

11/17/2008

Wenatchee Farm-to-Table Workshop

## **Opening remarks:**

Joan Qazi, EAT

- Two focuses for the meeting: distribution and meat processing.
- Panel discussion in the morning and break-out sessions in the afternoon with independent networking opportunities throughout
- Thank-yous for morning donations
  - Sleeping Lady
  -
- Success stories “sticky wall”
  - We will collect the information to share with other organizations and for the community food assessment
- Thank-yous for sponsorships
- If interested in becoming part of the local food directory, there are sign-up sheets at the registration tables

Hugh Vibbert, Dean of Professional and Technical Education at Wenatchee Valley College

- Owns a fifth generation farm in Central Oregon
- 37 years in production
- Understands the challenges farmers face, both large and small
- Looking at sustainability: how do you produce a high-quality product today, while maintaining the ability and capacity to produce a high-quality product tomorrow?
- Wenatchee Valley College serves a three county area
- Wants to develop a Sustainable Agriculture program at WVC
- Starts with a production strategy, encompasses processing, addresses marketing/entrepreneurship,
- Be engaged today and look at the broad system, not just your own operation

Ray Faini, Chair, WSU – Chelan County Extension

- Extension is involved with ag., but it’s a whole lot more than just commercial ag.
- Involved for over 30 years and in Chelan County since 1987
- Extension’s work is dictated by what the surrounding participants want extension to do

- In urban areas, there is great support for local food system work and support. In rural areas, less interest
  - Example: a study in Iowa...
- Folks who want Extension to do something need to make their voices heard
- Commercial ag. accounts for \$1.3 billion per year in Central Washington
- Extension is educational programming driven by what local citizens want
- Small farms team, master gardener program, urban horticulturalist on staff
- Chelan/Douglas County identity
  - Demographics: 24% are 17 years or younger
  - 51% are 35 years or older
    - This is the target market, which comprises over half of the area residents
  - People are more and more concerned about an engaging food experience
    - Four “e”s: educational, entertaining, aesthetic, escapist
      - People want a product/experience that transports them from their everyday life
      - What makes your product special? How is it different and unique? The better the backstory, the higher the interest.
  - Extension can help small producers break into new markets and established markets

Marcy Ostrom, WSU Small Farms Team

Roundtable Introduction of Producers and Buyers – Who’s in the room?

-Let’s keep it short and simple!

- Tony Davis, chef at McGlens restaurant in Wenatchee, interested in fresh and local
- Pat Tucci, Good Sheppard’s farm, in Wenatchee
- Doug Bergstrom, Chelan master gardener
- Guy Evans, Sunshine Farm, produces lots of things
- Jeff Low, restaurant, interested in produce and beef
- Coffee, Luthern retreat center, 400 guest/day in summer, 100 guests/day winter, food service manager
- Ken, Sleeping Lady, looking for anything and everything, Leavenworth
- Ted Calstrom, Alaska Salmon Sales, lots of wild caught seafood, thanks last conference for spring boarding current sales
- Georgine Coats, East Valley School district in Spokane, tremendous trouble getting product delivered, curious about WA fresh fruits and vegetables program

- Sherri Johnson, food service manager in East Valley School District, likes WA fresh fruits and vegetables program
- Fran Herndon, East Valley School District, ditto above, hard time getting anything beyond apples and pears
- Vicki Welch, Sunnypine Farm in Methow Valley, Goat Dairy, cheese, yogurt, distill lavender oil and floral water
- Vicki, BLANK school district, having similar troubles getting local produce year-round, the kids love the fresh fruits and vegetables
- Ken Tase, produce stand along HWY 28
- John Butler, American Produce Express in Omak
- Rod Weaver, Second Harvest NW, recently received Farm-to-Foodbank grant (part of 2008 Local Farms - Healthy Kids bill)
- Pat Munce, Small Farms coordinator for Spokane County, goal is to raise awareness of farming in the community
- Leo Hass, Cascade Catering
- Jerrilynn Delaney, garlic, fresh cut flowers
- Carey Hunter, Pinestump Farm in Okanogan County,
- Casey Commins, Healing Connection, teach the homeless a trade and teach them to cook at a kitchen, Stone Soup Salsa, in Cashmere
- Sherri Snyder, Community Farm Connection, interesting first year with Farmhouse Table
- Susan Schwatz, Natural foods
- Alison Davis, Gibbs farm
- Dave Hisey, county correction, 400-500,000 meals per year,
- Jeff James, Grand Valley Ranch, pig farmers, heritage breed stock
- Terry Swagerty, WSU county extension, has mobile slaughter unit, glad to see the conference
- Rick Steadmeyer, journalist, here to do a story on local food
- Anne Taber, Community Farm Connection
- Richard Kaivis, opening a new restaurant, looking to use all local product, excited about the conference
- Mike Bangs, interested to see if there's interest in growing veggies for a living
- Donna Terry, cherry grower
- Janelle Winds, late cherries, IPM orchard management
- Nathan Barnard, Grinwald Guild kitchen manager, excited for educational opportunities,
- Eric Lang, raw milk sheep cheeses and lamb
- Hank Manriquez, promote fresh fruits and vegetables in this area, great to see response for these meetings, used to have 10 people show up, now its past 100
- Terry Hiller, CRM orchards in Peshastin
- Linda Boyd, Springhill Orchards, Cascade Foothills Farmland Association
- Jamie Kattin, apricot and cherry orchard, organic
- Patrice Barrentine, WSDA Small Farm and Direct Marketing program

