



# Community Based Agricultural Development

An of Overview of the Concepts, Tools and Resources to Broaden Engagement in Agricultural Issues

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# Agenda

- Overview of the Issues and Trends
- Why Are Community Based Responses Important?
- Key Concepts
- Community Based Tools and Strategies
- Resources Available
- Discussion



# The Changing Face of Agriculture

- Farmers and getting less of the food dollar
  - Changing market conditions, consumer preferences, processing, and the rise of contract farming
- Fewer and fewer firms control the production, processing and marketing
- Prices increasingly being determined by global market forces
- Farm profits continue to decline
- U.S. still dominated by small farms – in number only
- Increasing competition for land - loss of farmland
- Increasing environmental concerns
- Increasing pessimism regarding agriculture and the family farm's future



## The Role of Agriculture in Our Communities

- Provides jobs as it purchases inputs and services locally – high multiplier effects
- Provide large share of many communities' tax base – and generally costs less in services than it generates in revenue
- Preserve open space, aquifer recharge areas, wildlife habitat, and biodiversity
- Residents, by wide margins, view agriculture as an integral to the “rural quality of life” they want to preserve
- Are integral aspects of many communities' history, economy, society, culture, and rural “quality of life”



## What Constitutes a “Community Based” Effort?

*Responses, considerations, and involvement of the public, the public sector, economic development interests, non-agricultural businesses and civic organizations in issues related to the role, safety, quality, and sustainability of agriculture and its products in our communities.*



# Why Are Community Based Responses Important?

- Agriculture is an integral component of our economy, society, environment, tax base, and community.
- Individual producers and producer groups can not do it on their own.
- Agriculture both *influences* and is *influenced* by community and economic developments.



# Goals of Community Based Agricultural Development

- ✘ Connecting agriculture with general community planning and economic development efforts
- ✘ Educating the public and policymakers about agriculture issues and opportunities
- ✘ To expand the political base of agriculture
- ✘ To ensure consistency between agriculture and community development goals
- ✘ Developing new marketing and value-adding opportunities for farmers, including direct connections between local farmers and consumers
- ✘ Strengthening the entrepreneurial, marketing and management skills and options of farmers and future farmers
- ✘ Developing the synergies between agriculture, tourism, regional cuisine, cultural heritage, and community quality of life
- ✘ Enhancing the environmental impacts of agriculture and preserving attractive working landscapes
- ✘ Establish and implement proactive strategies for ensuring the future of farming



## Key Concepts

- Community food systems
- Food security
- Value-added agriculture
- Direct marketing
- Public policy
- Community Indicators



# Positive Changes & Opportunities

- Changing consumer preferences
- Growing public awareness
- Growing proximity to markets
- Increasingly responsive producers
- Changing marketing and processing options
- Information technology opportunities
- Consumers are increasingly “voting with their dollars” – creating a large and growing constituency



# Strategies & Responses

- ✘ Planning for agricultural viability
- ✘ Business planning and capital investment
- ✘ Loan programs and economic development
- ✘ Developing consumer recognition of the role of agriculture
- ✘ Coordination with ag land preservation programs
- ✘ Buy Local Campaigns
- ✘ Direct marketing
- ✘ Farmers Markets
- ✘ Community Supported Agriculture
- ✘ Marketing to restaurants and other food retailers
- ✘ Diversification
- ✘ Processing Incubators
- ✘ New products and marketing strategies
- ✘ Agritourism
- ✘ Cooperatives
- ✘ Reducing the costs of production



## Planning for agricultural viability

- Incorporating ag business strategies into traditional economic development plans
- Ensuring that agriculture is fully addressed in local comprehensive plans
- Ensuring that the impacts of local ordinances and regulations take into account the needs of farmers
- Actively seeking the input of farmers regarding local and public policy issues that affect them
- Conflict resolution, public policy education, strategic planning/visioning



# Business planning and capital investment

- Ensuring that local farmers and ag businesses have access to the technical resources and assistance they need
- Ensuring access to grants, loans, cost share, tax incentives and other capital investments based on sound business plans
- Ensuring that agricultural producers, processors, and retailers are actively engaged in local economic development activities and resources



# Agricultural Land Preservation Efforts

- Conservation Easement Purchases
- Effective Agricultural Zoning
- Transfer of Development Rights
- Differential Tax Assessment and other covenants
- Ensuring ag operations are considered in land use planning and regulatory designs – e.g. local ordinances etc.



## Helping Residents Understand Ag in Their Community

- Helping residents understand and appreciate the role ag plays in the economy, the tax base, the environment, and society
- Multipliers and agriculture's economic impact
- Helping residents understand the imperatives and issues involved in agriculture and the needs that farmers have
- Assisting residents in understanding their role and opportunities for helping local agriculture thrive



# Building Direct Marketing Options

- Farmers Markets
- Community Supported Agriculture
- Ensuring ordinances don't impede pick-your-own operations, roadside stands etc.
- Marketing assistance and publicity
- Connecting producers with food purchasing institutions (restaurants, schools etc)
- Buy Local Campaigns
- Food Buying Clubs, Food Circles, Regional Networks etc.



## Ensuring Effective Local Produce Mix & Opportunities

- Targeting new markets
- Promoting local product diversity
- Developing new products
- Seeking alternative processing options
- Assessing innovative value-added opportunities



# Expanding Enterprise Options

- Agri-tourism
- Grower cooperatives
- Helping growers reduce costs



## Roles & Opportunities for Extension and Research

- Provision of information and research findings
- Public policy education
- Facilitating local discussions
- Coordinating local efforts
- Focusing research on related topics and information gaps
- Strengthening farmer-non farmer relationships



# A Few of The Many Good Resources

- **Adding Values to Our Food System: *An Economic Analysis of Sustainable Community Food Systems*** <http://www.ibiblio.org/farming-connection/foodsyst/addval.htm#summary>
- **Growing Home: A Guide to Reconnecting Agriculture, Food and Communities.** Joanna Green and Duncan Hilchey, Cornell
- **What's Cooking in Your Food System? A Guide to Community Food Systems** Community Food Security Coalition (310) 822-5410
- **Adding Value for Sustainability: A Guide for Extension Agents and Other Agricultural Professionals.** NERCRD
- **Cardi Toolbox: Agricultural Economic Development** [http://www.cdtoolbox.org/agriculture\\_economic\\_development/index.html](http://www.cdtoolbox.org/agriculture_economic_development/index.html)