



COMMUNITY  
FARM  
ALLIANCE

[www.cfaky.org](http://www.cfaky.org)

P.O. Box 130  
Berea, KY 40403  
859-756-6378

# Producer Pandemic Pivot (Value Chain) Thursday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## Landscape:

The pandemic created both challenges and opportunities for family farms across the state. Demand for local agricultural products increased dramatically in direct-to-consumer markets but plummeted in other markets such as restaurants and schools. Producers across the state pivoted their business models, making tough decisions on where to put their resources, to maximize the amount of food getting into their community as well as their farm profits. Some producers engaged in new marketing channels, such as online sales. Demand for CSAs increased dramatically as did other ways of buying food in ways which minimize contact. Processing proteins became a nightmare as processors became overwhelmed with supply. Many producers saw their customers taking a renewed interest in local food and cooking and were able to forge deeper relationships.

## Policy Issues:

- Health insurance
- Crop insurance for small, diversified farms
- Food manufacturing permit fees for commercial kitchens
- Adapting to weather changes as a result of climate change
- Increasing food access
- Protein processing – Better access to poultry processing is needed and some farmers are interested in on-farm processing capabilities. Additional processing capability is needed throughout the state for cattle, hogs, sheep and other animals.
- The number and cost of permits to operate small farm stores and stands is burdensome for small-scale farmers

## Narrative & Messages

- Strong local food systems are integral to healthy local economies.
- CFA can help educate consumers on where their food comes from and the perspective of farmers on raising that food.



# Healthy Food Access

Thursday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## Landscape:

- Farmers across the state of Kentucky have incorporated healthy food access as a key component of their business models.
- Pandemic has led to a large increase in folks receiving SNAP and P-EBT benefits. However, these folks were unable to shop safely with online ordering and curbside pickup bc SNAP has to be redeemed in person. Some farmers markets saw as much as a 200% increase in SNAP redemption as well as P-EBT. Seniors FMNP voucher redemption has decreased because of them being in a high risk group.
- Kentucky Double Dollars Program = statewide nutrition program allows for greater access to local fruit & veggies
- FreshRx = produce prescription for Mothers on Medicaid (MOMs)
- CFA donated \$13,000 to FeedingKY and Feed the West

## Policy Issues:

- Funding federal nutrition programs: FMLFPP, P-EBT, SNAP, WIC & Senior FMNP, etc.
- Senior vouchers not currently redeemable at Fresh Stop Markets
- Farmers of color are shut out of farmer assistance and loan programs (USDA discrimination)
- Healthy food access programs funded by local ag development boards
- Need more funding accessible to vegetable producers & other farmers to support land ownership, etc.
- Normalize food purchasing for all income levels in any particular space
- Relieve pressure points for costs to the farmer to make it more cost effective to sell to low-income customers / food access programs
- Bureaucracy makes nutrition programs difficult to access (i.e. FNS application process is complicated. Restrictions from FMNP make it hard for farmers to markets to institute these programs.)
- Expecting another KY bill to be introduced this upcoming legislative session that harms safety net programs including SNAP

## Narrative Shift & Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

- *Food access* looks at all the different choices and access to healthy food in a particular community. i.e.: What outlets are available in the community? Is the food culturally appropriate? What types of food are being sold in the community? How do people's identity control how they best access the food that they need/desire. *Local Food*: What can we produce in our local food shed?
- Myth: Feed people or help farmers make money but you can't do both. Fact: we can do both. How can we create an infrastructure so that farmers can meet the food needs of E. Kentucky? Food apartheid has been an intentional separation of people from the healthy food.
- Food incentive programs are good economics, bring money to an area, make farmers more accountable to the community, opens up markets and makes farming more stable. "It's just good business for farmers."
- "Instead of buying into the myth of scarcity and competition, we are helping people get land access and ownership which is key to long term farming. We need to focus on maintaining a market place where people from all income levels shop for the same types of food at the same places."
- How can we support community-led endeavors? These have the greatest positive impact, more equity, and better meets needs of the community.
- Applying for incentive programs can be a fulltime job, so need to be more accessible.