- Ingrid Majors, Olympia Food Coop, interested in fruit and grains
- Eric Miller, Olympia Food Coop
- Ashley Green, Cider Mill, specialize in Ag. Tourism
- Kim Langston, works for her grandfather. 250 varieties of fruit, looking to network, 60 varieties of heirloom apples
- Daniel Carr, opening up a small meat and cheese shop at the bottom of their Leavenworth restaurant
- Scott and Judy, first time farmers
- Erin Drew, growing lots of varieties
- Unknown, in Royal City, interested in starting an educational center for gardening and farming, as well as growing to sell, looking for interns
- Teresa Su....., degree in food nutrition and dietetics, here to network and get the word out
- Jo Robertson, Warden (Grant County) school district, has both state and federal fruit and vegetable grants, looking for WA produce, can use dried, looking for all kinds of products
- Mike Caida, Farm Loan Manager for Farm services, looking to provide credit to small farms
- Nancy Warner, IRIS, start-up non-profit in NCW, three major programs, local food, healthy lands and success in sustainability
- Ran Albright, small farm in Ellensburg, Boar meat goats, medicinal herbs, tinctures, etc. Interested in food as medicine, growing some interesting experiments and making value added products. Wants to connect with cheesemakers.
- Claire Paris, Larkhaven farm in Tonasket, cheesemaker, both goats and sheep, also have meats
- Boots Wickstrom, 4W ranch, guest cabins, produce beef, pork, chicken and eggs, started on-farm workshops for those interested in learning about processing poultry, hog slaughtering
- Jim Hanson, grassfed plains bison, East of Cle Elum, has USDA!
- Sandy Linbeck, Tiny's Organic, wide variety of stone fruits, all organic, also grow row crops, grow unique, different varieties, interested in restaurant sales
- Colleen Donovan, Heifer International, wants to build community based food systems
- Bruce Spencer, SpencerFood Organics, small family farm, 34 years as a farmer,
- Bonnie Schoenfeld, working with low-income people and food systems
- Sheryl Helen, Mother Nature's Organics, home/office delivery
- Amy Simonson, EAT
- Michel Wiman, WSU Small Farms Program
- Mike Hawking
- Rich Colson, EAT treasurer
- Kim Lohse, CSA program and farmhouse table market in Wenatchee
- Nancy Nicholson, Nicholson Orchards, also dry fruit,

-Scott and Ruth Parsons, Healthy Gourmet

Panel on Innovative Distribution Methods (start ahead of schedule)

Marcy Ostrom, moderator

John Butler, American Produce Express

Clayton Burrows, Growing Washington

Kim Lohse, Farmhouse Table

Watershine Woods, OPMA

Marcy: This panel was developed out of the desires from last meeting to address distribution models.

John Butler: I'm a farmer not a public speaker

-Quick overview: third generation farmer in Okanogan, on the property for 70 years

-Took over in 1984, which was his plan, to take over the family farm

-Apples and pears, 130 acres, now down to 30 acres

-Decided to take more control over what they're doing

-Took fruit into Montana with roadside trailers to local customers

-Went down to Arizona to sell fruit

-Semi load of fruits, sold half in five days, brokered the rest

-Started going to local schools to find a new market (2000)

-Just started knocking on doors to try and sell to save the family farm

-60-80 schools or districts on board

-Very receptive, understood what was happening in the farming industry

-100% school sales!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

-Moved from being a grower to more of a middle man (buys from neighbors)

-The trucking world ends in Wenatchee. To get product to market, they had to do it themselves

-Heard from schools that prior agreements with farmers didn't work out.

