

Food Policy Issues in Western NC: Summary of Survey Results

November 2, 2012

A survey of partners to the NC policy committee of the Appalachian Foodshed Project (AFP) was conducted in the third quarter of 2012. Eight responses were received and formed the basis for the summary that was presented by Shivaugn Rayl, Policy Director at the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, to the AFP working group on November 2 at the Yancey County Extension office in Burnsville, NC. The summary Shivaugn prepared is provided below. The full results of the survey are available for review on request from Angel Cruz (aecruz@ncsu.edu).

Most Pressing Needs in the Food System

Six issues were identified in the answer to the question "What is the most pressing, critical need in your community and how do you think local food and farming relate to that need?".

1. Alleviating food insecurity
2. Meeting increasing demand for local food
3. Ensuring public transportation facilitates food access
4. Creating and retaining living wage jobs
5. Addressing chronic diseases linked to diet and nutrition
6. Providing education on Good Agriculture Practices (GAP)

What Needs to Change?

Respondents were asked "What is the one thing you would like to change about the food system in your community?". The answers were grouped into these themes:

- Improving the accessibility of farmers market, by expanding hours or accepting EBT or both
- Securing local-food purchase commitments from institutions, stores, and schools
- Providing more GAP certification and food safety training for small farms
- Bringing on young farmers

What Resources are Needed?

Repondents were asked "What resources or services does your community need to make improvements in its food system?" The answers were grouped into these themes:

- Additional processing capacity and/or food hub
- Improvements in public transportation
- A strong, organized network
- Small grower GAP audit trainings
- Beginning farmer support

Next Steps

This summary will be circulated with stakeholders in Western North Carolina and within the NC AFP policy working group to understand whether there is agreement about these issues, changes and necessary resources and to identify any additional top priorities. Ultimately, these priorities will direct the efforts of the NC AFP policy working group in the region.