



HARVEST AGAINST HUNGER AREA SUMMIT **OLYMPIA, WA**

FEBRUARY 2ND, 2012 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

UNITED CHURCHES OF OLYMPIA

110 11th Avenue SE Olympia, WA 98501

Welcome and introduction (5 min)

Julie Washburn, Executive Director Washington Food Coalition

This is the third of four summits taking place across WA. WFC is one of the partners of these summits. Collaborative project, funds from specialty crop grant, identify areas where produce is going to waste or identify new ways to get such specialty crops to market.

New ways and opportunities of partnership – find new ways for connection to be made. Goal is a conversation and actual projects that we want to see happen.

Overview of Specialty Crops (5 min)

Director Dan Newhouse WSDA

Dept of Ag has new and special role, not the responsible state agency for procurement of emergency food. Connection between agriculture and need to feed the hungry is a natural one. There are concrete examples from the last year to get more food into emergency food system. We need to know the opportunities and realize how growers can get more food into the system. We can highlight some of the examples taking place, like local producers getting involved with local food bank – fruit/veggie, dairy/meat participating to get fresh products into the system.

Many of the small farmers in state are face of WA ag, have the most interaction with urban areas through sales and markets. We share common goals, like increasing food into the system – because demand and customer base growing. Demand continues to outstrip supply and WSDA is very happy to be involved in this project.

David Bobanick, Director of Rotary First Harvest

RFH connect growers with food banks, essentially a nonprofit produce broker. RFH's main core work, is distributing produce, like apples and packing them for distribution throughout the state. Also running the HAH project, developing local models to get more produce into food banks. Introduces Amanda of Farm Hub.

EcoTrust Food Hub Presentation (20 min)

Presenter: Amanda Osborne, Director, Food Hub, EcoTrust

www.hood-hub.org

Excited about capacity of Food Hub, once gaps are identified in specialty crop growers, food hub is designed to help connect all food producers – dairy, meat, produce etc w/ wholesale level buyers.

- 1) Marketplace functionality – listing of food needed or wanted and certain needs to buy or sell – certain functionality options exists.

- 2) Directory – producers, buyers and associates (anyone supporting regional food economy in a tangible way). Can sort to find buyers and producers in certain area.

Example – of directory listing. Able to see what specialty is, contact internally and externally through email address, photos. Every Food Hub profile has same basic structure.

*Emergency Food Assistance “badge” in Food Hub profile = growers who are interested in working with growers who want to participate with hunger relief organizations, etc.

Can search for product and filter for specific ways.

Food Hub covers WA, OR, CA, ID, MT and AK – six states – and can limit search to particular areas

***** Break *** (5 minutes)**

Stakeholder panel discussion (50 min)

Facilitator: David Bobanick, Executive Director Rotary First Harvest

- Tricia Sexton-Kovacs: Washington State Department of Agriculture
- Robert Coit: Thurston County Food Bank
- Amanda Osborne: FoodHub
- Dan Newhouse: Director WSDA

Q: What motivates a farmer to work with a local food bank?

DN: Sense of community and responsibility, a matter of asking growers, and talking with local food bank manager. Many donors want to contribute w/out being spotlighted, often times an anonymous donor. How can we get the word out a little bit better? For example, I take fruit into warehouses – where it’s packed and sold. Working with warehouses could be a good connection that a lot of fruit does not get harvested and packed and could be utilized. Growers could know this an option.

Q: Large packing houses?

DN: With large warehouse, talk with a field person, if they were aware of need that could go a long way .

Q: What do you do with apples that are not “pretty”?

DN: Often times go to juice, but still nutritious. There is very little waste.

TSK: Instead of selling apples to juices, some growers/packers put aside for sale to schools

Q: Tri-Cities Fields of Grace, goes through Second Harvest, use their equipment to capture and bring back to warehouse. Can ask for apples from farmers, but all of sudden 20 bins are available, how can we help smaller groups to get crops to food banks?

-DN: Dairy industry set-up to become involved. People in ag are competitive, if given a challenge they can perhaps assist with logistical nature, but requires tremendous amount of logistical support.

AO: There isn't a perfect answer yet. But developing regional food economy always falls down to distribution and is the number one hurdle to build a successful regional system. On Food-Hub do have opportunity to announce what needs exist and try to address, also needs innovation. Piggyback what is happening in the for-profit world.

DB: There is capacity in the hunger relief system... For example, grower in Yakima had 600,000 pounds of apple available. Found picking crew from packing house, used other packing house for bins – these groups are the experts, at the end of day might be able to help. Easier for commercial industry than for food banks, identify resources that can be leveraged.

-Connie Nelson, from Spokane. Biggest issue was not transportation, we have arrangement from local AZ Rental companies – have big trucks to help with transportation, don't have to use smaller Penske Truck. Also make growers aware of Good Samaritan, more concern right now liability is a bigger concern.

-DB: Currently doing a position paper in review of the "Good Samaritan" if have straightforward resource will share with everyone in hunger relief community and growers.

