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Sam Brownback, Governor

Local Food and Farm Task Force  
Friday, November 14  
10 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
Kansas Department of Agriculture Room 124  
1320 Research Park Drive  
Manhattan, KS 66502

### **Agenda:**

10:00 a.m.	Welcome and Introductions of Task Force	Chair Ron Brown
10:30 a.m.	Overview of SB380 <i>Local Food and Farm Task Force</i>	Senator Tom Hawk
11:00 a.m.	Review of the Task Force Mission & Timeline	Chair Ron Brown
11:15 a.m.	Development of Task Force Working Framework	All Task Force Members
12:00 p.m.	Cell Phone Break and Task Force Lunch	
12:45 p.m.	Task Force Meeting Resumes	All Task Force Members
2:00 p.m.	Meeting Adjournment	Chair Ron Brown
2:00 p.m.	Open Networking for Task Force and Public Attendees	

### **Meeting Minutes:**

#### **Attendance:**

Task Force Members Present: Ron Brown, Chair; David Coltrain, Loren Swenson, Dr. Cary Rivard, Sen. Dan Kerschen, Rep. Adam Lusker and Annarose (Hart) White

KDA Members Present: Jackie McClaskey, Secretary; Kerry Wefald and Jake Worcester

Guests: Julie Mettenburg, Sarah Green, Brenda Gutierrez, Phyll Klima, Jessica Bowser, Joanna Wochner, Nick Reinecker, Missty Lechner, Misty Jimerson, Ashley Wisner, Eileen Horn, Nancy Brown, Cole Cottin

### **Welcome and Introductions of Task Force**

#### **Overview of SB380/Senate bill 286 - Senator Tom Hawk:**

The Local Food and Farm Task Force started out as Senate Bill 380. Late in the session, the bill merged with Senate Bill 286, which also included the Kansas Celebration of the National Day of the Cowboy. Senate Bill 380 did not have a hearing in the House of Representatives, but chair of the Kansas House Agriculture Committee, Sharon Swartz allowed the bill into conference committee.

Senator Hawk grew up in Colby, KS in town. Father was a produce man. Later, his family moved from Colby to Parsons. Senator Hawk's father went to Denver twice a week to purchase produce. His family has also had experience with dairy. In the Kansas Senate, Senator Hawk had the opportunity to hear the Dean of the K-State College of Agriculture mention high tunnels and became curious about current Kansas production. This led to conversations with professor and researcher, [Dr. Rhonda Janke](#) who has done food assessment surveys for Douglas County and most recently Sedgwick County. Senator Hawk inquired how other states are approaching local food production. Several states are taking statewide policy actions to expand and develop more local food production infrastructure, Iowa especially. The Kansas Local Food and Farm Task Force legislation as written is based off Iowa's legislation.

Senator Hawk's background in education inspired the community development of Senate Bill 380. Senator Hawk involved the Kansas Department of Agriculture, Secretary of Agriculture, Jackie McClaskey and sent her a draft copy of the bill to review. Secretary McClaskey involved agriculture marketing team staff, Annarose (Hart) White to provide additional suggestions. At one point, the bill involved eighteen individuals. The Task Force Currently has seven members. This is a more workable size of group that will hopefully lead to more policies that are effective. The Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee wanted the Governor and K-State Research and Extension involvement. The top priority of the task force will be the legislative report, and getting the legislature on board. The task force should consider what barriers exist in addition to what incentives and opportunities (including technical assistance) should be outlined policy wise. Accessibility of food is also included in statute.

