

Food, Hunger, Water, Agriculture Policy
Food Systems Action Team
9.3.20 ± 3:30 – 5:00 pm
Meeting Notes

Facilitator: Lilly Irvin-Vitela, New Mexico First

Notes: Erika Robers, New Mexico First

In Attendance:

- Pam Roy- Farm to Table
- Dan Gerry- WAVE foundation
- Denise Miller- NM Farmer's Marketing Association
- Bruce Hinrichs; NMSU Cooperative Extension
- Jonas Moya- NM Cattle growers
- Trista Teeter- Food Is Free ABQ
- Bryan Crawford Garrett: Thornburg Foundation
- Kathlyne; Intern for Farm to Table
- Zak Barela: NMDA

Updates

- Need for the state to match funding for double up food bucks. There's a lot of need right now. They are going to be expanding to all the Loews stores in the state. Applying for their next four-year federal grant. They want to get a dollar for dollar match. They are requesting 700 to 800 thousand dollars.
- No new updates concerning their NM Cattle Growers policy.
- NMSU Cooperative Extension to have an online soil health conference on September, 22-23.
<https://rsvp.nmsu.edu/rsvp/soilhealth2>
- NMCEWL is about to roll out a survey of farmers and ranchers and the effects of COVID. Should be circulated.
 - New Mexico First will be responsible for pushing the survey out. If you're curious and want to do a guided interview with some of your members, there is an opportunity to do that.
- Figuring out how to have gleaning state-wide.
- **Deadline is closing soon on ??**
- WAVE Foundation started thinking about a five-year plan. They need to restore the soil on their property. They are busy restoring the soil through composting.
- An intern is now working with Farm to Table. Interested in systems change and attends NMHU.
- Farm to Table expanding and digging deeper in the policy recommendations. Gleaning survey is coming out in Spanish as well. Farmers met with Lujan Grisham. Regional farmer and market act. It focuses on equity for farmers. Annual meeting September 23, 11:00 AM to 2:30 PM window. Policy and priority setting early.

Town Hall Meeting and New Action Groups

- Should we be weaving various work groups together that have overlapping themes. What does this group think?
- Yes, time is very difficult for all of us because we are in so many groups. If we can over time figure out more efficiency by merging these calls/groups, it would be helpful. Zoom rich days. Everyone coming together is very inspiring. It says so much about the need and desire of New Mexicans.



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People. Ideas. Progress.

Please contact Sharon Berman at sharon@nmfirst.org if we missed or misunderstood anything in these notes.

- Agreed. Efficiency is important. It is important to bring these groups together so that we can do the work better. Action oriented.
- Agreed, that groups can be combined- the reality is that all these issues are connected. There is always a conflict between too specialized and too generalized. He thinks there is an opportunity here to bring the groups together.
- **When we come back together next time, we can lay out options for people to choose from.**
- We've talked about policy. We aren't lacking solutions that could work and we aren't lacking people power. If there are opportunities for other advocates to support your messages, let us know. Budget applications are in the works- it's very urgent.
- Recommendations that are more policy rather than budget, it's about creating and drafting the actual legislation. Now we move past the big idea phase to the nitty gritty.
- We may be working on the Omnibus bills.
- Everyone can sign up as a member of Farm to Table and everyone is invited to come to their annual meeting on September 23. Driven by equity. They hold one another accountable to the mission of the organization. They take the long view.
- Please reach out to New Mexico First if you'd like to be part of the new working groups formed through the Town Hall.

Cold Storage and Transportation:

- Food and ag have continued to tell us they need cold storage. There's a lot of discussion around developing a platform to share information and allow the public to interact with the data. Updates around cold storage and transportation and data collection- share this info with community.
- Nothing new at the regional level. The NM Farmer's Marketing Association has been providing grants to farmers. Annual grants- about 12 farmers a year are funded. Many of the farmers build cold storage on their farms. They are working with food hubs.
- ESHIP Rio Grande Project- 5 counties. Erin Ortugosa runs it. There will be a survey coming out about cold storage and transportation. Launch survey on September 15. Even though it's only 5 counties, it will still be helpful as a whole.

Early in the Pandemic- lack of farmer access to seed

- Shout out to NMSU and the NM Acequia Association. Will there be seed supply issues again in the spring? We want to be more responsive next time around if we can be.
- No updates from NM Farmer's Marketing Association on what the farmers have said about their seed supply. She hasn't heard anything recently.
- We don't have the quality and safety infrastructure in NM that would allow us to participate in the Federal programs. If we were able to build out the programs that we have that are successful, maybe we could somehow meet the needs that fall in the middle.



Food Box Efforts

- More farm to food box. The USDA program (billion dollars in it) is a commodity program. It is meant for distributors or large organizations whose job it is to distribute food. The way that the program should work is that organizations who have specialization in one area should be able to assist. We can partner with orgs that are getting a contract. USDA program is designed as a commodity program. Not designed for NM agriculturalists.
- Idea is that we could produce local food and get it into boxes for those in need. Is there a way to expand this? There are questions about whether we can package and distribute in a way that responds to hungry people. We might take a regional approach- like maybe partnering with states around us. The Hyper local approach is working. There needs to be funding for these very regional efforts that are buying from local farmers and then boxing the food up for local families that need it.

Gleaning Efforts

- Thank you to The Food Depot and the Dept. of Ag for collaboration. They were in a listening session where farmers spoke up about their needs. Survey coming out in Spanish. Report will come out by Nov 1.
- Some issues of contention- worker pay issues and possibly liability issues. Looking to other states who are already doing gleaning for help with the safety and liability issues. We need to hear from producers and those who are on the ground so that the policy is built by those most effected. Please spread the gleaning survey far and wide.

Next Steps

- Think about how to efficiently combine meetings.
- New Mexico First to share Town Hall Increasing Food Security and Local Food Systems policy priorities.
- All people to share any policy priorities of interest.

