

Illinois Farmers' Market Task Force Minutes

June 28, 2012

The Farmers' Market Task Force meeting was held in Springfield, Illinois at Illinois Department of Agriculture, on Thursday, June 28, 2012. Patricia Welch called the meeting to order at 10:05 am.

In attendance: Pat Welch, Roxanne Junge, Pat Stieren, Christina Rogers, Wil Hayes, Robert Haugland, Stacey Bailey, Kevin Dixon (nomination in process), Susan Bostanche, Lisa Bralts, Debbie Daniels, Marjorie Sawicki, Elaine Sebald, Laura Erickson, and Elizabeth Whiteside

Attendee acting as a substitute: Christina Simpsori for Delayne Reeves

Visitors: Tracie Tobin, Bill Beaty

Introductions - Introductions were made by each member in attendance. Ethics training was discussed. Everyone must read the 2012 Ethics Training document and submit a signed copy of Acknowledgement of Participation in: 2012 Ethics Training for Appointees to State of Illinois Boards. This must be submitted to Pat Welch by July 15, 2012 if they have not already done so.

Review of P.A, 097-0394 - Task Force members terms shall be for a period of 2 years and the task force shall undertake a comprehensive and thorough review of the current statutes and administrative rules that define which products and practices are permitted and which products and practices are not permitted at farmers' markets and to assist the Department in developing statewide administrative regulations for farmers' markets. The first annual report is due to the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House no later than December 31, 2012. With that date in mind, we need a draft report from the task force no later than September 15, 2012 so that it can go through the Department and Governor's office approval process.

The question arose to when the 2 years begins as some of the members were appointed in December of 2011. Pat Welch will check with the Departments legal section.

Election of chair and co-chair: Pat Stieren was elected as Chair and Roxanne Junge was elected as Co-Chair. Elaine Sebald volunteered to facilitate the meetings discussions.

By-Laws: By-laws were reviewed and discussed. See attached draft by-laws. These will be voted on at the next meeting.

Issues for the task force: The remainder of the meeting was in discussion of issues and prioritizing the issues the task force will work on this year.

The following is the list of issues:

1. Consistency of Regulation
 - a. Between the local health departments
 - b. Sharing of information to start up farmers markets
 - c. Clarification of existing regulations
2. Identifying & updating farmers markets and contact information
3. Defining what is a Farmers Market – distinguishing from a temporary event
4. Ensuring administrative regulations support incubation of small businesses.
5. Identify barriers to development & support of local food systems through farmers markets.
6. Mechanism for distinguishing between cottage food vendors & those with commercial kitchens (Eggs, meat, dairy with different types of regulations)
7. Education of all parties involved in food safety at farmers markets (vendors, mgrs, sanitarians etc.) May be able to clarify needs through market managers and vendor surveys.
8. Process for introducing new ideas for processing, storing regulation through scientific evaluation and validation.
9. Provisions for food sovereignty (education)
10. Identification of (Best Practices) programs that are working well for local health departments & markets (How do we replicate, Share?) Need to include other state information.
11. Metrics on past food safety outbreaks related to farmers markets compared to other outlets.
12. What do local health departments perceive as problems with farmers markets (i.e. survey)
13. Role of Farmers Markets managers/staff in relation to local health departments – education in both directions needed.
14. Lack of local health department staffing to provide consistent support to farmers markets (also inexperienced staff due to turnover)
15. How do we balance food safety, nutrition cost to promote a more holistic approach to community health? (i.e. cooking demos & sampling)
16. Process for watching new trends and figuring out how to address them on an ongoing basis. (Proactive)
17. Recommendations for how farmers markets & local health departments can best work together (timelines, roles, etc.)

From the issues above, the priorities for this year are:

Defining what is a Farmers Market

Developing and conducting surveys to determine needs/issues as outlined in 7, 10 and 12 issues.

The meeting was adjourned at approx. 3:00 pm.

Next Meeting August 1, 2012.