

FOOD POLICY FORUM

MEETING NOTES

December 1, 2022: 1:00pm-4:00pm

OBJECTIVES

Make forward progress related to 2022 Forum recommendations:

- Conduct vote on Land Use Policy recommendations (Informing Land Use Policy Action Team)
- Review and refine Farm Bill 2023 recommendations (Farm Bill 2023 Action Team)

INFORMING LAND USE POLICY: VOTE ON RECOMMENDATIONS PACKET

Petra Vallila-Buchman invited forum members to vote on a set of eleven proposed land use recommendations, drafted by the Forum's Land Use Policy Action Team. The recommendations voted on today were refined based on member feedback given during the October 6th Forum meeting.

Forum members supported the recommendations put forth by the informing land use policy small team. All eleven Land Use recommendations passed. With the vote of approval, the land use recommendations will be shared with the Governor, legislators and a selection of relevant state agencies on behalf of the Food Policy Forum.

The following stand-asides occurred during the vote. Leanne Eko stood aside for mitigation of lost farmland and impact of public land acquisition project recommendations in the context of unknown impacts to public school districts. Representative Dye stood aside on both the urban infill and mitigation for lost farmland recommendation and issued a minority statement. P.J. Cawley issued a comment noting, "I will stand-aside on urban infill. I support Representative Dye's statement on the need to increase the opportunity for urban agriculture. The lack of ability to make population centers denser is not a problem for agriculture. Housing in urban areas is a deep and complex issue that the food policy forum does not need to tackle." Due to being a new member on the forum, Marie Spiker (as Jen Otten's alternative) stood aside on all proposed recommendations.

FARM BILL 2023 COORDINATION

The Farm Bill team put forth recommendations for consideration and discussion with the full forum. To review the proposed recommendations, please see [here](#).

Forum members provided input and feedback for each title, including:

Nutrition

Claire Lane provided an overview of the Farm Bill recommendations. Lane shared that the Farm Bill covers SNAP, 'basic food' in Washington State, and all the related programs connected to SNAP. The Farm Bill also includes funding for TEFAP and for small emergency food funding programs. Programs like WIC and child-care are in a different federal bill. Suggested recommendations included providing further resources and funding to programs and removing barriers to populations that are shut out from the programs or face significant policy barriers. Unlike any other program, there is also a prohibition for Native American people to receive SNAP benefits and also get help from FDPIR. Lane shared that no other populations are prohibited. Dual enrollment is not allowed for indigenous populations.

Additional recommendations addressed expanding access to the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. Members commented that NSAC has further released their Farm Bill platform, which includes language to clarify the values-based approach. This report can be found here: <https://sustainableagriculture.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/2023-Farm-Bill-Platform.pdf>. Members also shared that there has been conversation of how USDA commodity food is being procured. It has improved over time, but there can be further discussion. Other comments addressed purchasing as an opportunity not only for nutrition culturally, but also for the ability for small BIPOC farmers to have opportunity not evident in the previous system.

Rural Development

Chris Voigt detailed that population caps limit rural areas if a population exceeds a set amount. Voigt commented that now that people can work remotely, populations have left urban areas and moved to rural areas. However, there are still struggles with infrastructure that cannot be determined by population.

Members noted that rural development does have the Value-Added Producer grants. It further includes rural micro entrepreneur loans, and the sorts of "community level" infrastructure that can support food system development, but many programs are not linked up.

Horticulture

Alyssa Auvinen provided an overview of LAMP and related programs. The Local Food Promotion Program grant assists with aggregation of local foods. The Regional Food Systems Partnership grant supports planning and implementation of local food systems. The Value-Added Producer Grant supports producers to develop value-added products, such as assisting in the production of making cheese for dairy farmers. The Farmers Market Promotion Program Grant supports marketing for farm to consumer sales.

Auvinen commented on the focus on equity. With the Value-Added Producer grants, there is usually a dollar-to-dollar cost share requirement that can be challenging for new and beginning farmers. There may be limited capital to apply and access these grant funds. It can be extremely burdensome for new and beginning and BIPOC farmers to tackle the paperwork involved in these grant programs.

Conservation

Ron Shultz provided an overview of the conservation title recommendations put forth following the Farm Bill summit. Ron shared that NRCS enters into agreements to provide technical assistance to landowners. Members raised a discussion question regarding the inclusion of the term 'regenerative'. Some posited that there is a lot of support for regenerative among many of the small farmers. Others highlighted that "regenerative" doesn't have any specific definition and is therefore less helpful in Farm Bill recommendations. The small team elevated that climate-smart ag has replaced regenerative agriculture to ensure language is consistent with USDA and best practices.

Addie Candib detailed the ACEP-ALE recommendation sharing that the dollars are critical for ag-land protection. Increasing the federal cost share will increase the percent the government matches. Land trusts incur thousands of dollars in costs via transaction costs. This recommendation would have the government cover these costs.

Members shared further resources regarding ACEP-ALE including: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/acep-agricultural-conservation-easement-program/washington/acep-ale-washington>

Research

Chad Kruger recommended removing the framing of institutions as the definitions of institutions is tight. Kruger also commented that NSAC is pushing the \$100m/year for SARE program. However, the SARE program only funds certain types of programs. Kruger suggested stepping back and recommended increasing agricultural research and education funding. Members posed the question on what areas of specific research/education funding are particularly important.

NEXT STEPS AND ADJOURN

Petra Vallila-Buchman, Ross Strategic facilitator closed the meeting and thanked participants for their time. The next Food Policy Forum will meet on January 12, 2023. Petra walked members through next steps including:

- Disseminating the approved land use recommendation report to legislature
- Incorporating proposed changes to Farm Bill recommendations and distributing to the Forum