, and water shortages. See [Meeting Minutes](#) from the June 23th meeting with guest speaker: Ed Huling. See [Meeting Minutes](#) from the April 28 meeting which discussed climate change



- 5) 3C. Restart the Maryland Farmers Market Association. See [Meeting Minutes](#) from the April 28 meeting which discussed the efforts of Steve McHenry listening sessions. See [Meeting Minutes](#) from the April 14 meeting which discussed the efforts of Steve McHenry listening sessions
- 6) 1A. Investigate opportunities to collaborate regionally, particularly with neighboring states, to better understand external influences on Maryland's food system resiliency. See [resource document](#) created. See [Meeting Minutes](#) from the April 28 meeting which discussed food hubs.
- 7) 3C: Establish a pilot program with a handful of Area Aging Agencies in Maryland, facilitated by the Department of Aging, to increase procurement of fresh, local produce through grants and technical assistance.
- 8) 3C: Replicate the [Baltimore urban agriculture](#) program throughout the state. Note the relevant bills passed this legislative session, including two new UMD Extension associates and extension of Baltimore urban ag program (need to link specific bills here)
- 9) 3C: Support the development of Resilience Hubs to include food assistance mechanisms and explore what is needed for long-term viability of food hubs. See [resource document](#) created. See [Meeting Minutes](#) from May 26th meeting with UMD Ag Economists Shannon Dill and Jim MacDonald
- 10) 2B: Support a statewide food waste reduction campaign. See [Meeting Minutes](#) from May 12th, where food waste composting on-farm was discussed.
- 11) 4D: Ensure that Maryland's food and farmworkers have safe and fair working conditions, and explore the labor needs, challenges, and opportunities related to the food system in Maryland, including labor shortages in agriculture. Access to affordable housing is also an issue for seasonal farmworkers.
- 12) 1A: Recommendations for considerations for a Task Force on re-establishing agricultural processing facilities,



- including water, processing, permits, labor, and land considerations.
- 13) 1A: Understanding barriers to small producers expanding, including contradictory regulations (zooming barriers), economies of scale for equipment (shared resources and joint services), and risks associated with non-commodity/non-traditional crops. See [Meeting Minutes](#) from May 26th meeting with UMD Ag Economists Shannon Dill and Jim MacDonald
- c) Open Discussion related to “parking lot items” above:
- 1) #11 (add access to affordable housing for seasonal farmer workers)
 - 2) As the subcommittee continues to develop recommendations, we need to look holistically for advancing Maryland’s food system resiliency. Are we meeting the goal of this committee? What is a healthy food system? The committee must begin considering how our recommendations impact/improve resiliency in the food system.
 - 3) The committee should begin to prioritize immediate needs beginning with the top 2-3 items.
 - 4) Can the committee highlight and identify key food supply chains within Maryland and the associated supply chain gaps, to develop solutions. Looking holistically and considering what are the gaps include: (1) Examining regenerative agriculture and climate change which are not part of the supply chain, but should be included (2) The lack of small scale farmers and improve their resiliency (i.e. lack of production and facilities).
 - 5) The parking lot item related to regional cooperation can be a catalyst for developing a holistic approach and exposing gaps. The committee should consider what experts are available within the committee, and determine where funding is available for Maryland at the Federal level (this is a time sensitive item). AFRI Special Topics: Meat and Poultry Processing - Agricultural Workforce Training NIFA



will host a webinar July 21 at 1 p.m. EDT for those interested in the Meat and Poultry Processing-Agricultural Workforce Training grant program. The program is being offered through the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) - Education and Workforce Development Request for Applications. For eligibility and more information, please consult the RFA ahead of time.

- 6) Interesting quote from UVM Extension: At the field level, resilience measurements might include: water-holding capacity of soil, ability to drain excess rainfall from agricultural land, buffering against wind and water erosion, biological activity rates, contaminant degradation rates, and extent of crop insurance coverage. (From <https://learn.uvm.edu/foodsystemsblog/2012/10/22/resilience-and-sustainability-in-the-food-system/#:~:text=At%20the%20field%20level%2C%20resilience,extent%20of%20crop%20insurance%20coverage>.) What are the metrics for measuring resilience? Possible idea for the subcommittee is to begin identifying categories of measurement for resiliency. Refer to Lindsay Smith's report "What we grow and eat", Maryland produces 10% of the food consumed in Maryland (this metric can be used to develop a metric objective).
- 7) Local food aggregation (pilot program was implemented) Work is ongoing with this challenging topic (how to aggregate small farm demand for both fresh food market and preservation for subsequent distribution?), the desire is to consume more locally produced foods. (One suggestion offered is to aggregate farmers online i.e. Frederick Fresh). Benefits our resiliency, reduces food waste, etc.

3. Next steps and adjourn

- Begin working in breakout rooms for the identified (4) common themes:



- a) Regional Production and Identifying areas, concentrated on increasing resiliency (supply chain gaps)
- b) Climate change and regenerative agriculture and Food waste
- c) Food Hubs, Farmers Markets Associations, Internet marketplace processing
- d) Housing, Farmers workers, barriers (Tabled for now to focus on 1-3, and lack of volunteers to work on this initiative)