Strategies that might be involved could be:

- Increasing SNAP programs at the farmers market
- Processing, storing and distribution of food, (fruits, vegetables, meats and other farm products)
- WIC client programs with fruits, vegetables, farmers market purchases
- Increase number and locations of farmers markets, roadside stands, farm stores, and/or locally owned grocery stores (lack of access in rural areas)
- Others to be determined

Senator Hawk said the Task Force has a lot of work to do in 14 months. In the 1900s Kansas used to have more than 65,000 acres of fruit and vegetable production. In 2007, Kansas had less than 10,000 acres; most recent figure in Kansas is 6,500 acres. If state had more high tunnels, Kansas could have a greater chance at meeting the current levels of Kansas fruit and vegetable consumption. During the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee hearing of Senate Bill 380, Senator Kerschen made a statement that the bill is in support of all forms of agriculture in Kansas. The Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee sees the Task Force as a way to increase Kansas percentage of agricultural crops and products produced in Kansas that are consumed in Kansas, increasing the acreage of production.

Senator Hawk plans to attend Task Force meetings frequently.

#### **Development of Task Force Working Framework:**

Chairman Ron Brown opened the discussion among the task force members to develop the working framework for the remaining 14 months. Each Task Force member provided overall remarks and described barriers and opportunities from each perspective.

**Dr. Cary Rivard** (K-State representative) shared he also serves as the Kansas Vegetable Producers Association Treasurer.

Barriers:

- Most K-State Extension agents don't have education/experience to help commercial specialty crop growers
- 17 Horticulture agents, 15 specialize in landscape, only 2 specialize in vegetable production
- Interesting time in Extension because many farmers are moving to private firms (crop consultants) instead of using county Extension agents. Most he talks to on a daily basis are 40 years or younger, farming for five years or less and are first generation farmers
  - Don't have infrastructure (walk-in coolers, label, etc.)
- Labor
  - What is preventing him from scaling up? Most say they grow as much as they can with the labor force they have.
- Tricky at the local and regional level to distribute information (some sparsely populated counties) Sometimes there is only one ag agent for the whole county
  - Start with production education

Opportunities:

- Beginning growers are interested
- Food hubs in Kansas City and Douglas County show promise for a market

**Ron Brown:**

Barriers:

- Developing a 50 year plan for water in Kansas, funding for water planning
- Are high tunnels the answer to less water usage?
- Cannot charge for premium of locally grown produce because their farm and farmers markets are located in income depressed places
- Personal farm produces more than what we can sell at market, but there is nowhere for us to take it
- Farmers market doesn't "set price" but have to compete with local Amish population that is able to sell it at a much lower price ( creates a little bit of friction)

Opportunities:

- We should increase the budget for K-State Research and Extension with resources
- Cover Crops
- Farm Bill, NRCS outside partners

**Annarose (Hart) White:**

Barriers:

- Lack of processing facilities to add value to raw specialty crops
- Lack of horticulture extension specialists
  - Not enough intellectual resources at K-State; there are 30 wheat breeders, but only one Cary Rivard. For a farmers market, 40 crops is a minimum (David)
- Unknown value of Kansas specialty crop prices among existing farmers even though specialty crops are commonly known as "cash crops"
- The consumption of specialty crops at state institutions (schools, prisons) and other private institutions such as hospitals, etc. are unknown among the farming community, and there is not a clear navigation of where to go to ask for how much of a certain crop is demanded each week/month/year. This makes it difficult for farmers to plan acreage and market.
- K-State Research and Extension publications are outdated

Opportunities:

- Food hubs
- Incubator kitchen network
- Operations like Good Natured Family Farms
- Other single-farm and multi-farm CSA (aggregated subscription to a farm or several farms, consumers pay up front) Ex. \$300 for 30 weeks of groceries

**Rep. Adam Lusker:**

The top priority for the Task Forces is to recommend to the legislature specific policies.

**Barriers:**

- State-wide clarification of what is “local”
- Clarification if report- task force work- is limited to fruit and vegetable production
- Small grocery stores and food deserts (schools and grocery stores are the most important things) Vital to seniors living in rural communities
- Not knowing what other barriers there are
- What types of incentives can be created that are beyond “financial incentives”
  - SNAP and WIC (Money is already on the table)
- Labor force (perception and reality)

**Opportunities:**

- Belief that assisting local farmers getting produce into grocery stores is key
- Growing “enhancing” commercial agricultural production
- Support for growers regarding water
- Going beyond the farmers market (regarding production, marketing plans, and commercial growers’ strategies)
- Relaxing regulations on home/certified kitchens (baked goods)

**Senator Hawk:**

Answer to the “Incentive Question” perhaps providing local incentives to encourage food production to schools and institutions. Examples of this would be bid and procurement laws and policies to allow state and local government to pay more for local food.

