

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS - *responses*
RED MESA FOOD FORUM
August 30th, 2006

1) **What could we do to increase the profitability for existing farms and ranches?**

Land availability..... and education on demand and What to plant,

- **Land-link** – Network between landowners and non-owners or small-owner producers to make use of land, production, and water (b/w those with resources with those w/out resources)
- **PROJECT: Local exposure marketing campaign** – that emphasizes local value-added production in terms of maintaining lifestyle and culture (maintain the culture of the Southwest, the history – the food history)
- **Water:** get it to those involved in food production.
- **Growth plan:** businesses, homes, and farms are given appropriate access to water. Finding out who has the water rights – map of who has access/rights to water.
- **Crops planted according to the water supply where they are planted.** Drought tolerant crops. Using water-wise practices. Plants that work in the environment. Right plant for the right place.
- Awareness of the **demand for local agricultural products** and let farmers know what specific products people are looking for.
- **PROJECT:** Mushrooms.
- **PROJECT:** More education on ‘what you can grow’ given the type of land and amount of water.
- **Fuel crops:** San Juan Bio-diesel.
- **Youth in agriculture.**
- **Organic certification is expensive.**
 - o Telluride FM idea.
 - o Certified Naturally Grown – farmers certifying other growers.
- **Website marketing class at FLC** – Steve Sovell, marketing professor.
- **Value-added agriculture.**

2) **What can we do to encourage more local agricultural production in our region?**

Key stakeholders, collaboration, organization, networks, local government, etc. incorporating into city and county politics and planning efforts....

- **Build ag production into efforts into our organizations think tanks.** I.e. LEADs strategic plan. Our local community development/economic development plans, chamber activities.
- **PROJECT:** Provide presentations to organizations

- 'Farms-to-school is cool.'
- **PROJECT:** 'Dog and Pony Shows' to non-ag related organizations. Kwanis, OHC, Chamber After Hours, Leadership La Plata.
- **Comment:** '*Sunflowers do not have a long enough growing season in Red Mesa District for Bio-diesel.*'
- **Water issues:** Domestic water, tribal water.
- **Grass Roots Visioning Fair:** Katherine Holt.
- **Comment:** '*Farmers need time to respond to demand. Producers are behind the curve. You can try to reach them by conventional home mailings – producers have a stubbornness about them. Producers also do not like change.*'
- **Farm and Ranch Show** – Fair grounds – make a pitch to producers at this venue about potential markets.

3) What can we do to encourage new producers?

EDUCATION, ECONOMIC AND INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEMANTIC SUPPORT-FARMERS MARKET, SUBSIDIES, COOP/COMMUNITY – LAND LINK

- **County to provide more hands-on help.**
- **Subsidies for farmers.**
- **Website.**
- **Access to water rights** – look at policies that support water access for agricultural production.
- Talk with **landowners who are interested in leasing their land.** Preferably those landowners with water.
- **Farmers' market on a weekday evening.**
- More cooperation to establish **a community garden in the Red Mesa District** – dry side of county.
- Central **network or resource that producers can go to for information and/or support.**
- Water.
- Weed information.
- Sharing water rights.
- Cooperative gardens.

4) How is access to food resources different in an rural area versus an urban area?

- Geographically challenging.
- **PROJECT:** Needs organization such as a cooperative pick-up and trade opportunity.
- Shop rurally.
- **PROJECT:** "Come home" Campaign
- Networking and connecting
- Food trade.
- Challenges?? "Licensing – seasonal – affordable.'

- Purchasing distance.
- **PROJECT:** Local grocery store
- **PROJECT:** Senior transportation
- Wednesday evening FM with other vendors, brew fest.
 - o Location – could be on the river...
- DISTANCE.

What community food projects could help this?

- Direct marketing to restaurants.
- Wednesday evening market – with beer garden, musicians, and food.
- A website to link producers and consumers. Craig’s List – which is free for the users. (Four Corners Ag.com)
- Grange meetings (surplus).
- Local grocery stores.
- Farm Tours for seniors or Senior Center Distribution.
- A CSA distribution.
- Welcome baskets for newcomers to the area filled with local agricultural products.
- Roadside stand.
- Seniors to have transportation one day/week.
- Bulletin board at the school library.

What resources are necessary to implement these ideas?

- Time/money/support from the city.
- Marketing help.
- Outside vendors to buy into Wednesday market idea.
- Time.

☞ Growing Partners of Southwest Colorado
 ☞ Community Food Forum
 ☞ Hesperus, Colorado
 ☞ August 30, 2006

Food Forum Mini Survey

In a few words, answer each of the following questions on the index cards provided. Please be brief with your responses.

