

Next Generation of Farmers & Ranchers Committee

Meeting Notes

January 11, 2017

NMF Committee Staffer: Sharon Berman

NMSU Committee Staffer: Jon Boren

Attendees:

- Gilbert Naranjo
- Caleb Gustin
- Alex Funk
- Jedrek Lamb
- Jon Boren

Research needed:

1. Percentage of school aged students that are homeschooled
 - What percentage of school-aged children are in rural communities?
 - What percentage of homeschool students in NM are homeschooled?
2. Best practices in ag programs for homeschoolers
3. How many farmers make it past the 4-year mark? Why, or why not?
 - How to bring it down to x%?
4. How many youths are engaged in agriculture at: grade/middle/high/college/producers – need metrics
 - Then, figure out algebraic statement: in order to get x number of farmers, we need x, y and z
5. Who is interested in what? (e.g., State will be more interested in education, health agencies might be more interested in short-term funding.)
6. Who is leading farm apprenticeships in NM? Where?
7. What are some changes we could make– for instance, labor code? Workers comp? liabilities, insurance? **Need suggestions about where restrictions lie.**
8. Are there land protection programs in other states? (e.g., Farm Act, easement programs.)
 - Given our current political/legal environment, what is more likely to work here?
9. How are other states funding ag programs?
 - Are there other/new revenue streams we didn't know about?
 - How do you protect it (example Don Tripp's double up food bucks program, which was put under gaming)?
 - Who are our allies going to be? Larranaga is a good supporter. Who are going to be their successors?
 - Are there private supporters/allies?
10. Compare programs in small rural states - which states are close to us – regarding infrastructure/ rural/population size.

Small Discussion-General Notes

QUESTION: Start with one policy or industry area you think has potential for change...

Issues (In order as discussed):

1. Training
2. Tax Incentives
3. Education
4. Long-term Viability
5. Communication
6. Resources
7. Native Communities
8. Recruitment
9. Bring Change from Inspiration
10. Succession Planning
11. Acknowledge Shift in Responsibility
12. Progression Planning
13. Beginning farmer/rancher stepwise progression plan
14. Multi-pronged engagement piece
15. Land rights
16. Commodity prices – trade tare policies

1. Training

- Alex: Most young farmers are not coming from farming families – so they need training
- Jedrek: diverse backgrounds. Many different reasons for people entering agriculture
- Micaela: Need to concentrate/discuss on quality of training – example University of Nebraska, 4-year program among others. Sticking with people. It takes a few years.
- Jedrek: In order to keep people involved, we need to discover people's core values. How do we find common ground/common goal, and how do we educate them? Elders, extension service (holistic management), formal education entities, recognizing benefits and shortfalls that exist now
- How to engage youth – (Jedrek teaches 6-7th grade ag culture at charter school)
- When someone is willing to go through the hardships – training - removing the romanticism, showing people
- Land, water, equipment & labor – need a system and assistance to maintain all of this (Jedrek quoted someone else on task force – Steve Warshawer, not able to come today).
- How to involve private sector.
- Insights on regulations.
- Insights on taxes. Jedrek – it's an asset to farmers.
- How to find skilled labor?

2. Tax incentives to keep land in production.

- Land lying fallow loses tax status
- Incentives for keeping land in use
- Create carrots to keep land from development
- TIDS – 20-year tax-free setup for those creating economic development as recognizing importance of farms
- Alex: Create Ag zones or districts that secures land without having to extend state resources. Revise existing policy to allow following ideas.
 - Variation of zoning
 - Tailored to specific communities

- Economic incentive zones – something for new/startup farmers to know
- In NJ, landowners can get land kept safe for good. (Caleb)
- Land trusts in NM
- Incentivize good things rather than punitive (in ABQ you can't grow edible food in front yard).
 - 14 trees only allowed in yard (only 4 are native)
 - If you're going to plant 50 trees in a park, 3 of them are edible.
 - San Diego now has policy to plant edible food (Jedrek)
 - Food security
 - Education
 - Airponics (Chicago O'Hare) in the recreation area
- Less grass, more gardens (Caleb)
- Encourage backyard gardening
- We're going to get rid of x% of pollution
- Gets rid of eyesores
- Revise laws about gray water, recapturing rainwater. (this requires state & federal permitting.)
- Revise Insurance industry laws regarding gray water.

