



Resilience in New Mexico Agriculture Crownpoint Regional Meeting Summary

Introduction

The **Resilience in New Mexico Agriculture** regional meeting in Crownpoint was convened on March 3, 2016. A group of 16 people from six different counties attended the meeting, including farmers, ranchers, educators, researchers, financial lenders, grantmakers and advocates.

The purpose of the meeting was to elicit input from key stakeholders on the trends having the most significant impact on the agriculture industry, as well as challenges and potential solutions, especially in tribal communities. These ideas will contribute to the industry and stakeholder research that will result in a long-term plan for a robust food and agriculture system in New Mexico.

Throughout the meeting, participants worked in table groups to discuss the following trends, challenges and solutions. Once information is gathered from all the regional meetings, it will be synthesized and potentially verified.

Trends

Participants were asked to identify key trends that are having an impact (either positive or negative) on the agriculture industry, in general. The trends represent individual opinions of participants in attendance at this meeting and not necessarily the group as a whole.

Positive

- *Markets*—There increased awareness of the connection between food and health issues and more consumer demand for organic, natural produce. This has led to an increase in local farmers' markets and more fresh produce in grocery chains.
- *Food Sovereignty*—The food access movement and increased interest in the benefits of organic, safe, non-GMO food, has led to intentional steps to build community food systems. There has also been a push for international protocols to protect the traditional ecological knowledge of indigenous peoples. There is more recognition that sustainable system design (e.g., heritage seeds, permaculture) is embedded in indigenous traditions.
- *Industry Support*—There is an increase in advocates to promote agriculture (e.g., nonprofits, trade associations, cooperative extension services).
- *Youth Interest*—Children are becoming more interested and involved in agriculture.
- *Local Producers*—There is an increase in small-scale, high-density, local food production (e.g., backyard gardening).
- *Climate Change*—There is a growing public awareness of the impact of changing weather patterns on the industry.

Negative

- *Water*—Water availability is becoming more uncertain. Increased competition for use and lack of timely adjudication has increased this uncertainty. The "use it or lose it" rule has become a disincentive to conservation.
- *Import/Export Policies*—International trade treaties have taken decision-making regarding trade policy out of the hands of local policymakers.
- *Seed Integrity*—Corporate stakeholders, like Monsanto, threaten the traditional ecological knowledge and sustainable practices of indigenous peoples through their commodification, patenting and selling of genetically modified seeds, as well as claiming and litigating perceived patent violations.
- *Public Perception*—There is a negative perception from some that commercial, agricultural practices are harmful.
- *Education*—Youth are losing valuable life skills due to the elimination of vocational agriculture and home economic programs in the public K-12 education system.

- *Stakeholder Friction*—Producers are missing the opportunity to work collaboratively for the benefit of all scales of operation (i.e., small, medium and large).
- *Leadership*—More leaders who are knowledgeable and supportive of agriculture are needed.

Challenges

These trends lead to a number of challenges which were prioritized by the participants.

1. Continued access to water and land for people, animals and habitat
2. Access to other resources (e.g., healthy soil), as well as capital resources for land, equipment, seeds and livestock
3. Strengthening the commitment of food sovereignty through education, training and resources needed to build healthy and sustainable food systems
4. Education for youth and adults regarding food safety/traceability, production, marketing and resource management
5. Technical assistance that allow producers to participate effectively in local markets
6. Supportive funding for native community agriculture projects

Solutions

Given the challenges, participants were asked to recommend potential solutions that would make the most positive difference in the industry.

Water & Other Natural Resources

1. Establish an accurate assessment of available water resources.
2. Establish drought plans.
3. Encourage individual farmer/rancher conservation.
4. Promote more efficient use of water (e.g., drip irrigation).
5. Establish water retention plans and support projects to reduce water run-off.
6. Capture water runoff.
7. Manage water resources at the watershed level.
8. Build producer cooperatives to protect the watershed.
9. Provide soil management education (e.g., benefits of cover crops and no till farming)
10. Support dry land farming.
11. Expand and support research in changing climate patterns and ecological shifts.
12. Make decisions based on independently reviewed, scientific models.
13. Sponsor events to build awareness of resource depletion and demonstrate how to build on available community resources.

Food Sovereignty

14. Establish supportive policies.
15. Provide education and training.
16. Provide technical assistance.

Education

17. Provide agriculture information through the schools.
18. Involve students in school garden projects.
19. Build community partnerships and coalitions.
20. Provide workshops for producers.

Producer Technical Assistance

21. Establish a statewide, producer collaborative with the goal to expand markets for New Mexico branded, organic foods.
22. Create certified, community kitchens that meet food safety standards for marketing local food products.
23. The Navajo nation could create standards that support local producers.
24. Utilize groups that are already in place (e.g., nonprofits, cooperative extension services) to educate producers on industry regulations and requirements.

Native Community Project Funding

- 25. Build more awareness and provide more funding for cooperative extension programs.
- 26. Expand tribal infrastructure funding.

Meeting Demographics

Stakeholder Groups	# Participants	Counties	# Participants
Advocacy	2	Bernalillo	2
Education & Research	7	Dona Ana	2
Farming/Ranching	3	McKinley	8
Financial Lending & Grantmaking	1	San Juan	1
Staff (NMF)	3	Sandoval	2
		Santa Fe	1