-AO: How do we create incentives for these commercial industries to help partner with hunger relief. For example, tax credits, for certain donations.

Q: Farm to school perspective, could these programs be leveraged to partner with food banks?

-TSK, did a bus tour in Sunnyside, Yakima area with food buyers for school. Food buyers were ready to put together a purchasing co-op, which would not have enough to work independently, but if have enough for one purchasing group each fall, could encourage growers to sell and price schools can afford. All of this is about starting conversation with small growers, school districts, and identify way for food banks to pool left over produce. This could be opportunity to increase volume to make distribution easier.

School commodity storage and transport – often use shelf stable or frozen, has not included much produce. OSPI is open to the idea of utilizing for other resources, like hunger relief. Prison and state commodity system and emergency food – all have trucks going different places for. Want to do huge infrastructure project where food is going and how it's being moved.

-RFH Created a Capacity Project Report from the entire hunger relief system perspective
http://issuu.com/bobanickdb/docs/gap_analysis

RC: Most beneficial aspect from local produce project at food bank:

- Work primarily with growers – looking at variety. Want to bring back nice basket of product and crops. Local produce program brings better shelf life. Dealing with local growers for longer shelf life. Learning how to manage inventory.
- With client focus, shift to nutrient dense foods. Produce and meat are top two areas to improve on and bring more food. People who wait in line at food bank, all of the good produce are gone for the day, significance of choice. Would like everyone from beginning to end of line to have same quality.
- As business owner, like best price possible. Free is best price to deal with, that's why we buy and spend money to buy produce from CSA shares. Purchase CSA for winter, but not many opportunities to buy crops during this time of year.

- Also have a produce food drive this time of year at grocery stores... stereo-typical food bank, bunch of canned goods, not the case – landscape is changing. Starts opportunity to help w/ prevention and not just basic needs.

Heather Davis TCFB Produce Manager: Have more grocery stores who want to participate than space – Currently Safeway, Fred Meyer. Local co-ops, in sum collected 450 pounds of produce and \$450.

DB: Explore messaging for statewide produce drive.

TSK: Free is not the best price for farmers, explore raising money that can spend on produce. In Portland, do Harvest of the Month for type of food and highlight it.

<http://www.growing-gardens.org/portland-gardening-resources/harvest-of-the-month.php>

If doing statewide campaign, would like to see highlighting of seasonal and local food. In turn, can purchase from local growers and buy from certain local growers. This mutually benefits many organizations to help support farms.

RC: Also run a school garden program, closely with 4 schools, part of program model relates to current work. Have food stand at school, children use to buy produce at farm stand at school. And the message where and how you buy local food, and at a different school the model is a CSA. How to access local produce, is part of the program design. Also have gleaning program to encourage joint marketing. Person can buy CSA share to donate for food bank, this is a joint marketing opportunity.

Biggest impact is gleaning program, represents one third of 50-60K of produce donations. Gleaning programs haven't all survived, and in turn has negative impact on local gleaning group. Food bank needed to build new relationships with grower, are there for the long term.

Shannon – TCFB Gleaning Coordinator: Have 6-8 farms in community who we work with regularly. Can have regular day, or can come harvest when there is need. Some farms 600 lbs a year some are 12,000 lbs.

DB: Trying to capture data of what works and just launched an online resource guide. Can see how it worked in different communities. <http://rfhresourceguide.org/>

One of three Thurston County Commissioners: Robert is great example of what Thurston County has pushed recently, Robert is depending on local resources for food bank procurement. When economy imploded, part of recovery was to strengthen local economy, especially the food. The more we can do locally, the more we can help. This is an exciting conversation, commissioners are interested in expanding --- connect urban eaters with rural growers.

Shelley Bentley: owns farm in Thurston County, it was the food bank and gleaning program that helped get my farm up running. If wasn't for food bank, farm probably wouldn't be here. The program Robert started for winter produce. Mixed salad greens in wonderful winter crop. It was a great outlet for food that was grown and to be paid food for crop during that time of year could purchase seeds and supplies to plant spring crop, was significant benefit for small farm.

Q: When is the best time for banks to communicate with grower?

SB: Combination of a lot, face-to-face, approaching food bank. TCFB has advertised how the food bank can help, when farmers will be having a meeting. Significant to have growers to talk other growers, help bring other people in.

RC: Co-op brings in local growers, talk about market. We have growers meeting in community, to talk about crops, so everyone is not growing zucchini.

TSK: Networks and trade association that communicate for co-ops communicating.

National Co-Op association, could find regional events: <http://209-240-78-12.static.iphouse.net/>

National Cooperative Business Association: <http://www.ncba.coop/>

They also mentioned a coop directory, which I found online. Here is the link to the WA

page: <http://www.coopdirectory.org/directory.htm#Washington>.

Derek Valley – Co-chair of Kiwanis garden. On communications side, talk face-to-face, grower meeting is really important. Food Communication with state employees. About 25,000 square feet.

Is this model being shared throughout Kiwanis? Shelton Kiwanis, and Hood Canal are looking at similar model. It was recognized model.

