

Food, Hunger, Water, Agriculture Policy
Food Systems Action Team
9.17.20 ± 3:30 – 5:00 pm
Meeting Notes

Facilitator: Lilly Irvin-Vitela, New Mexico First
Note Taker: Xavier Vallejo, New Mexico First

Participants:
Roy Montibon, The Montibon Company
Tyler, New Mexico Coalition to Enhance Working Lands
Bryan Garrett-Crawford, Thornburg Foundation
Sharon Berman, New Mexico First
Erika Robers, New Mexico First

Agenda

- Check-In
- Policy Priorities
- Cold Storage
- Seed Supply
- Farm to Food Box
- Gleaning
- Healthy Soil
- Behavioral Health in Ag
- Next Steps

Cold Storage

- We need to have conversations about how philanthropy can help address some of the gaps regarding the funding we have available. If we have funding, we should start using that to fund projects.
- We're trying to think about how to best use that funding for cold storage, and other warehouse infrastructure needs.
- The Farmer's Marketing Association has focused on funding geographically dispersed projects. There have been efforts to fund tribal communities. Looking at smaller scale producers in underserved areas is a priority.
- There need to be incentives for business owners to invest. Most businesspeople would need to take the plunge. We must reduce the risk a little bit to make things worthwhile.
- If we start to think about what will give incentive, we need to think about where the gaps are that may serve as opportunities for business expansion.

Seed Supply/Distribution

- No Updates

- **NM Foundation needs updates on the topic.**
- Anticipate an ongoing statewide issue of seed shortages.

Farm to Food Box

- No Updates

Gleaning

- Task force meeting again next Tuesday morning. There is a survey that is in the process of being finished up. There's been a decent response. Folks have been looking to see what other states are doing. We need to make sure that gleaning truly is a win-win and we don't hurt farmers in the process.
- The Montibon Company to start conversation with Food is Free about potential opportunities in Northeast New Mexico.

Healthy Soil

- How do we incorporate soil health? How do you infuse some values working within legislative constraints? We need to work language into drafting that honors the concerns around natural resources and desires of big tent, stakeholder groups.
- There is a lot that's been done regarding local procurement in recent years. Ex: Food Supplier, Food Safety Model. Lots of success in this sector. How do we build on this? How do we also not disrupt things on the back end, with purchasing those goods?
- Need to look at the Ag Resilience plan. If there are places where consensus is built, it makes sense to build on those areas.
- New Mexico First putting together discussions and workshops for different workgroups. If there are any specific topics you want to discuss, reach out to Erika Robers: erika@nmfirst.org.

Behavioral Health in Ag

- One result from statewide survey is a huge lack of mental and behavioral health services. Are there considerations we should be making, as we approach these conversations at the state level? Resources specifically for farmers. If 60% of farmers don't have internet access, we have to consider what other resources don't they have access to.
- When we think about mental and behavioral health, people tended not to focus on specific industries. Focused more on geography. When you think of policy fixes, are there things that stick out?
- We need to do more brain storming around this.
- There's a lack of broadband in the state. Excellent broadband (fiber optic gigabit broadband) in Las Vegas. There's a broadband desert in the middle of the Rio Grande Valley. If farmers are isolated and going through financial distress, it could be difficult. If we were to address broadband in this policy, it would be helpful. Folks would need somebody to talk to. They're naturally very isolated. Telemedicine could be beneficial.
- Groups like the National Alliance on Mental Illness should be included on these calls. They have specific mental and behavioral health initiatives.

- For a while, the NMSU Extension Program has been pushing out a lot of resources with messaging specific to the ag industry.
- Other areas need to be addressed, specifically related to issues with broadband. There's room for legislation.
 - New Mexico First has been in touch with someone who has extensive knowledge and experience with broadband that could be brought onto the calls. **New Mexico First to follow up.**

Next Steps

- Do we want to consolidate meetings? Is there a way we can do this better?
- Every other week meetings work fine. Comfortable to consolidate workgroups with overlapping topics if needed.
- Where it seems like efficiencies can be created, it makes sense. These meetings and the Value Chain meetings should be consolidated if there are a lot of the same people and discussion points.
- We don't support our agricultural producers enough. We shift quickly to distribution, but we need to go back to supporting producers.