

**SW Colorado Farm-to-School & Policy Meeting**  
**24 Feb 2005, Durango Office Suites, Durango**  
**3-4:30 PM**

ATTENDING: Christie Berven, Tom Riesing, Sue Bruckner, Chris Barker, Katrina Blair, Beth LaShell, Jerry Zink, Bliss Bruen, Jim Judge, Greg Vlaming, Trent Taylor, Jeanne Trupiano, Jan Blanchard, Kay James, Raylene McCalman, Bill Manning, Charlie Alberts, Dean Mullen, Michael Rendon, Pam Dyer, Jim Dyer.

FOOD & AG POLICY DISCUSSION: Jim Dyer presented an overview of the Food & Ag Policy Council process in Colorado and in the Four Corners states as supported by the Southwest Marketing Network and partners. A fact sheet on policy councils and the vision statement for the State Working group was handed out (both can be found on our website below). Attendees were referred to the Drake University clearinghouse website ([www.statefoodpolicy.org](http://www.statefoodpolicy.org)) for more background on policy councils around the country, and to our local webpage on the Oakhaven site ([www.oakhavenpc.org/FoodAgPolicy](http://www.oakhavenpc.org/FoodAgPolicy)) for more on the Colorado Policy Working Group.

The SW Colorado Sustainability Working Group has been meeting for several months now, and food and agriculture issues are very prominent in those discussions. This Farm-to-School and Policy Group is an offshoot of the Sustainability Group, and will continue to report back to the broader group.

Some of the issues discussed included:

- State standards for food and nutrition in our schools (Bliss).
- Should there be a state-wide Farm-to-School program?
- The La Plata County land use code under consideration — should this group review it to ensure it allows and encourages small-scale, alternative agriculture, direct marketing, etc.?
- Conservation funding, open space, and farm preservation.
- Encouraging young people in agriculture.
- A state policy of preference for buying local food — some state action is underway.

Tom, Christie, Bliss, Jim (Judge), and Jim (Dyer) agreed to take the lead on developing and articulating local Food & Ag policy issues, and Tom and Jim Dyer will share those issues with the state working group.

FARM-TO-SCHOOL DISCUSSION:

Jim Dyer gave an overview of the options under Farm-to-School programs across the country:

- Getting local food into schools
  - Single products as a pilot program
  - As special event local meals
  - As an ongoing part of the menu
- Ensuring nutritious food whatever the source
  - School meals
  - Vending machines
- Food and Ag Education
  - Nutrition education in the classroom

- Cooking demonstrations/classes
- Students to local farms and ranches
- Farmers and ranchers into classrooms
- School gardens

The wider benefits of Farm-to-School programs were discussed:

- Supports local agriculture
- Promotes local food
- Combines local food and high quality food
- Furthers public education through children
- In time it should promote:
  - Value-added processing
  - Season-extension/preservation
  - Increased local production

Many resources are available across the country, and the best single source is the National Farm to School Program website: [www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org)

Some of the points that arose in the discussion included:

- We must consider how lunches are financed — the budget, any available subsidies and grant programs.
- Vending Machines — how to get better, healthier foods and drinks — especially water — into them.
- What policy changes at local and state levels will be necessary to get local foods into schools here and throughout the state?
- Department of Defense fresh food program — how to get more local produce into this program.
- Michael Rendon would like to see Ft Lewis College move from Sodexho to Bon Appetite in 2006 when the Sodexho contract expires. Bon Appetite uses local foods, will even set up a facility to preserve fresh foods. Their costs are 8-10% higher than Sodexho.
- Need to get more nutritionists in this planning group.
- Can we find one school in the county that is willing to support a pilot program? ...perhaps where the parents are willing to pay something extra to get this food??
- There are some grants available to help set up a school garden or food program, but other funding would be needed once a garden or program is established.
- Explore the co-op model for producers supplying food in this area.
- What are the budget challenges of the 9R District regarding food (Kay James will talk to them and report at the next meeting.)
- Work with PTO and DAC.
- Cheap food is a big impediment.

The group agreed on a GOAL for THIS YEAR: Get some local food into at least one public school by this Fall.

Jim Dyer