**Loren Swenson:**

**Barriers:**

- Every canned goods sold at farmers market (every batch has to be tested)
- Finding markets (grocery stores, institutions, etc.) – Only selling through the farmers markets are not the answer; crops are not just ready on Thursdays, but every day of the week. In order for Kansas to have more than 4% Kansas consumption of fruit and vegetables is from local production, we have to get more local produce into grocery stores, not just farmers’ markets.
- The existing sales tax on Food/ Kansas grown products (if there was none, people would demand it) not all farmers market vendors pay sales tax even though technically they are supposed to) –Right now there is no incentive for grocers or consumers to demand local production of more foods
- Could commercially grow flowers (won’t sell at market), could sell at grocery store

**Opportunities:**

- Easy to grow anything in Kansas
- Believes the demand is out there

**Statement from Secretary of Agriculture, Jackie McClaskey:**

Thank you for being here today. I can recall sitting in Senator Hawk’s office in January 2014. We walked through a plan of action and then getting it through the legislative process was a huge success. I had the opportunity to attend the Kansas Rural Center meeting (November 2015) and was able to express the agency’s commitment to local foods. When KDA brought Agriculture Marketing Team from Commerce back to the Kansas Department of Agriculture we remained committed to growing all forms of agriculture. We are just as interested in farmers’ markets as large commodity agriculture organizations. We are focusing on bringing all experiences to the table. We really see this task force as being a part of that. We are committed to doing what we can to help the Local Food and Farm Task Force.

Chair, Ron Brown thanked Secretary McClaskey for the Kansas Department of Agriculture’s central role that everyone can identify with and we are proud of KDA’s work.

## Sen. Kerschen:

Our focus should be to make a PLAN. I see identifying a plan with many opportunities.

Main questions:

- How do we put the plan together to make it work?
- How do we get the information?

Barriers:

- People need to know how to make it profitable and grow
- Raw milk issues (goat milk)
- Food safety is a large issue that should be addressed
  - Commercial kitchen needs/Mulvane baking
- “Vapor Lock” of cash flow and expansion, meaning beginning farmers don’t have the capital or the resources to move to the next step (ex. Selling beyond Farmers Market to wholesale produce)
  - Expanding farms, growing quickly but still don’t have enough cash flow to hire a farm manager.

Opportunities:

- Recommendation to expand K-State Research and Extension infrastructure “intellectual capacity”
- More of an approach to local foods like cooperatives where there are a group of producers that can sell together, processors can be found separately. (This has worked well with dairy and grain industries)
  - Maybe some entrepreneurs can come together and put together a kitchen and pursue that opportunity
  - Sales should be coordinated so producers can focus on profitability
  - Cary Rivard shared history and background information about food hubs, which serve as an aggregator, sometimes called a packinghouse. They are usually farmer owned or non-profit with three to six anchor growers. Services provided by food hubs vary. Many pack, wash and market produce. In Kansas, two feasibility studies have been completed and published. The Kansas City area redefined local to within 200 miles. Kansas City interviewed 175 growers that live within 200 miles. Food hubs are not the silver bullet for local food production, but they have been productive with conversations about getting more local food into grocery stores. Now talking about how get first generation farmers to scale up from the pickup truck to a panel barn.
    - [Food Hub Feasibility Study](#) (executive summary; PDF format: 523 KB)
      - The executive summary of a study to assess the feasibility of a food hub business for Northeast Kansas.
    - [Food Hub Feasibility Study](#) (full report; PDF format: 5.3 MB)
      - The full report of a study to assess the feasibility and economic impact of a food hub business for NE Kansas.
- Sales tax as a financial incentive for consumers, grocery stores already have incentive to have locally grown campaigns/signs
- Marketing system outside of large areas so there can be a dependable supply of products for their store
- Ability to expand existing businesses that are doing only word of mouth promotion and “selling out” Example: Selling pigs/shares of pigs
- Training and recruitment of farmers to start Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs to reduce “Vapor Lock” and receive more cash up front from consumers