3. Education

Caleb: FFA is behind a lot of ag education. The way they're set up in high school to do long-term project. (Example, 16-year-old in GA who invented a technique to kill kudzu)

- Word of mouth in NM
- Educate young people about the importance of agriculture
 - Require an ag education class
- Explore a more coordinated, active effort between the university and the extension. Could University coordinate better with groups. (Jon)
 - FFA teachers declining nationally, although maybe not so much in NM
- Get native American involvement in Tribal extension program. It requires Master's degree. Hard time filling those positions?
 - Home Ec, ag classes in public school
 - All 19 pueblos share funding. Have southern/northern pueblo agencies, but many pueblos are going independent now. What little portion they have, they're trying to figure out how to get people. There's USDA outreach and NMSU, but it's not as solid. Funding is light.
 - How to get Native Americans into this field?
 - They don't always know they will need multiple degrees – one after the next one.
 - Loans can be very heavy burdens. How can we help with that?
 - Gilbert – habitat garden at the school.
 - Revise Education policy to include some form Ag Science 101 in public education.
 - Incorporate ag into benchmarks for science.
 - Science – require a link be made to ag in some way. Could be Ag history.
- Pipeline – different entry points – attend to all of them, increase
- Think about how to target youth outside of the public education system.

- FFA chapter that meets once per month in AK out in the tundra (Caleb), and “case curriculum” taught in the schools.
- RESEARCH Percentage of school-aged students that are homeschooled
 - What percentage of school-aged children are in rural communities?
 - What percentage of homeschool students in NM are homeschooled?
- RESEARCH best practices into ag programs for homeschoolers
- **Educating policymakers.** (Jared) Effective communication in terms they can understand.
 - How to put a personal face to all this? (Jon)
 - There’s a cowboy attached to cigarettes, but is there a cowboy attached to agriculture? (Maurice)
- Rural living needs to be more attractive.
- Example of innovative program in NM: Bernalillo Co - Mill levy on property taxes to train kids in ag (Micaela). Innovating and creative
- Ag feeder schools:
 - Chicago – has ag farm in city, robotics, hydroponics. Job placement.
 - Connecticut – near sound, have own dock. Students have underwater robotics system, aquaponics – high school students get this experience
 - Ag science schools – one big school, all ag focused. English, math, reading all supplements to ag knowledge. Ag educators teach classes in evenings.
 - Ag feeder schools are branching west.
 - Imaging an ag feeder school in Albuquerque. (Caleb) state regulated core subjects – get science at that school while also continuing at their own school.
 - Auto shops – auto school, which is an ingrained part of community. Hands-on education.
 - Washington schools work with Boeing. Boeing offering students jobs for \$24/hr. to build planes.
- What’s the missing link for funders/partners? (Micaela) – **get vocation programs**
- When you start comparing to other schools (Jon), the investment in public school system is not in these areas. We’ve got to do a better job of instilling value in agriculture and our tribal and Hispanic lands. Appropriations to increase agriculture. Everyone’s focused on oil and gas. Provide uniformity to laying a foundation – when oil and gas does come back. Then we can build programs and fund them.
- Schools are expensive. (Micaela)
- Could we get labs involved?
- Everything comes back to funding. What’s new? Best practices in other states?
- How do I get land, deal with organic ag prices?
- Instill in next generation the value of soil health – education

4. Long term viability

- knowledge of managing, business plans (through extension or other) (Alex)
- Mechanisms for funding
- Skills development

5. Communication

- Advertising. **Pass this next gen content on to appropriate committee.**
 - Telling the ag story. #myagstory was the biggest twitter presence one day.
 - Commercials (Caleb)
 - Watch pueblo commercials (Gilbert) – dances.
 - Gilbert invited everyone to come to dances. Go see, bring kids.
 - Rain dances
 - Seed exchange
 - Branding and marketing - Unify labels in ag marketing topic
 - #NMTRue – this is preferred one by most.
 - NMDA label – “growing a tradition/tasting a tradition...”
 - You have to make becoming a farmer/rancher (and other science fields) sexy
 - The *Got Milk?* campaign
 - Jay Hill – standing in his onion patch – a la Star Wars: “What will you become?” Contact Maurice Portillo!
- Marketing for future generations. Think about communicating and generation gap – communication. Appeal to younger people – they want a purpose. (Caleb) (Tyson-Kraft building their models off of Dougal).
 - Need to give it meaning and purpose. Purpose-driven work.
 - People are more interested in the traditions (Gilbert) rather than gathering piles of money.
 - People will be retiring soon from USDA and other agencies. How do we fill those spots, and how do we educate them before they do?
 - Pressure on agencies – wine and dine them – get them educated. Make sure people know what it’s like. Then create policy around that. We need to bring them into our world.
 - Families/people/the person behind ag has been removed.
 - How to make farming AND ranching appealing?
 - Maurice: Ranching is more rewarding – faster, get more \$\$ from sale of 1 cow.
 - Jedrek: They need to see the continuation. They need to see it grow, the reward of selling, eating/tasting. Most of the activity occurs when they’re out of school. Basic infrastructure to put in place (automatic watering) so they can see the
 - Alex: Water rights – overwhelming (so expensive) – where can government come in and help get things started?