List one aspect or example in our local food system that you are excited about:

Local food products in various retail outlets; farmers markets, store, restaurants,

1. Local products at Red Mesa

2. Farmers Market
3. Local Health food Stores
4. Local food in restaurants
5. Fruits and Veggies and knowing where it comes from
6. Local and or organic foods, including meats available
7. That we can grow products that are in demand
8. The potential to shift the typically suburban mindset/culture to a rural based set of values that influence choices
9. The opportunity to be part of it
10. Excited about- level in interest in sustainable food
11. FFA in High School Mr. Ortiz
12. Teaching people to eat closer to the source and from local sources.
13. Community gardens/farm-to-school projects
14. More CSAs
15. Farmers Market
16. Eggs/cheese/milk/meat "rural exchange"; ecoversity; local regional certification
17. Local farm market & rural store (Denise's store)
18. Better quality food
19. Finding ways to produce and preserve food locally in an energy efficient way – for example, drying food.
20. Extended farmers' market mid-way to mid-October, November and December
21. Farmers Market
22. Networking of parties; ideas to promote local foods in city
23. Direct marketing (almost all of our "ag system" is locked into commodity production/ Buying "locally" – maybe SW Colorado

List one food issue (or food need) we could improve upon in La Plata County:

More food production, through education with growers and consumers on how to increasing production, policies to increase, working with access, and affordability,.... Putting various groups together- networking to increase all of the above!

1. Exchange amongst producers
2. More local food available more often
3. Affordability
4. Need water to grow food: catch water systems and grey water
5. local pork and chickens
6. Getting the word out!

7. Develop incentives for more/better marketing an agricultural production
8. Consumer access and fruit purchase
9. We have an economic Dev Ethic with groups- region 9/ LEAD/ Chamber, but we rarely link food/ag/ranch ethics together
10. MORE local food.
11. Get info into Newsletter from Farm Bureau and Co. Extension Office for the producers regarding the demand and product destination
12. Work at policy level to facilitate farming/ranching and marketing of their product
13. Good nutrition for all; particularly young and elderly
14. Rural west side farmers market
15. Production!! Cost of land/lack of water limits production/distance to available space
16. Food availability to the working poor
17. Education on putting diet knowledge to use in food choices
18. Community education about food production in urban and semi-urban areas
19. Root cellaring
20. More variety
21. Unneeded, illogical bureaucratic regulations
22. More producers of most products

Provide one suggestion on how *you* might contribute or improve the food issue described above.

Individual giving, increased production (growing for more than individual use), leading by example increased sharing

1. Edible Landscape
2. Try to provide another food source by getting our farm up and running; promote farm tours and education/ schools and seniors
3. Produce for more than ourselves
4. I would love to grow food, but I can't cause no water
5. As a relatively affluent consumer, I'd not hesitate to invest in better food that also supports the local ag. community
6. Marketing through my work and through planning
7. Knowledge of landowners in area
8. Providing flyers and word of mouth
9. I am seeing the "local option" for foods more and more
10. I am going to start seeking out local sources and tell others

11. Cooperate with my neighbors to use my land to contribute to system
12. Talk to candidates for office and elected officials
13. If Riverview parcel were to become a community garden, I would contribute my labor
14. Work at or assist farmers and CSAs
15. I would like to become a local producer and also get more involved in efforts to increase production through increasing farmers markets/CSAs (consolidation of growers); farm link programs to link land owners with producers; low-income access (senior coupons, WIC, low-income shares, etc.)
16. Adopt a family to give excess garden food to
17. Website as a tool to link supply with demand
18. Through service learning and research/education projects through Fort Lewis College
19. Community root cellar run/operated by someone who knows root-cellarling and can begin teaching those who store food there
20. Frequent farmers market more frequently, develop hybrids that don't need much water!
21. Activism to change laws, education (i.e. Colorado raw milk bill)
22. "Sell" producers on local marketing

What would you like to see at the next food forum?

1. Fiber, which can be valued added from meat breeds
2. Constructive planning on 'how to's' for up and coming farms and struggling existing farms
3. People that want to farm connecting with people who have land.
4. More of what you are doing, keep up the good work!
5. A test at the school for the farm to school program, meat, apples, something?
6. Nutritional comparisons between locally grown and supermarket produce
7. More examples of how this works
8. Comprehensive inventory of local producers and marketing sources
9. Time for producers to develop a network
10. Would like to see a panel of who is doing what in the "*field.*" - pun intentional
11. Discussion of supply. Need to market, buy local!
12. Talk about cost of packaging and processing versus eating more whole foods; Would this make local foods more affordable?

13. A directory of usable, producible lands available to those interested in production
14. Progress report
15. Give us a little more notice and encouragement to provide various elements of the "meal"; Thanks to those who provided our food tonight!
16. Food/Fiber forum
17. More great Turtle Lake treats
18. I'm very excited to hear results of the assessment
19. Who local producers are and what they have available
20. Planning for the future – how will the things learned through the assessment be implemented; concrete ideas for the future; time and money – how to increase production, who to talk with, etc.