RC: Produce is grown that gets tilled under, gleaning is one way to avoid that. Food Lifeline does the Grocery Rescue, encourages grocery chains to donate meat/dairy/produce perishables to emergency food system. Created program that honors what grocers are concerned about. 90 percent of meat we give out is from grocery rescue – was giving out steak and lobster – was thrown away before. Still a lot of education required. Need to treat donation like food, not as trash. Need system in place to take donations. Need to create systems and tiers for different recovery and food donations.

Dept of ecology also looking at waste stream – for humans and animals.

AO: Not just for growers, restaurants, buy large quantities that might go to waste.

Q: Any unique collaborative dist models could transfer some models into hunger relief effort and what are the gaps from moving produce to market?

AO: Unique Portland model, drive electric assist tricycles to haul, doing routed delivery in downtown core by bike. Moving a lot of product. Have created backhaul delivery, stopping at Whole Foods markets picking up stuff that'd go to waste and deliver to missions and food banks. Constantly moving product. Focused on what is available today and how can we use it now.

Currently talking with group based in Boston, looked like Food Hub competitor to match buyers and sellers. Business to use tech to create P2P for smaller growers, alternative. Have warehousing facility and trucks that operates from Princeton NJ to Southern Canada model. Licensing agreement for ideas. OrFoodEx

Stakeholder panel Q&A with audience (20 min)

*****Break*** (10 minutes)**

Breakout Group Work Session (50 min)

Split into groups between three workgroup tables. Harvest VISTA and remaining panelists will lead a conversation to identify challenges and opportunities in getting additional specialty crop produce items into hunger relief system.

- Identify current barriers
- Develop possible solutions or pilot models to overcome barriers

- Who needs to be involved, and how?
- How can WSDA, WA Food Coalition, Rotary First Harvest and others support these efforts?

Table groups brainstorm and capture/summarize information (20 minutes), present findings and suggest potential pilot models (15 minutes) and finish with inter-group Q & A (15 minutes).

Barriers:

- Liability issues w/ gleaning and Good Samaritan Act
 - (RFH is currently exploring position paper)
- Cost and compensation of product
- Capacity – storage and transportation
- Competition – how to look at the big picture and collaborate
 - Messaging
 - Share resources – trucking, storage, food, donors, etc.
- How to support low income farmers / mutual support / farmer incentives
- No one effective catchall to communicate with growers and farmers
- Farmer anonymity versus recognition
- Regulations
 - For example, the LDS Church closing some of their canneries
 - Rules re/ harvesting
 - Food handling regulations – if food not packaged or handled properly will go to waste
- No steady or regular supply of fresh/frozen produce
- Canned food donations vs. monetary or produce donations
- Public Perception
 - Who is coming into food banks
 - Farmers – food banks can't use my produce
 - General Public – food banks don't want produce
- Sustainability of programs
 - Staff /volunteer resources

Solutions:

- Farmers Market
 - Gleans or Donation Stations
 - “Pennies on Pound”
- Finding and engaging non-traditional partners
 - Military bases, hospitals, other large institutions
 - Prisons, Dept of Corrections – Superintendent of Public Instruction OSPI
- Best practices information bank
 - Good Samaritan Law
 - Teaching / Training gleaning skills
 - Blanket/Common insurance policy and protection
 - (Explore RFH be policy lead and members can buy in – pay for own membership, lower barrier costs for other entities)
 - Hand written and face-to-face thank you
 - Duplicating best practices

- WFC trainings, resource guide, webinars and manuals
- Tax incentives
 - Growers
 - Truckers
 - Storage – cold and dry and distribution
 - Packaging
- Communicating with growers how and what:
 - How: WSU Ext, Food-Hub, WSDA, radio, other media outlets
 - What: Need, existing infrastructure, competition
- Easy way to divert large donations to other food banks, share within regional network
- Create statewide competition among growers:
 - Best new donor, biggest donor
 - Governor’s Office? WSDA? Commissions?
- Increase Community Gardens
 - Kiwanis Gardens example in Olympia
 - RFH models
 - Mother Earth Farm in Tacoma
 - Vancouver Carrot Farm
 - Explore Area Summit on Community Gardens?
 - Master Gardeners, WSU Extension, VISTA Summer Associate Program
- Shared processing, storage facilities
 - USDA food hub model – <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/foodhubs>

Who should be Involved:

- Conservation District – growers have contact w/ land use (regulation side)
- Packing house field managers
- WSU Extension
- Granges
- Schools and farm to school program, other institutional produce users
- Funding sources to support pilots
- Farm Bill?

Take Away Ideas / Possible Pilots: (Must be understandable and achievable)

- 1) Farmer focus groups (WSDA and RFH)
 - a. WSDA sponsored “Growers Guide to Donating” as a follow-up
- 2) Use food-hub.org as an information disseminator – can also be an electronic place to warehouse information – or another third party site?
- 3) Develop strategic approach on the food bank side (WFC) – messaging, what to do w/ large donations
- 4) More experimental mechanism to get process information needed than a focus group
- 5) Working with main packing houses to increase and improve contact with field managers