-Mandated quality. Be there on time, have a quality product, reasonable price

-Made a commitment: never gonna give fruit away again. Never sell at a loss. If you sell quality, you can make a profit.

-In 2002, a product came out to slice apples. Fresh-cut, value-added business.

-Got a WSDA value-added grant

-Took two years before they saw money.

-Value-added market has TAKEN OFF

- For other “slicers”, the distributors were the quality concern
  - Reinforced the focus to self-distribute
- Distribution has been a headache
- We spend a lot of nights in hotels, getting places from Okanogan
  - Must adhere to trucking laws (less than 11 hours at a time)
- 15-20,000 lbs of product over the mountains
- You can't just sell apples. You have to fill the truck. We buy apples, pluots, ORANGES, pears.
- I ask my neighbors what they need for a price. We're not in the business to get the cheapest product, we're in the business to get the best product.
- Communicate as best we can what the best product is, how long the window is open, very hands-on approach with customers
  - Also available for education. There's a face behind the produce that comes to the schools.
- Distribution is a manageable task, but a tough task

Question/comment:

Georgine: John cares about the product and the schools. I could tell that he cared. That's when the kids started eating the apples. Kids love them. John never gets so big that he doesn't care. He's always out there. I've never had to send a product back.

John Butler: When we started out, we had plastics boxes and a box credit system. When petro-chemical products became expensive, we had to move away from that. We want to give kids something better than a red delicious. It's not uncommon to have fruit picked on Sunday, then delivered on Monday. Word-of-mouth travels fast, especially around quality.

Tiny's: What was the grant?

John Butler: Value-added grant. We buy pre-sized fruit. When you slice a piece of fruit, you can use most of the culls and juicer apples. Tell your customers the truth. It can be educational. We don't want to tell our customers that we can do something that we can't do.

-No school is too small. We don't have a drop charge, we look at the total day sales. In Okanogan, no way to get product out there if we impose minimum purchases.

Watershine Woods, Okanogan Producers Marketing Association

-I'm a farmer, I've always been a farmer. So you know we're the luckiest people in the world. I learned most of my farming from my grandparents before I was nine years old. 1977, I was one of the back to the woods people. I wish it was true that if you grow it they will come...but it's not. I've been direct marketing, everything from Pike Place to local farmers

market. Our economic development council wanted to help local ag. The unanimous answer from farmers was to help with direct marketing. The marketing and distribution were the problems. Small, family farms were going under left and right. We decided to form a marketing association. We called everyone, and we got six farms together under the idea that small farms would be stronger as allies than as competitors. We got some help for how to form a cooperative. Then we were contacted by Farming and the Environment which got us grant support to help transport our product to the Des Moines farmers market. The biggest help from that was the PUSH. It forced us to get together and act.

We stayed away from the FM. Too much time away from the farm. What we decided to do was to ally ourselves with each other. We had a good mix of products and skills (accounting, mechanics, direct marketing, a guy who goes out and looks at what's happening at different markets). We started doing it on our own. I'm the marketing coordinator. When I can call a grocery store and offer 15 different products, they love that. They figure each invoice costs \$15. If you can add diversity, they want to buy more more more. Streamline it and make it simple for the produce buyers. If local growers don't achieve the quality and consistency that a distributor achieves, they won't buy. Quality sells itself. Our greatest strength and our greatest weakness climate/distance. Working together has made it work. We're all 5-10 acres. We're something in between FM and large, commercial ag. I attribute a lot of the success to the personalities involved.

We've had a lot of people wanting to join, but I think multiple small coops is the answer. That enables us to be flexible and responsive to the market. Plus, we've worked together for a while and understand each other.

Try and find a good blend of products to offer.

Clayton Burrows, Growing Washington

It's good to see Mr. Butler here, he's gone to great extremes to make the distribution system work. To see the growth of his business speaks to his ability as a trendsetter.

Growing WA is a collection of new generation and Latino farmers. We operate 5 farms in W. Washington, ranging from 1 acre to 50 acres. This season we attended 400 farmers markets, sell to restaurants, two CSA programs, sell to various schools. A lot of times it boils down to a lot of trucking.

Theme: multiple farms marketing and distributing products in an efficient, high-quality manner.

Farm-to-school

How do you make it affordable for both farmers and schools? There's plenty of support for farm-to-school programs.

Peak farming coincides with summer break...not ideal match-up.

