

Flip Chart Notes -- Strategic Planning Forum #5 @ London
Shiloh Steakhouse (relocated from Extension Office due to flooding
Task Force of the Future of Kentucky Agriculture and Rural Communities
Kentucky Agricultural Council
9/4/12

Question: How will the outreach to schools goals / actions be accomplished? By whom? Need for focus on coordination.

Don't leave out local school boards – they need to be involved or else the recommended initiatives / changes / improvements for Ag Education won't happen.

Our area has a low [declining] tax base – so Ag teacher positions get cut by the School Boards.

We need Ag teachers . . . every county has lost them in the last 5 years.

Need to include “Frankfort” [State Department of Education] to influence local Boards

There are processing facilities in the region (Williamsburg) – however, the cost of meeting USDA regulatory requirements, inspections, paperwork is an obstacle. Could there be programs to provide technical assistance or funding to help processors deal with these regulatory aspects?

Career opportunities in agriculture need to be inventoried ... kids who might consider ag careers need access to this information; also, the potential areas of employment need to be “real” before we sell kids on these avenues.

Market demand for certain career tracks needs to be validated

There is need for more cheese processing facilities in this area.

Need support for Dairy in general.

Need micro processing capabilities

We have no arborists in this area.

Small producers don't know about all the grants that are available – how to get more information to them?

There is a need to promote “wholesome eating” as a way to build market demand for produce and fruits.

The strategic plan needs to place heavy emphasis on value-added opportunities

Need for “market-ready” training . . . programs exists [at KFB?], but need to be expanded

Need to get myths out of the way. . . producers need to meet with wholesalers – need for producers to learn what it takes to get products to market.

Challenges for the farmers market side of the business: there is a mis-match in some areas that don't have enough vendors / producers, versus areas that don't have a sufficient customer base.

Farm markets won't / can't absorb all that we produce . . . how can we get wholesalers to buy the surplus?
Need to develop producer-to-wholesaler channels . . . Remember, all the produce grown in Florida isn't bought there!

Other states (North Carolina) manage to export their surplus

Lack of companies to SELL our product to in the dairy business, plus process are set by the government.

Price we are offered doesn't cover the cost of production.

Produce farming doesn't generate enough revenue to pay for a tractor.

There is no entitlement to being a farmer.

Markets have to be real . . . with tobacco, people knew where they could sell it and it gave higher returns.

Industrial hemp . . . it's interesting but is there a real market for it? We need more education on this if people are going to get in the business.

Who represents the small farmers within this process?

Topic #5 (Next Generation Farming) should be the #1 priority for this plan

Question: Is the focus of the Plan on large [industrial] farms or on small farms / farmers?

How to grow the pie?

Question: How can we make information about farm programs more available? E.g. Farm-Start?

There is need for more awareness that KADF funding is being eaten up by debt service on water lines. If this funding could be restored the dollars would be there to fund the kinds of regional projects and initiatives being discussed in this plan.

The emphasis on water is important. We need strategies to protect / promote "on-farm water" . . . need to work with NRCS and other agencies on this.

Who write legislation on Agriculture that gets considered by the General Assembly? Who reviews this legislation?

The challenge of addressing the on-farm Water issue: We have no Farm Bill; KADF funding is limited; NRCS lacks funding . . . we need to turn this situation around.

Agri-tourism . . . don't overlook this . . . we are trying to do this in Laurel County.

Testimonial (from non-ag participants): We recently paid \$5 to visit a farm and it was a great learning experience about how a farm really works, about how different farm outputs become inputs for other aspects of farming.