

**Flip Chart Notes -- Strategic Planning Forum #6 @ Morehead
Morehead State University Derrickson Agricultural Complex
Task Force of the Future of Kentucky Agriculture and Rural Communities
Kentucky Agricultural Council
9/5/12**

“Environmental” issues need emphasis within the plan. It needs to be “data-based” . . . good information needs to get out to the public.

Reaction to Youth Ambassadors: Ag programs in the classroom are among the first to get cut. How will we be able to implement such an initiative? The Schools are the feeder system . . .

How to be proactive instead of reactive [to issues, to the media . . .]?

Need to teach more [educate the public] about the use of “technology” in agriculture . . . there is a concern by consumers that technology does NOT make food safer . . . there is mis-information going to consumers.

Technology can be more efficient but ALSO make food supply SAFER

There is the myth of the “happy farm”, that is not the reality . . . Consumers don’t get accurate information about what farming really is like.

People seem to forget: “Farmers are in business to make a profit” . . . not just to “Feed People” [e.g. they are financially motivated, not just doing something altruistic]. The public doesn’t understand this.

Even in rural areas, people don’t seem to understand the importance of Agriculture.

Issue of the age at which we begin to reach people [with information about farming] . . . High School is too late . . . by that time, kids already think they don’t want to go into Ag careers.

How can we best teach “Agricultural issues”? We need to broaden the definition of agriculture.

Example of having high school Ag students go to elementary schools to teach units on agriculture . . . this has been done in Scott County, is very successful as a way to educate, communicate.

Do students realize that “Ag” can also be part of the “science” department?

Regulations make it harder for institutions to buy directly from producers.

In today’s classroom, there is a declining number of kids who LIVE on farms, within the same school system, versus 10 years ago or more.

A Superintendent did away with the Ag program in one county . . . he reportedly said: “We have the budget, but convince me that we need it”.

Question: How would you educate [non-farm] students if the Ag programs are stopped. There is a rumor in one county that the Superintendent is going to end the program.

Ohio has a model with an Ag learning segment that starts in middle school.

I've had Ag classes since Kindergarten . . . that's why I'm here [in a university Ag program]!

Students [K- 12] need more "hands-on" experiences with agriculture, like growing gardens.

Kentucky Dairy Development Council has several programs:

Mobile trailer for taken educational module on the road . . . Run through KDA . . . "Kentucky KATE" . . . aimed at 5th, 6th graders

There is a history behind programs like this [why it was developed] that people need to understand . . . It was responding to KERA, and the de-emphasis on Ag education within the regular school programs . . . Kids were not getting Ag education at school.

There is a need to work with the State Department of Education to get them to understand the importance of Ag Education.

There are Food Bank initiatives that can take more of the farm surplus product

Clearinghouse idea: A way to get more information out there [to producers] . . . streamline the process for finding information about new market opportunity and development techniques. One location; involve all the university Ag schools. The information is "out there" but there are too many hoops involved for the producer to find it.

Next Generation Farmers: it may be a lifestyle, versus a purely economic choice – "It's what they want to do".

Young people want to do something they love.

How to address the sheer expense aspects of getting into the business?

It's an unusual business to get into . . . [in terms of capital requirements].

Key ingredients of the farming start-up process need to be understood.

We need profiles of young farmers who started "from scratch".

Need for starting farmers to have 2nd jobs . . . but it can make it work!

Importance of role models . . . inspirational models.