



NJ Farm to School Conference
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Lawrenceville School

Speaker Notes

Farm to school policy: A ripe opportunity

Speaker: Tegan Hagey (thagy@thefoodtrust.org)

National Farm to School Network

Organized 10 years ago. Lots of small organizations operating individually.

2005 received a grant to organize nationally and regionally.

4 priorities, with the 5th being policy

Farm to school network in 1995. 2 programs started, one in Florida, one in California, both focusing on the disconnect between food in schools.

Now there are 2,000 programs

How do these programs start?

- Parents
- Advocates
- Foundations
- Policy makers

Why policy?

- Money availability
- Making your voice heard
- Equity/consistency in communities

Policy trends

- There has been quick policy implementation in many states. There are now 18 states that have farm to school policy.
- All of these programs are very diverse

New Mexico, the first state to enact farm to school legislation in 2001, recognized that it was a good thing to put locally grown and produced foods into the school systems. At the time, there was no \$ involved, but just the connection.

From 2001-2009, there have now been 17 more states who have passed legislation similar to NM, and many have been much more specific as to how much preferable food should be from that state.

Washington State

This legislation was very strong and stated that they will facilitate the purchase of Wash. Grown food by local schools, by linking school districts and local producers as well as connecting school curriculum. This has been the strongest language to date in any state.

The \$ attached was \$1.49 million in funding and \$600,000 to schools to purchase Washington grown.

Speaker: Jane Storrs-Maryland Dept. of Ag.

There are many layers involved with the policy making

- One of the roadblocks to farm to school is commodity payments. This was started back in the 30's and continues today. If a farmer sells even a portion of his crop to an organization other than what he has been contracted to do thru the commodities program, they will lose all their funding.
- The other challenge is meeting all the GAP and other requirements in order to sell to schools. Bottom line is it's not simple.

Recent Maryland legislation

- 2006 - they passed HB 883 - 5% Price Preference
- Not sure that this was ever used
- 2008 - sb 158-Jane Lawton Farm to school
- Increase knowledge of nutrition and agriculture and consumption of locally grown foods. There were very few resources to make this happen and almost no funds. They were given 5 months to make this happen. They got 23 of 24 districts to participate. The time was ripe to buy local with both public and producers.
- How did they do it?
- They built relationships and established communications.
- Tried to get the right people involved
- They continued to use people who asked how, not why.
- They generated positive buzz.
- Used middle people who were connected enough to make things happen.
- Focused on collaboration.
- Used models and templates everyone could use.
- They also kept a TBC (to be considered) list so that all ideas are recorded and when there is time/\$/personnel, they revisit the list.

Managing the process

- Continue to keep people honest about what is really happening on the ground.

Speaker: Megan Elsener – Community Food Security Coalition

- Don't be afraid to call your representatives and tell them how you feel.
- Child nutrition reauthorization bill– every 5 years a reauthorization happens and bill can be changed.
- This bill includes the national school lunch program
- Fresh fruit and veg. program
- Special milk program

Key players in DC

- School Nutrition Assoc. (SNA)
- National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (NANA)
- Child Nutrition Forum (CNF)
- Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)
- The Society for Nutrition Education (SNE)
- Community Food Security Coalition (SFSC)

What are policy priorities?

- \$ for lunch and breakfast \$.35 for lunch and \$.20 for breakfast
- Elimination of reduced price
- Universal school breakfast
- Strengthen nutrition standards for school meals and competitive

Foods network priorities for 2009

- Enact mandatory funding for access to local foods and school gardens
 - \$50 million over 5 years
 - Will provide for start up grants for schools to establish the infrastructures necessary for implantation of farm to school programs

Political forces

- Budget
- Authorization
- Financing

Where we are right now: The whole above process in happening, and what we need is for individuals to call or write to let them know about farm to school.

Call reps and tell them where you are from and why you think farm to school is important and that you want them to find the \$ to fund the child nutrition reauthorization bill.

Legislation is under www.farmtoschool.com

www.foodsecurity.org has a booklet you can download or have sent to you.