6. Resources

- **Need a resource guide for all of the loans available. A one stop shop.** (example: not everyone knows about USDA startup loan – Caleb). It could contain:
 - Chronological setup (elementary through college – jobs)
 - Links and contact info
 - Iowa State has “Beginning Farmer Center” that coordinates the resource guides, etc. (Alex)
 - Ag awareness
- **Involve the private sector.**
- Leverage community resources. Resources besides loans and grants. Are there community entities? (e.g., community kitchen)

- Partnerships between funders – where does one begin and the other come in? (Maurice)
- Target middle school. (Maurice)
 - Stem-based ag program at memorial middle school (Jon). There was work to benchmark standards. Kids producing produce for cafeteria, also doing engineering – robotics, etc. This will require additional state investments – a challenge.
- Transportation and storage networks
- How to keep dialogue going
 - **How to access medical industry (hospitals, among the largest)**
 - Need Presbyterian to read ag plan, and understand why they need to invest
 - Look at how we talk to health care and other groups
- USDA programs (60-70% costs covered, but sometimes you have to pay your portion up front) – windbreaks, barriers, water (drip irrigation)
 - Great programs, but, Jedrek says, funding gets cut from farming
 - There are some implementation problems with USDA (Alex)
 - Maurice (USDA) said that nationally, USDA was allowed to add another goal to promote youth loans and will be doing tons more outreach.
 - USDA has fallen short in the outreach department.
 - Loan portfolio has increased.
 - State of NM (Maurice) added something too - \$5k loan that requires a sponsorship by an assistant producer (not necessarily 4-H, which is common misconception). To start and continue a business from scratch. Program in its infancy – by February, it should be ready to go. Ages 10-17

7. Native communities

- Gilbert: Native communities struggle to balance culture with mingling with mainstream American culture, educating our people and sharing knowledge.
 - Prioritizing that balance is difficult without the funding and education we need. We have to compete for resources too.
 - we're struggling as our own people to keep what we've had for centuries, being the first people here.
 - Our challenge every day is learning computers, etc. The reality – we have to weigh out these situations – how to be American, educated, have money.
 - For our people, it's more important to have our language, our culture, our way of life. This is our biggest challenge. We're losing our culture & our language. We're searching, how to get that back. We're hanging on to it as best as I can. How do we get it back, and explain that we have to get native people in these programs so we can benefit from resources, knowledge – at the same time there's a struggle that's hard to express. Sharing and acquiring knowledge.

8. Recruitment

- Need to look more broadly about who we recruit – example, 4-H. (Jon)
- Assumption is that you have to be from farm or ranch to be involved. We have to do a better internal marketing effort. Also, how to recruit students into ag? Much of this is related to STEM disciplines. If we can show potential income, competitiveness for jobs including tribal youth, and

opportunities for future, we might see an increase in students seeking degrees. Ag biology program provides a great foundation for people wanting to branch out into multiple directions.

- i. Companies (John Deere) are looking for people with backgrounds in agronomy (food engineering) (Caleb)

9. Bring change through inspiration

- to be ready for desperate times, times of crisis. Food prices – they are not able to be upheld by global economies (Jedrek) It may take a food crisis of some sort. Most shoppers at farmers' markets are young families. It's a health aspect. Change comes from inspiration and desperation. How do we make it come from inspiration? To make that conscious choice to do that? I fear it may come through desperation.
- Crisis – farmers are retiring. There are major implications. People will then want to fund. However, it's not a quick turnaround. Need some planning. How do the inspired set up an infrastructure, so when that time comes, there's a plan in place?
- Focus on positive note. One farmer can feed 162 people.

10. Succession planning

How do we address:

- land access
- where water is coming from
- kids aren't always in line to take over from parents
 - losing farmland at rapid pace
 - cognizant that it's essential to keep economy going
 - need to be supportive of a diverse range of people in agricultural
 - bringing in new folks, young folks
 - match retiring farmers with up and coming farmers.
 - Could involve lease rather than sale
 - Different services could be offered – succession planning for a complex (Alex)
 - Make sure farm will be used well/appropriately
 - Provide consultants to farmers regarding renting/leasing/selling
 - Consulting with new farmers – training – help them take on an appropriate amount of land (5 vs. 50 acres)
 - Business plan, whole farm plan

11. Acknowledge shift in responsibility

- (state/funders/me, the farmer)