## David Coltrain:

Appreciated the work the Kansas Rural Center has completed the past 20 years, the KRC has stepped up to fill in the gaps of service left by K-State Extension. The low hanging fruit where the task force can make the biggest impact is the expansion of Kansas fruit and vegetable industry of “local foods” He had

previously developed a tomato high tunnel project with K-State Agriculture Economics. Report concluded that high tunnel tomato production is very, very profitable.

History: Garden City has a vegetable farm of 60 acres. Each summer for labor, the farm hires 12 junior high and high school employees. Every year there was a waiting list of about 30 more students who wanted to work.

**Barriers:**

- Before planting the first seed or plant, know where the product is going to be marketed. Some farmers are planting what they think will sell, instead of what they know will sell.
- Need a specialist in SW Kansas, especially
  - All neighboring states grow more than Kansas (CO: 150,000 acres), (NE 40,000) and (OK: 40,000) meanwhile Kansas is growing a mere 4,000 acres
- Labor, intimidating
- Extension agent training – horticulture
  - Spring annual meeting receive training, 95% is about landscape
- Extension agent staff
  - Less than half the faculty 40 years ago
  - K-State used to have a watermelon breeder, two fruit professors, now Rhonda Janke does the work of all four of them
  - Chuck Barr and Ted Carry (Sweet Potatoes Breeders)
- USDA defines a “farm” as someone who sells more than 1,000 acres

**Opportunities:**

- Colorado acreage is decreasing in production because of water issues, perfect time for Kansas to step up and expand
  - California acreage is also decreasing by approx. 1 million a because of water supply
  - Oklahoma has 1,000 acres of broccoli
- Urban farmer grossing \$100,000 off of 1 acre, making \$40,000 per high tunnel
- Better understanding of supply and demand
  - EX. Picking tomatoes in July to sell in August (stored in cool basement 62 degrees)
- Selling product, “How to sell to grocery stores”
- Crops Kansas can specialize in on a national level
  - Cantaloupe (K-State published report that Kansas can be competitive with New Mexico, Arizona and California)
- Produce Auctions, equivalent of taking tomatoes to the COOP
  - Mennonite population
  - KS needs economists to tell farmers how to reduce cost to grow crops
- Farmers Markets in Southwest Kansas (Mainly all just baked goods and crafts)
  - Ulysses grower drives from 60 miles away, 10 acres, 10 kids, doing very well and usually has prices \$1 more than large grocery chains.
  - Garden City is in a hub of eight counties in Kansas that produce 1/3 ag production in Kansas. If farmers put in 10 acres of vegetables, they could gross more money than 1,000 acres of corn

**Lunch Break**

**Guest Speaker: Julie Mettenburg:**

- “Feeding Kansas” just published
- Kansas Rural Center is a partner with Kansas Health Foundation
- KRC used technical assistance from the Public Health Law Center in Minnesota
- When developing report, looked to states that had a “food plan”
  - North Carolina, Oregon and Iowa
- Worked with state agencies, regional leaders and grassroots level

- Finished with a list of seven recommendations
  - Local areas and counties should have more local food task force groups, similar to Douglas County
  - Need for clarity of regulation regarding food safety, zoning and more. Should establish a Czar of Kansas foods
  - Change in policies regarding procurement of Kansas grown ingredients from local and state government agencies (including schools, prisons, etc.)
  - Agricultural economists added to K-State research and extension specializing in fruit and vegetable production
  - Increase public funding for K-State Horticulture research areas
  - Additional technical assistance and education regarding spray drift and sensitive crops via developing a state wide task force

Mettenburg volunteered to be available to make further presentations of the findings of “Feeding Kansas” to future Local Food and Farm Task Force meetings.