Quantity, quality, consistency. Must meet all three every time. The food buyers are often used to a "click of the mouse, next day delivery" hard to compete with that.

Farmers often don't have time to go looking for sales outlets, flip the coin, schools often don't have time or resources to go looking for farmers.

It's challenging for schools to manage multiple points of contact.

Insurance and food safety are consistent barriers.

Final thing: lack of basic resources on both sides of the equations. Example: most schools don't have scratch kitchens. They take processed food and reheat it. Small infrastructure steps can help reduce that barrier.

What we've done is try to tackle these barriers on a small scale. We have a long way to go. We've approached it by consolidating: one invoice, one truck, one insurance policy. By drawing on multiple farms, we can consistently offer quality and reduce problem areas.

We can't expect school buyers to WANT to buy local. The current system is very strong and they don't have great resources to throw at the problem.

Transportation and storage are big issues. When you get farmers together, they can feed off the group energy, which helps create a feeling of ownership. If you can piggyback efforts, you can make a lot happen. Simple, cooperative transportation system. Communal resources helps overcome lack of resources.

We are fortunate to have state support for our efforts, but we have to try and create a system that is self-sufficient and not dependant on grant support.

## Restaurant Program

The majority of our production comes from a rural area. The biggest market is in Seattle. How do you efficiently and effectively get product from point A to point B? We use technology to help aggregate product. Buyers purchase by Tuesday, we deliver on Thursday. If you can fill a truck with 30-40 orders, you can economically justify going from point A to point B.

Another strategy is to back-haul from point B to point A.

An important part of the program is to keep the integrity of the small farm name from harvest to delivery, so that the small farms get credit.

We've started to use farmers markets as distribution points. It's a natural fit, because farmers stay within their normal routine, but can maximize their distribution.

We focus on keeping it simple.

This program reduces risk for both farmers and buyers.

## Multiple Farm CSA

We studied the Pike Place Market Basket. Biggest problems: didn't allow farmers to set their price, required farmers to deliver product to PPM, didn't focus on what's best for the farmers.

Allows farms of all sizes to participate. Doesn't have the same risk as running your own CSA. We provide: marketing, staffing, cold storage, delivery. Small program is experiencing strong growth...will likely have the largest CSA north of Seattle

Our approach is the same for each and every program: maximize overlap with trucking and keep it simple and easy to work with. By working this way, we're opening up new markets for our farms and for other partner farms.

Kim Lohse

Farmhouse Table, coordinator for Farmhouse CSA

Under Community Farm Connection: to bring local consumers closer to local food while supporting local growers.

Farmers have identified distribution as the biggest barrier.

Idea: create a small storefront for local growers and to create a CSA to function as a distribution network.

Focused on growers that grow for a living, not backyard gardeners.

CFC submitted a grant to the Icicle fund to support local community enhancement environmental issues.

-CSA is the first step to creating a larger food network in the region.

Space in Wenatchee donated. Commercial refrigerator was given by local food purveyor. Through an informal arrangement, given access to cold storage space, work space to put together the boxes, a professor, Bob Gillespie, volunteered to drive the school's refer truck to all of the participating farms. College donated.

Because we're not a traditional middleman, we're just facilitating the movement of local food to local eaters. The CSA customers are philosophically dedicated to the endeavor, which helped generate GREAT volunteer support to help make the system work.

It's been an amazing year: more demand then they could meet.

We didn't know what to expect at the outset, which meant that we didn't really know how to plan. We actually partnered with OPMA to buy row crops.

We were able to connect with growers and meet them half-way to smooth the distribution.

Offer a newsletter, which included recipes, growing updates, events calendar

Also included: flower shares, fresh bakery goods (Pretiolla bakery)  
We decided that we needed a face/space for the project, so we opened Farmhouse Table market to sell additional products: cheese, locally made salsa, other local value-added products. Not everybody wants to get a CSA, the storefront is a way to accommodate a larger market.

Overall, we've had a great positive response from the community. We already have a lot of people signed up for 2009 CSA, we have a new, larger retail space, we've been conducting market research to try and accommodate our customers. We are exclusively local, so we are trying to figure out how to extend our growers seasons.

Reiterate Watershine: Stronger as allies than as competitors. Use that idea to get product from farms that grow earlier (geographic variety) and grow different products to coordinate our program to have enough food, variety and quality available for our customers.

We're hoping to do more farm pickups, but we ultimately want to have our own truck. We're working with local chefs to create pre-made products from local products.