12. Progression planning.

- Simple is good – identify track a person can follow. (Caleb)
- We want to see the success rate for new farmers be X.
 - RESEARCH: How many are making it past the 4-year mark? Why, or why not?
 - How to bring it down to x%?
- RESEARCH: Engage how many youths at grade/middle/high/college/producers – research metrics
 - Then, can figure out algebraic statement: in order to get x number of farmers, we need x, y and z
- RESEARCH: Will need to keep track of who is interested in what: State will be more interested in education, health agencies might be more interested in short-term funding
- Farm apprenticeships (Alex). Who is leading that in NM, or where is it? What are some changes we could make – for instance, labor code? Workers comp? liabilities, insurance? Need suggestions about where restrictions lie.
 - Jedrek has some info about federal/scholarship. It's being tested now.
- Land protection programs in other states? Farm Act, easement programs? Need examples. Given our current political/legal environment, what is more likely to work here?
- How are other states funding ag programs? Are there other/new revenue streams we didn't know about? How do you protect it (example Don Tripp's double up food bucks program, (Jedrek) which was put under gaming)? Who are our allies going to be? Larranaga is a good supporter. Who are going to be their successors? Are there private supporters/allies?
- RESEARCH – compare programs in small rural states - which states are close to us – regarding infrastructure/rural/population size.
 - Consider forming coalition of similar states

13. Beginning farmer/rancher stepwise progression plan

- (needs be coordinated among all agencies/resources). Pathway for new producers to follow depending upon their objectives. I.e. Farm/Ranch simulator. More integrated approach to beginning farmer/rancher programs. From 4H-FFA – getting agencies working together.
 - Create schematic – flow chart – you want to do this, here's what you do...(Jedrek)
 - virtual simulator – using questionnaire for instance, where would they best fit into agriculture?
 - Farm simulator video game (Jedrek) – successful farms were built off this.

14. Multi-pronged engagement piece

15. Land rights

- how do we ensure that the soil is healthy? If inherited land is not arable, it will take decades to build it back up.
- Need a soil bill of rights, to ensure soil is healthy.
- Provide setting for nature to take care of it.
- Instill in next generation the value of soil health – education

- How to get a politician to value the land they walk on?

16. Commodity prices – trade tare policies

- In whose interest are they?
- **House ag and farmers’ committee needs more farmers.** Currently only 1 farmer – mostly lawyers, etc. They don’t hear the food. They hear how it affects real estate, etc. How to convert to language that legislative bodies can hear? It’s not only relevant on economic terms – we need to be able to articulate how ag is important and essential to NM/US.
 - For instance, re Food security, “I Can” programs, etc. Programs to deliver food to families adds moneys to state coffers. Increase nutrition, less medical expenses.
 - Reduce anxiety regarding feeding family – how to best capture/express this?
 - Compared to dairy – the \$\$ are so varied – hard to get attention
 - Compared to rest of country – we are rural – not seen as such – so get compared inappropriately
 - Communication between federal agencies and producers needs improving.
 - NM doesn’t have electronic infrastructure (Maurice). Producers can’t “go to tallest mountain in NM” to access email.

Top 2 ways to improve ag in NM? (Jon)

- **Partner with NM True, get more media out.** Get branding of NM out. Put more agriculture out there. **[send this idea to relevant committee]**
- Link it with stories – families – businesses
 - Ag department get StoryCorps to partner with them (<https://storycorps.org/>), or use as model to gather ag stories.
- All areas of the state
- Work with *the green tree* – a paper based on native American agriculture, traditional weaving, etc. (Gilbert) (is it possibly *Green Fire Times*?)
- **Use land that is idle.** There is lots of land that is idle. Some families don’t get along, so it’s sitting there. Start producing more crops, cattle, etc. using farm equipment we have. Finding people to share resources and knowledge. (Gilbert)
- **Conduct health education (diabetes) and other awareness training.**

What are the biggest barriers to filling employment gap you’ve identified so far? (Jon)

- No training/education
 - Viability program - Coordinated resource/a number of experts - providing advisors to identify and report to individual farms/operations. (e.g. In MA, they send out (Alex) people to farms to evaluate farm. They give full report to farmers. (Alex))
 - This is being done for tax sector and biomedical sector, film startups
- No business plan
- Startup costs
- Debt
- Increase in the number of production (as opposed to increasing the number of farms)

- Education doesn't have to ensure farmers come out of it – this information can be brought into any sector. This is providing tools for long-term understanding, cooperation, collaboration.

What information do we need to vet our preliminary ideas, identify additional ones, and overcome barriers? See research section at top of doc

If time permits – what communication and collaboration strategies might be needed for addressing our issue? See blue highlight for goals and some analysis ideas

What are we MOST excited about from this conversation?

One idea our group is proud of, that Alex Funk originated and shared out: **Create A Beginning Farmer Center**. This would be a jointly funded resource at all the universities with one full-time coordinator. Iowa State has “Beginning Farmer Center” that coordinates the resource guides, etc.

- Use Iowa State model
- This would incorporate almost, if not every of the main issues raised below, including land access, startup costs, debt issue, where to get info, loan info, land info, one-stop shop, resource platform, staff within extension who are new farmer agents, good way to identify where there are barriers. If we don't have a program to refer you to, to identify bottlenecks.
- Would be able to provide rate of success, what to expect during the first 4 years. Where can government and policy play a role?