



Oregon Solutions
Lincoln City Food Project Meeting Minutes
January 7, 2009; 3 -5 pm

Present: Mayor Lori Hollingsworth, Rob Pounding, Mike Barnes, Mike Forrest, Joyce Thompson Graham, Tilly Miller, Sharon Wiest, Isaac Knott, Carol Moore, JoDana Bright Taylor, Sam Angima, Judy Pelletier, Neil Jensen, Sandy Pfaff, Rebecca Flaming, Rosemarie Cordello. Visiting: Elizabeth Black, Larry Miller (Lincoln City Cultural Center).

Absent: Randy Walker, Dave Schaefer, Chris Christiansen, Max Hamblin, David Hawker, Jim De La Rosa

Commercial Buyers' Needs

Mike from Price 'n Pride explained that the store buys in large quantity. Currently, when they buy organic food, it is not fresh by the time it gets there. They would like to showcase the food on a separate rack designating that it is locally produced. Their needs are for a good quantity of fresh and presentable food, reliably delivered.

Isaac from Camp Westwind – the camp now gets produce from FSA. They've also gotten a small quantity of local food from Hugh Pickering and Siletz River Ranch. Their needs are for a larger quantity of local food at a price the camp can afford.

Rob from Blackfish Café – already buys salad green, hard vegetables, meats, cheeses, herbs and mushrooms from local sources. Fish, meat and fruit are difficult to get. His cook staff has learned to cook with the ingredients available in the season. As a veteran of buying local, he has faced the following challenges: consistency in delivery and product, lack of consistent hard vegetables (greens are easier to get), the cost of the food, and staff's ability to adapt to what's available. His goal is to get all food from within a 100 mile radius.

Rob works with Hugh Radcliff, who grows crops for him as needed. Every week, Hugh delivers on time with products he describes a few days beforehand. Hugh has the potential to do more direct selling.

Joyce from Lincoln County Food Share would like to get fresh local food for her clients. The food would need to last four or five days. The facility has coolers. She wants to consider a pre-buying relationship with a farmer like Rob has. For example, similar to a CSA, if she committed to paying \$500 a week, she could count on a certain amount of food weekly. She needs consistent delivery of a predictable amount of food per week. Food Share's pantries are open 5 days a week.

Sharon from the Culinary Center already buys local food, mostly through Rob. She recently got chicken from Walker Farms. Her goal is to buy much of her food locally and to educate her customers about where the food comes from.

Where are the producers and how do we reach them?

Sam from Lincoln County OSU Extension brought two lists of farmers. One lists vendors at the County's farmers markets and the other is people owning farmland in the County who may or may not be farming it. He said there are several challenges to growing in the region, including climate and the current age of most farmers (average age is 55). While there is "1000%" demand for local food, there are not enough farmers to meet the demand.

Currently the motivation of farmers to serve the local market, or even to grow at all, is low. However he believes that once farmers are aware of how many outlets are available for selling their food, they would meet the challenge. The key is to put farmers and buyers in the same room.

Sam is developing a database where farmers can post what produce they have available and when, and buyers can post what they need. In this way, buyer and seller are brought together.

We discussed whether it would be fruitful to link up people on farmland they aren't using, perhaps seniors, with young farmers who want to grow but lack land. JoDana said that at the community garden program, she meets many seniors who would be receptive to making land available to young farmers. Camp Westwind also has 17 acres of land available that they want to cultivate in crops.

Neil Jensen said that he has a list of 107 licensed restaurants, exclusive of fast food places, in the County. That is a potential larger source of business.

Lincoln City Farmers Market

Carol shared the results of dot surveys and customer counts. Surveying at 3 markets during the 2007 season, surveyors found that 1000 people on average shopped at the market on a given day, spending around \$20 (though the 1000 figure is subject to some interpretation). Also, while most customers are from the area, a significant number are tourists. It also showed that most customers come to the market to buy food, with only a small number coming for the crafts.

The market gets customers by advertising in Oregon Coast magazine and by word of mouth. It generates \$1,468,000 in revenue. There are 10 food vendors, most from within 100 miles. The market has been open four years and is becoming more and more successful. It runs from May through September (18 weeks).

Elizabeth Black from the Cultural Center, which hosts the market, says the Center appreciates having the market there. It is much more convenient for them to host it on

Sunday. Carol also queried current vendors about their preferences and many said they preferred Sundays since they had other markets on Saturday.

Carol says the market can be improved by making contact with new growers and community gardeners to increase the number of vendors. She agreed that a survey of Lincoln City residents was a good idea, to learn their preferences for the market and what mix of vendors works best.

Next Steps:

1. Sam is having a training for farmers in mid-March. He will enlarge that gathering to include more farmers and the buyers who are interested in purchasing from them. This is a chance for buyers and sellers to meet and for sellers to realize they have a ready market for their products.
2. Customer surveys at a few locations where people gather: Feb. Jambalaya Cook-off at the Culinary Center, the community center, a grocery store and at a few school events.
3. Farmers market vendor surveys to assess what days and times they could come to market, what interest and capacity they have to diversify products, etc.

We agreed to coordinate this work by email between this meeting and our next meeting. Rosemarie will begin that process.

Next meeting: Wednesday, Feb. 4, 3 – 5 pm, same location