# Climate Change

Thursday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## Landscape:

- CFA has been plugging into national conversations around climate change and the Green New Deal, and working with state coalitions on solar energy and healthy soils legislation.
- Climate change is the observation of trends & patterns that have changed over large periods of time through changes in seasons and precipitation, for example, that are driven by greenhouse gas concentrations in our atmosphere. – Kentucky's Climatologist, Dr. Stu Foster

## Policy Issues:

- Soil health legislation introduced last year in the KY State Legislature (& pre-filed this session), supports soil health and incentivizes farmers, encouraging farmers on what they want to see around soil health in the state and making sure it addresses all needs. CFA and coalition working to fix language in the bill.
- Water management—KY is a water-rich state
- Challenges of farmers trying to save seed (i.e. patents) which will become a necessity
- Allowing solar farms with sheep grazing
- Trying to proactively set up marijuana production to be as "green" as possible
- State institutions buying local ag products, reduce food miles & fiscally responsible
  - Food safety requirements & regulations are barrier for small farmers
  - Montana has an emergency policy to allow selling home-slaughtered livestock
- Need more support for growers & the value chain to increase local food supply in KY as climate change more drastically affects our national food supply (i.e. wildfires in California)
- Incentivize farmers to build healthy soils

## Narrative Shift:

- We are seeing climate impacts NOW, not a future thing.
  - Hard to plan when it gets really hot this late in the year & not being able to know when last frosts are.
  - Increased flooding events (EKY) hurts crops
- There are solutions to mitigate climate change in Kentucky. Farmers can be a part of the solution.
  - Planting window in shifting—be patient
  - Urban high tunnel initiatives—protected agriculture
  - Building healthy soils—add organic matter
  - Deep mulch, no till, cover crops
- We can talk to farmers on these issues and offer them the benefits. "Climate variability" relates these challenges to farmers' bottom line.

## Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion:

- Collaborative research between ag scientists and growers & prioritize marginalized communities hardest hit by climate crisis.
- Urban/rural divide: In Louisville most of the people practicing urban or small scale ag are people of color and have been left out of being able to access land. See urban ag as an opportunity to help those growers and not see it as a threat to the rural farmer. It is more of a black vs white farmer situation, it will never replace large scale rural farmers, but it connects farmers and consumers.
- Knowing where the gaps are is an important part of the solution—be looking for what is missing
- Must be intentional about reaching out to partners embedded in marginalized communities who know folks and are trusted.



# Equity in Ag

Thursday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## Landscape:

- Issues with aggregating and moving products, especially from rural POC farmers to urban centers with large populations of POC
- Culturally-important foods: we need a diversity of farmers to grow diverse crops that appeal to peoples with different cultural backgrounds. Accessibility of food, and healthy food is not enough. Food also needs to be culturally appropriate.
- Food is not accessible if people do not know how to prepare and eat it.
- Representation is important. Seeing farmers that look like you is important to consumers and other farmers. Feeling like a novelty is one potential challenge that minority farmers face.
- Cultural background can build the foundation of a food and farming perspective and thus affect every single aspect of your operation. Escobar makes this point about farming as a community – in many Latin American communities, farming is done as a community, period. Therefore, any discussion of farming as individuals is irrelevant to him.

## Policy Issues:

- Funding
  - USDA discrimination
  - Need more funding available to farmers of color and other socially disadvantaged farmers.
  - Small pots of money without red tape.
  - Relationships with granters and mentorship in when to apply and how to be a strong applicant
- Policies that value and support small-scale farms, and not monocrops/industrial agriculture
- Support urban agriculture

## Narrative:

- "Farmers are earth people. That is what we have in common and what can unite us across diverse cultures." – Dr. Dawson
- Equity means being fair. But in the context of history, where there has not been fairness, it is crucial to go out of your way to make things fair. You can't just offer funding, programs, assistance – you have to seek out the people who are most marginalized and offer these things to them directly.
- Equity requires changes values because the system promotes certain values that aren't working for all
- Need more collaborations from the whole, diverse community.
- Culturally important foods! For honoring culture & ancestral roots, and promoting health and getting people excited about vegetables. Need to connect farmers and businesses to ethnic crops.
  - Nelson = squash
  - Nancy = purple potatoes
  - Travis = beans and tomatoes
- Need to be more intentional in diversifying agriculture through: mentoring young farmers, saving small farms, better connecting folks with resources and information, and transformational not transactional relationship-building to make farmers markets a destination.