We may institute online ordering.

CFC wants to increase Farmer-Chef connection. Chef from McGlenn's is spearheading that effort. We can become the intermediary between chefs and growers.

Q & A

Sunny Pine Farm: How did you pay for the trucks?

Kim: we received a grant from the icicle fund to help pay for gas, small stipend for the drivers, plus we used other people's trucks/vans. WE'll probably apply for another grant.

John Butler: I have two trucks on the road everyday. I raided my kids college fund to save the farm to buy two refer trucks. As the business grew, we sought our financing. There's a lot of local help, and it's not always an easy sell, but you have to ask to try and generate interest.

Clayton: We leased two trucks, but they broke down. We purchased two with farm proceeds, then we lease one monthly.

Watershine: when we started, we had grant support. We ended up pooling our money at the end of the first year, taking minimal products to buy a truck. It's too important. You've got to do it early.

CFC Lady: We've talked about not being the middleman...how do you finance the other, non-grower positions (i.e.marketing coordinator)?

Watershine: We split it up. Each grower pays 12% of the invoice, as well as a box fee. Then it evens out (zucchini vs. peaches, different price per product). The hope is that we'll generate another pool of money to buy another truck.

Clayton: Subsidized through farm sales, but we use our non-profit to help pay for various expenses.

Jerrilynn(?): If a farm has extra product that's not going to market, is there a tax credit for food donated to food banks? I encourage people to donate extra product to the food banks, because they need it.

Guy in audience: Once you deduct your expenses for inputs, you can't deduct from the product created, because you'd double deduct.

John Butler: we often donate extras to food banks, but we've never taken the receipt. Re: oranges, I need to have a full truck, so I just started calling California growers to find a small, family grower. I've used Lawson Bros. packaging exclusively. He's honest and upfront with me, which allows me to keep the quality of product high. To cover our overhead, we have to keep the machines running. It's tough to get folks to deliver up to Okanogan, unless you buy a semi load.

Patrice: One way to get a deduction for donating product: count it as marketing - business expense

Julie: All of the food banks provide a receipt for tax purposes, but it's an individual, case-by-case decision.

Lady in hat with glasses: Is there any emphasis by schools to move away from conventional produce?

John Butler: We offer what the schools want. They haven't asked for organic, so we don't offer it. They're just trying to get a high-quality, fresh, healthy product.

Blue shirt, beard: John, do you have any gaps in your product line?

John Butler: Right now, I'm selling every pluot that comes through my door. The schools, in my opinion, are open to anything so long as it's a high-quality product. We're now selling Asian Pears that a grower sent us, normally he juices them, but the schools just love them. Sometimes the schools don't want a product because the kids use the pits or whole fruit to cause mischief.

Joan: The Wenatchee school district is interested in connecting with local growers, but they need samples and a product pitch. Food service staff is willing to work with whole foods!!!!

John Butler: The infrastructure is a tremendous cost. If I change my product line, it's a whole new investment (i.e. the ideal holding temp for

lettuce is different than the holding temp for apples, which would mean a different cold storage facility)

Alaskan fish guy: Concerning school systems: has anyone heard of Sodexo? They create a lot of hurdles to get through if you want to break into institutional markets.

Meat Processing: 14

Farm-to-School: 7

Restaurant: 9

Value added: 5 (kind of combined with trucking)

No cry for new topics.

Lady with scarf: We are working on putting together a directory. Please go to the registration table

Further introductions:

Hilario Alvarez, Alvarez farm, all kinds of vegetables, almost 300 different varieties, sells at FM and restaurants, in Mabton

Tricia Sexton-Kovacs, moving to WSDA for the Farm-to-School program, the statewide resource.

Introduce the chef:

Scott Parsons: We're grower-chefs, we've been at this a while, times they are a changin'. Healthy Gourmet cookbook.

Menu: All vegan, except for the wild salmon in the wraps.

Greens are the stars of a couple salads: mizuna, tatsoi, ong bak (?)

Winter squash (buttercup and butternut)

Leek and potato soup

Whole grain French bread.

