

Flip Chart Notes -- Strategic Planning Forum #7 @ Frankfort
Kentucky State University - Cooperative Extension Building Room 238
Task Force of the Future of Kentucky Agriculture and Rural Communities
Kentucky Agricultural Council
9/5/12

Suggestion to add to consumer outreach programs:
Dairy Spokesman Network [while noting that it is industry-specific]

How to involve people NOT already in agriculture, as ambassadors, spokespersons for future consumer outreach efforts?

Other programs to add / acknowledge:
Ky Farmers Care program
Common Ground

KSU has a new degree program in agriculture that is experiencing a significant diversity of students (in terms of age as well as other demographics); students reflect wide range of interests.

People don't know all the career options that exist in "agriculture", beyond the production end of things

There are opportunities to promote agricultural career options in urban areas as well as rural ones.

A gap exists in Voc Ag programs in the schools at the middle school level.

There is a need for more Ag Literacy education at the middle school level – not just career information.

County school boards are cutting funding / support for Ag education – they don't see Ag as a viable career path

Professional development seminars are one way to get the word out – speaking to classes . . . teachers always are looking for speakers, are appreciative of having the information

Core Content for public school education is going to change soon . . . There is an opportunity / need to link agricultural curriculum to science and related disciplines.

Efforts are needed to make kids aware of the "technology" aspects of agriculture, not just see it as production, "growing things".

KSU has a new Ag Mentoring program

Suggestion: the Plan should include mention of "Master Gardiner" programs / training / career options.

An obstacle to encouraging more visits to farms by kids may be the liability risk, cost of this. Could there be a program to mitigate that?

Under Topic 4, “Policy-maker Education”, the plan should include an “immersion program” for policy-makers to go see farms directly, learn first hand the issues involved . . . “Feel it . . . see it”.

Farmers make a lot of decisions based on emotion – they are not always good business decisions.

A big market is emerging in the next 3 years for banana peppers and hot peppers. KSU and UK are working jointly on this.

There should be more emphasis on fruit crops, including grapes (for wine).

Opportunities exist to promote products that have a distinct “Kentucky Brand”, such as Paw Paws . . . when people hear about them, they will associate it with Kentucky.

The Dairy industry should get emphasized as a market opportunity – this should include goats, goat cheese.

Need to ensure that “organics” are included among new market opportunities.

Need to find ways to support small scale producers, who may not want to scale up to a bigger market . . . Direct market producers

Concern that small marketers should not try to compete with or to criticize “Big Agriculture”; rather, they need to promote the idea of co-existence.

Issue: there appears to be a growing division between producers of “niche market” products versus “industrial agriculture” – there is a need to “narrow the gap between these production models”

In communicating to consumers, small / niche producers should emphasize the positives of their products, how they are produced -- not the negatives of other products / producers.

Concern: don’t let retailers drive this conversation.

The list of “policy-makers”, “influencers should be expanded to include RETAILERS; Health-related groups.

Question: are there additional MOBILE processing facilities? Answer: Yes, two more are in the works (at Kentucky State U).

Topic 4 B (New Market Identification – proposal for an “Ag Partnership Business Center” and technical assistance to producers): There are lots of resources among various existing organizations . . . how can we embrace technology to push more information out about these opportunities? There services themselves are good, but people don’t know where to find information.

Estate planning for farm families in transition is a challenge . . . there are psychological issues; concerns over sharing information.

“Farmers may never really retire”.

Dairy industry has had conferences with speakers on transition [other commodity groups may also have similar programs] – but there is no local network of resources.

Does the focus on “next generation farming” include related agribusinesses? For example, packing houses.

How can retirees get into farming? (Comment: It happens in California)

The Farm Start program is not limited to “young” farmers; there are other programs at the universities that could be accessed by persons of any age.

Agricultural High School programs in other states have diverse students, including women, African Americans, foreigners. We should look at some of these.

We need to help people in the Ag community become comfortable with the Latino workforce that is a reality today

Have we looked at things from the opposite direction? I.e “urban agriculture”? How can we support it? Zoning policies that may be needed, etc.

Lexington has 200 people raising chickens in the urban area and a dedicated support organization named “CLUCK” – there is increasing demand for eggs.

Are there water resource programs (best practices) that will provide assistance to farms where conditions are POSITIVE . . . we have been told our property was too good, that the programs were only for land where conditions are terrible . . . [Several audience members responded in the affirmative that federal and state water programs should assist all farms].

Underscore the knowledge / information gaps as a recurring theme

KADF has funded a new program at KSU aimed at helping get more information / assistance out to small and disadvantaged farms.