

1320 Research Park Drive
Manhattan, Kansas 66502
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900 SW Jackson, Room 456
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Jackie McClaskey, Secretary

Governor Sam Brownback

Local Food and Farm Task Force Meeting Minutes **August 23, 2016, 9 a.m.- 1 p.m.**

Task Force Members in attendance: Chair Ron Brown, David Coltrain, Loren Swenson, Dr. Cary Rivard, Annarose (Hart) White, Senator Dan Kerschen, Representative Adam Lusker, and Ex Officio Member Senator Tom Hawk.

KDA staff attendance: Kerry Wefald, Julie Roller, Lynne Hinrichsen, Chad Bontrager and Taylor Harms.

Others in attendance: Jessica Bowser, Mark Skoglund, Charlie Sargent, Barb Depew and Mary Fund.

Welcome: Meeting called to order by Chair Ron Brown at 9 a.m. All task force members were present. He announced presentation had been made to the legislature and task force members introduced themselves.

Task Force Members- Chair Ron Brown, David Coltrain, Loren Swenson, Dr. Cary Rivard, Annarose (Hart) White, Senator Dan Kerschen, Representative Adam Lusker, and Ex Officio Member Senator Tom Hawk.

Representative Lusker reported the group received directives from the legislature in order to extend the task force. He stated the biggest challenge is a cultural shift to buy in a farmers' market versus a store (ex. cucumber in the store is not from Kansas). Asks Task Force to have a narrowed and specific report for the legislature.

White stated that Farmers' Market in Sumner County is growing from 1 to 4 produce vendors. This includes one that is growing in a hoop house. They're discovering many "bee fanatics" in the Wellington area. Every county has an NRP program that allows 'x' number of acres to be planted in pollinators/pollinator-friendly.

Dr. Rivard reported that he hosted an Urban Food Systems Symposium at K-State Olathe this summer. He spoke with other colleagues who have served on similar groups in other states. He gave the example of North Carolina. (within their task force, they have people who would potentially fund some of these directives). He suggested considering Sunflower Foundation or Kansas Health Foundation to fund directives that the group would like to instill. He stated that moving forward, the task force should think about shuffling membership of the task force who

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could potentially help the group move forward (with funding). He also feels that it would be good to get more farmers on the task force.

Senator Hawk reported that those who are in charge are limiting the group. He stated that the political compromise is to encourage people to attend task force meetings and ask them to present. The group might not need a comprehensive report. He is proud of the work KDA has done and believes that, politically, the task force needs to remind K-State to support through their positions as well. Senator Hawk stated that it is good to have Kansas Farm Bureau here. KFB changed some of their policies to reflect what is happening with their members. The group made statements on sales tax and local food. The task force added information about wine and funding. Senator Hawk stated that the ongoing issue is to identify how to fund some of the group's ideas. Other states have some examples. He stated that the challenge is how do we get young people involved and how do we fund young people becoming farmers? Hawk also reminded the group that the task force didn't deal with meat processing opportunities. He believes the group needs to look at regulations, but that the group didn't resolve conflicts.

Senator Kerschen reported that Ag Credit has a special section in their report specified for specialty crops and how they are financed.

Chair Brown stated that specialty crops are not in acres and he believes there are opportunities with FSA for insurance.

Representative Lusker believes that wine industry could be a big opportunity for the state. Lusker stated that the group is not here just for one day and that this is just the beginning — for many generations to come. Lusker would like to see one meeting designated to wine in the future.

Dr. Rivard stated that GAP was voluntary, but FSMA is changing that (sliding scale depending on sales).

Swenson stated that low commodity prices make it attractive to start growing specialty crops. He stated that what hurts farmers' markets is the perception people have of them not having produce for a longer period of time, but they do. Swenson said that it would help if more people grew tomatoes in January, so that he could buy locally to keep people coming into their store. Farmers' market hours are limited.

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White stated that current, traditional farmers do not fully understand large-scale specialty crop producers. White reported that there is work needed on encouraging people to talk with large production/traditional farmers about dedicating some acreage to specialty crops that would not require large or difficult transitions. Scaling up could make a large impact and we need to speak their language — helping them understand how to dedicate some of their acreage to specialty crops.

Dr. Rivard spoke to equipment for specialty crops being much cheaper than traditional crops.

White suggested Kansas work with equipment dealers within the state and form alliances.

Representative Lusker returned to the 3 specific directives from the legislature.

Dr. Rivard stated that farmers and ranchers trust K-State Research and Extension above many other entities.

The question was posed: What if a one-page report of opportunities/what is going on now was given to extension agents?

Dr. Rivard stated that there are about 25-30 true horticulture agents (within Ag and Natural Resource Agents), therefore few agents have any knowledge of how these systems work. He stated that it is not as simple as sliding it into the county office.

Kerry Wefald suggested that the group needs to look at the Family and Consumer Sciences piece of it. With those agents, it is important to creating demand and conversations at the local level. The extension piece is vital.

Julie Roller suggested Scotty Thellman as a potential speaker.

Coltrain stated that there needs to be promotion of education in schools (vocational ag programs). He stated that there needs to be promotion and lessons on specialty crops here. Coltrain reported that some Community Colleges are working towards this effort. Johnson County has a sustainable ag program, Highland has a grapes and winery program, Seward has a specialty crops class/vegetable production/marketing specialty crops, and certificate program on how to grow specialty crops.

Dr. Rivard posed the question: If you're a row crop farmer and want to transition to specialty crops, what do you want to know?

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Answered by several task force members: Attitude and public adjustment (cultural change), how do I sell it and where do I sell it? Show profit to be made.

Lusker stated that he believes Lawrence is a model that would be good to help to look for help from.

Task Force members discussed Objective #1 of the 3 directives from the legislature:

- Department of Education: FACS, Ag Ed, Farm to School
- Extension: Ag and Horticulture (list of staff needed when Kansas can afford to fully fund)
- PSA with cable lobby
- Case Study: Scotty T./ Top 5 Specialty Crop farms in Kansas
- Lawrence model
- List of Community Colleges with Specialty Crop programs/classes
 - Johnson, Seward, Highland, Cloud
- Examples of business plans for 5+, 25+, 50+ acres
- Publications Needed
- State Fair: enhance specialty crop displays
- Explore railroad opportunities for export
- University of Minnesota

Deputy Secretary Chad Bontrager gave a growth strategy project update. August 30th, Governor's Ag Summit will be held. Specialty crops will be one of the breakout sectors with discussion. Bontrager also spoke to the UP. He stated that he had a meeting with the UP and they discussed hauling fruits and vegetables on the railroad. ABD railroad said they would love to do specialty crop hauling in Kansas and El Dorado is a great location for it. They have areas of the state in mind for certain activities. Trains have the possibility of being refrigerated.

Senator Hawk stated that the group should set goals, look at funding, and have specific bills ready. By proposing items, it will help move goals forward.

Lynne Hinrichsen, Wefald and Roller (from the Kansas Department of Agriculture) gave a Kansas Department of Agriculture report. Hinrichsen provided information on USDA's website for beginning farmers: <https://newfarmers.usda.gov/new-farmers>.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.