Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council's Report to the Governor's Office, the Commissioner of Agriculture, and the General Assembly for October 1, 2011.

Per the requirements of Senate Bill 10-106, this report on the happenings of the recently formed Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council (COFSAC) is being provided to update Governor John Hickenlooper and his office, Commissioner of Agriculture John Salazar, and the State of Colorado's General Assembly.

History

The Council was formed in early 2010 when Governor Bill Ritter signed into law Senate Bill 106: Creation of Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council. Senate Bill 106 was sponsored by Senator Bob Bacon (D-***District 14***) and Representative Marsha Looper (R-***District 19***). The creation of the bill was based on recommendations included in the Food Policy Blueprint, a report commissioned by LiveWell Colorado in 2009, and on a September 2009 report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, which included the development of food policy councils as a key strategy for increasing community food access. COFSAC is charged with fostering a healthy food supply available to all residents while enhancing the state's agricultural and natural resources, encouraging economic growth, expanding the viability of agriculture, and improving the health of our communities and residents.

Appointments

The following individuals are currently appointed to COFSAC. See Appendix 1 for a brief biography of each representative.

Jane C. Brand, R.D., S.N.S.
Nutrition Unit Director
Colorado Department of Education
State Agency Representative

Mary Lou Chapman
President & CEO
Rocky Mountain Food Industry Association
Food Wholesaler/Retailer Representative, 2yr term

Amber Clay
Farmer, Bookkeeper
Agricultural Production Representative, 2yr term

Patricia M. Daniluk, M.S., R.D.
Nutrition Services and WIC Director
Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment
State Agency Representative

Karen Falbo, C.N.
Nutrition Program Manager
Natural Grocers by Vitamin Cottage
Nutrition and Health Representative, 3yr term

Jim Isgar
State Director
USDA Rural Development
Rural/Community/Economic Development Representative., 3yr term

Pat Kendall, Ph.D., R.D.
Associate Dean for Research
College of Applied Human Sciences
Professor, Food Science and Human Nutrition
Colorado State University
Nutrition and Health Representative, 2yr term

Julie Kerksick
Director, Office of Economic Security
Colorado Department of Human Services
State Agency Representative

Barbara Marty
Farmer
Agricultural Production Representative, 3yr term

Jim Miller
Deputy Commissioner
Colorado Department of Agriculture
State Agency Representative

Ruth Stemler, M.S., R.D.
Director
Share Our Strength Colorado
Anti-Hunger/Food Assistance
Representative, 3yr term

Cynthia Torres
Director
Colorado Farmers' Market Association
Food Wholesaler/Retailer Representative, 3yr term

Linda Yoder
Agriculture Producer
Agricultural Production Representative, 2yr term

Meetings & Events to Date

Governor Ritter appointed all council members in the fall of 2010. After gathering for an informal meet-and-greet in December 2010, the Council initiated its regular meetings in January 2011.

- At the first official meeting on January 27, 2011, Jim Miller was elected to chair COFSAC, and Ruth Stemler was elected to vice-chair. Operating policies and procedures were reviewed and passed.
- A series of informational webinars on food systems councils and the state of food and agriculture policy was conducted for the Council in March and April 2011.
- A food systems orientation was held on March 24, 2011 for council members at Colorado State University with presentations on key elements and drivers of the Colorado agriculture industry; getting healthy, Colorado foods to consumers; and getting usable data into the hands of communities. See Appendix 2 for a full agenda.
- An all-day strategic planning session was held on May 26, 2011 with a professional facilitator to define and co-create a visual of Colorado's food systems and to write objectives for a 2011 work plan. See Appendix 3 for the work plan that emerged from this process.
- On August 11 and 12, 2011, many members of COFSAC and one member of the Farm-to-School Task Force participated in a brief tour of some of Colorado's food systems, including stops, tours, and meetings in Summit County, the North Fork Valley, the Arkansas River Valley, Canon City, and Colorado Springs. See Appendix 4 for a complete tour agenda.

Targeted Activities of the Council

The work plan developed in May 2011 guided the formation of three subcommittees: Communications, Economic Development, and Healthy Food Access. These subcommittees are comprised of council members and non-council members, including several representatives from the Farm-to-School Task Force (mandated by Senate Bill 10-81, the "Farm-to-School Healthy Kids Act"). See Appendix 5 for a list of subcommittee representatives.

Communications Efforts:

- The Council has begun development of a website and several promotional materials to better communicate the activities of the Council. The website will serve as a resource for current information on the COFSAC as well as for current information about regional and local food systems coalitions. Visit www.cofoodsystemscouncil.org to view the current website. See Appendix 6 for the most recent promotional flier.

Economic Development Efforts:

- To learn more about specific economic development opportunities and needs for producers interested in gaining entry or expansion into Colorado markets, the COFSAC will be hosting a series of economic development summits beginning in the fall of 2011. Two summits are planned for December, one in Longmont and another in Pueblo.
- The intention of these summits is to hear from farmers, ranchers, food processors, and agriculture support groups about various business models and market strategies that could open new or strengthen existing markets within the state.

Healthy Food Access Efforts:

- The Healthy Food Access subcommittee is convening additional in-depth food systems and food access orientations and partner discussions.
- Colorado Farmers Market Association, Colorado Department of Human Services, and Share Our Strength are exploring how to work together to increase access to Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) infrastructure at farmers' markets across the state.

Next Steps

More detailed reports will be submitted to the House Health and Environment Committee; the Senate Health and Human Services Committee; the House Agriculture, Livestock, and Natural Resources Committee; and the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee or their successor committees by January 31, 2012, as mandated by Senate Bill 10-106. This report will include a summary of findings, recommendations, and any ideas ripe for policy action.