**Priority topics for upcoming Task Force meetings December 2014 – December 2015:**

- Kroger Warehouse, vegetable storage and wholesale purchasing (tour and/or guest speaker)
- Balls Foods Warehouse, vegetable storage and wholesale purchasing (tour and/or guest speaker)
  - “What would make them want to buy Kansas product”
  - Talk with buyers
- Good Natured Family Farms
- Talk with wholesale produce buyers
  - Martinous Produce in Pittsburg, KS - <http://www.martinousproduce.com/>
    - 3510 North Lonestar Road Pittsburg, Kansas 66762
    - [admin@martinousproduce.com](mailto:admin@martinousproduce.com) Tel: 1.800.776.7854
  - Affiliated Foods (rural areas of Kansas)
    - Location in Elwood, KS (VP of Business Development is [whall@afmidwest.com](mailto:whall@afmidwest.com) Wayne Hall 608-347-7318 OR PO Box 420, Elwood, KS 66204 PHONE 913-365-9741
  - Liberty Fruit
    - 1247 Argentine Blvd Kansas City, KS 66105 Phone: 913.281.5200
    - Director of Procurement – Eric Schriever [eschriever@libertyfruit.com](mailto:eschriever@libertyfruit.com)
    - Procurement manager/wholesale sales – Jerry Pitonak
    - Warehouse Operations Manager – Donald Bryant - [dbryant@libertyfruit.com](mailto:dbryant@libertyfruit.com)
- Oklahoma City Food COOP, Kim Barker presented at Kansas event in 2014
  - [outreach@oklahomafood.coop](mailto:outreach@oklahomafood.coop) or [president@oklahomafood.coop](mailto:president@oklahomafood.coop).
  - PO BOX 681, Oklahoma City, OK 73101 (405) 605-8088
- Associated Wholesale Grocers
  - 5000 Kansas Avenue, Kansas City, KS 66106 913-288-1000
  - Direct Inquiries to Rhonda Loftus [rloftus@awginc.com](mailto:rloftus@awginc.com)
- Update from Cary Rivard and Josh Roe about specialty crop state-wide survey
- High Plains Food COOP – Atwood, KS Chris Schmidt and Chris Sramek
- Tour of Kansas vegetable farms (Kansas Vegetable Producers organized one several years ago)

**Other individuals:**

- Warren Sutton (20 acres of green beans and pumpkins, Norway, KS)
- Margaret Ringer (Sprouts, Hutchinson, KS)
- Dr. Rhonda Janke – K-State Faculty
- Chuck Barr and Ted Carry (Sweet Potato Breeders) – Retired and no longer with K-State
- Allen Stevens – retiring from K-State, all duties being absorbed by Cary Rivard
- Dr. Vincent Amanor-Boadu, ag economics professor at K-State

**Meeting schedule for upcoming task force meetings:**

- During legislative session (January – May 2015) meeting in Topeka on Fridays

- For the first several months, priority to meet monthly in the first three to four months, then reevaluate meeting schedule and frequency

**Action items/Asks from the task force:**

- What is the loss of state revenue if there was no state sales tax on food?
- What is the loss of state revenue if there is no state sales tax on Kansas produced food?
- How much needed to expand K-State Research and Extension – Commercial Horticulture (Vegetable and Fruit) production?
- Request historical data from Kansas Ag Statistics for vegetable acres. Compare and contrast these reports with neighboring state acreage (CO, NE, OK, MO, and Iowa).
- Invite a representative from Dillon's (or another large retailer) to speak to the group about procuring local fruits and vegetables for sale in retail stores.
- Look at a cooperative model and invite growers in to talk about retail versus wholesale experiences and expectations.
- Invite Chuck Marr and Charles Hall in to address our group regarding fruit and vegetable production in Kansas. (both retired now)

**Next meeting:**

**Local Food and Farm Task Force**

**Friday, December 12**

**10 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

**Kansas Department of Agriculture Room 124**

**1320 Research Park Drive, Manhattan, KS 66502**