

MINUTES

Illinois Farmers Market Task Force

Meeting Minutes

November 29, 2012

Present: Pat Stieren, Susan Bostanche, Robert Haughland, Wil Hayes, Stacey Bailey, April Caulk, Pat Welch, Diane Handley, Kendra Buchanan, Sharon Valentine, Laura Hepp Kessel, Roxanne Junge, Kevin Dixon

Next meeting: January 9, 2013 10am-3pm, Crowne Plaza, 3000 S. Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, IL

I. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the August 1, 2012 meeting were briefly discussed but not approved. Please review so that we can approve them at the January 9, 2013 meeting.

II. Announcements

A. Illinois Specialty Crops, Agritourism and Organic Conference is January 9-11, 2013 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel & Convention Center, 3000 S. Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, IL.

B. Healthy Farms, Healthy People Conference went well. It was a great networking opportunity.

C. The IFMTF Annual Report made it through Communications Committee and is at the IDPH Director's Office. Not sure if any changes are needed at this time.

D. All members of the IFMTF need to register for the State Web Portal online. How to register is in the packet given at the meeting. Please register before the next meeting so that we can have IDPH demonstrate how the portal can be used for the Task Force. The website is www.idphnet.illinois.gov. All our documents will be posted on here. Some things to remember when registering are that for your organization put where you work and then for Department put IFMTF.

E. IDPH looking into incubator or shared kitchens to develop a list of sites.

III. Discussion

A. Surveys

1. Market Manager Surveys –

a) 59 people responded which is only 18% of market managers

b) Some highlights of the survey were as follows:

(1) About half of the market managers are volunteers which was felt to be significant because some thought that a paid manager may take more time to research regulations.

(2) About 70% of the market managers had been doing the job for less 5 years or less. **What does this mean? Markets are new? Managers get burned out easy?**

(3) Types of vendors participating at farmers markets question was surprising to see that 44% sell farm products from other sources than their own farms. Also that 62% of vendors were artists or crafters.

(4) There were several questions regarding the types of products sold at markets and there estimated percent of vendors selling that product. **These questions may need reworded. It was felt that the percentage of vendors selling produce was low.**

(5) 40 out of 56 markets said there vendors use mechanical refrigeration to keep perishable foods cold. This question asked to check all that apply which also included 30 markets using cubed ice, 15 use dry ice, and 8 use non-mechanical refrigeration for keeping perishable foods cold. **Keep in mind the numbers and not the percentages in this question.**

(6) Accessibility to restrooms is addressed in a question which brings up hand washing easily accessible issue. **We need to look at the regulations and discuss what is easily accessible for vendors.**

(7) 35 out of 57 markets have vendors that do sampling, cooking or other food preparation. This was addressed in a few questions. **Need to discuss how to do sampling properly.**

(8) It was felt to be a good sign and interesting that 90% of those that considered it applicable, working with the LHD (local health department) regarding arranging cooking or sampling was fairly easy or better. In the other questions regarding LHD relations, there were positive numbers regarding working with market managers and their vendors working effectively with the LHD.

(9) Only 2 responders were not required to have hand washing stations for cooking or sampling. **Hand washing is a subject for future review as previously stated.**

(10) It was noted from the question regarding food safety training or experience that most market managers or other market staff has food safety knowledge.

c) Plan to follow up with a few questions if necessary to further clarify answers as necessary.

2. Vendors

a) Not sure on how many vendors the survey was sent to but only 61 vendors responded.

b) Some highlights of the survey were as follows:

(1) About half of the vendors sold produce.

(2) Vendors also said that they felt that they had a good relationship with their LHD with 53% rating it a 10(excellent).

(3) Vendors felt that local training or webinars were their preferred method if food safety educational opportunities were held to increase knowledge. With 63% of vendors feeling that ways to improve food safety at farmers markets was the topic they were most interested in followed by ways to improve food safety at their farm or business.

c) Education was a big focus of our discussion for vendors. It was discussed looking into LHDs having educational classes as well as a booklet being developed for Farmers Market vendors educating them on food safety and regulations as well as other farm topics.

3. Regulators

a) 89 out of 98 certified LHDs responded to the survey which was 91%.

b) Some highlights of the survey were as follows:

(1) It was interesting to see that there are a few LHDs that do not register cottage food operations.

(2) Top Violations found at farmers markets were: Labeling, source, sampling, hand washing and temperature violations. **These are all things to look at when going over food safety.**

(3) Some of the most popular complaints to LHDs about farmers markets were regarding pets/dogs at the markets, homemade/home canned products, and vendors operating without a permit.

(4) LHDs listed a number of items regarding specific rule changes they would recommend as related to farmers markets. Many felt no changes were necessary however those that did said **revising the temporary food requirements including the 14 day requirement; clearly define what is a farmers market; revise the TIB30; and look at the cottage food info were areas to look at revising.**

(5) Most LHDs felt that their role in working with farmers markets were guidance, education, and regulation. **The development of a brochure will help LHDs in their role of education with the farmer markets vendors.**

(6) Several questions generated split results, ie permit fees, sampling and website information. **Committee will review before developing educational materials.**

*c) During the discussion of the regulators survey, we discussed the differences in a farmers market and a temp event. We also discussed the cottage food act. **Next meeting we will further discuss temporary events and food safety regulations.***

IV. Future Work Plan –

A. 2013 Meeting Dates - January 9, April 4, September 5 and November 7, 2012

- 1. Look at and discuss food safety and food safety education**
- 2. Discuss IDPH's Technical Information Bulletin (TIB) 30**
- 3. Discuss the creation of a Farmers Market Education Brochure**
- 4. Food Hubs - What are they and where are they?**
- 5. Future surveys and the need for consistent numbering systems between the group surveys.**

V. Next Steps –

A. All members look TIB 30 and be prepared to discuss recommendations for changes at January meeting.

B. LHD members, be prepared to present information regarding food safety and food safety regulations at the January meeting.