Freshly made hummus, mint and parsley

Russet and bosc pears for dessert

Good food should look as good as it tastes

Holy Chocolate Chip Cookies

### **Break-out sessions:**

**Farm-to-Restaurant** (about half farmers, half chefs/food buyers)

Question: What are some past experiences selling to restaurants in NCW?  
-Generally the restaurants that purchase locally are "higher end"

- They offer better prices
- Their customers appreciate the extra effort to source local products
- Restaurants that are “clumped” in the same area create easier distribution
- Chefs want a weekly “fresh sheet”
  - They often don’t have time to survey a lot of markets throughout the week
  - They want efficient, easy communication
  - Helps chefs plan ahead and create their menus according to what will be available
  - Who will generate the sheet?
    - Example: Olympia Food Co-op compiles a “buyer’s list”
      - Could send it to local chefs, farmers and farm-support orgs to serve as a “jumping off point”
    - Example: Growing WA uses a website to display available products.
      - Helps aggregate information from a variety of farms
  - CFC has generously volunteered to produce a basic fresh sheet.

- Goal: Create a “common distribution point” for farmers to drop-off product and chefs to pick-up product
  - Suggestion: local college?
- Chefs are also interested in value added products, meat, dairy, fish, etc.
- Advance ordering can help farmers plan out their work load and make their deliveries and bookkeeping more efficient.
  - i.e. creating standing orders for product per week, or per month over a designated period of time or growing cycle.
- Fact: There are at least 4 or 5 local restaurants that want to buy locally (see woman from CFC for names)
  - Will other local restaurants start ordering from local farms, i.e. will there be a “domino effect”?
  - There is a small local movement underway

- Question: What are some farm-to-restaurant models that work?
- Elsewhere, (esp. in Seattle), a single farm might grow for a single restaurant under a contract agreement
    - Example: Whistling Train Farm and Flying Fish restaurant
  - Aggregated distribution from outside of the main buying area
    - Example: Growing Washington

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Question: What works for developing farm-to-restaurant relations? What doesn't?

-Chefs need to balance their menu flexibility to accommodate small farm changes

-Example: list "sautéed greens", then be accept kale, chard, spinach for the dish

-Educate both customers and staff about the farms and why they are unique/special/interesting

-Suggestion: include farm names on the menu, maybe even include short descriptions

-Create limited "Farmers Market" menus, and offer them regularly to build a customer base that appreciates and expects farm-fresh food.

Question: What are some solutions to help build stronger farm-to-restaurant connections?

-Add another Farmers Market

-There is a strong connection between a vibrant farmers market scene and local food appearing in local restaurants.

-Beyond a place to buy food, the market acts as a networking hub to share ideas and build relationships

-Chefs can help petition new FM efforts

Question: What are some of the main barriers?

-Some products have very small sales windows (e.g. cherries), which limits market opportunities

-Idea: set up contracts with local retailers WAY in advance.

-Some products don't change frequently (e.g. cheese), how often do restaurants want product alerts?

-Idea: develop a consistent "call sheet" to frequently remind potential buyers about your product

-The responsibility is on the producer to initiate (and continue) contact

-How do producers generate new customers?

-Perseverance is key. If you have struggled making a sale with a chef one week, call them again the next week.

-Give samples! Your product is your greatest ally in making a new sale (or reinitiating contact)

-Take photos: 1) of your product (to send via email) and 2) of action on the farm

-Sell the farm first, then the product.

-Your story (and back story) makes your product unique.

Chefs may hear a thousand pitches about goat cheese, but your goat cheese is the only one created by you. Pitch from that angle, pitch the unusual. Chefs are also trying to stand

out from the crowd, tell them how your product will help them achieve what they want.

- More meetings and networking opportunities
- Enhance the FM scene
- Communication with the public
- Farm Dinners (where the farms and chefs donate their time and resources for a community event)
  - Idea: use the farm dinner as a fundraiser to help support CFC and their “fresh sheet” project

## **Farm-to-School**

Top three topics:

- 1.) Farms need to approach schools and schools need to be open to ANY food grown in WA
- 2.) The web may be the best place to gather and share successes and challenges of farm-to-school connections
- 3.) Evaluate the distribution network and farm participants to expand the community of farm-to-school producers.

## **Value Added**

Top three topics:

- 1.) Food Processing Licensing requirements – WSDA vs. County
  - a. Meat
  - b. Eggs
  - c. Etc.
- 2.) What are some resources?
  - a. S.C.O.R.E.
  - b. WSU Cultivating Success classes
  - c. Grants
    - i. Rural Development Office
- 3.) Shared Commercial Kitchens
  - a. Non-profit with certified kitchen (e.g. Farmhouse)
  - b.

## **Meat Processing**

**Panelists:**

- Marcy Ostrom, WSU Small Farm Program
- Terry Swagerty, WSU Extension and Stevens County MPU
- Cheryl Ouellette, Puget Sound Meat Producers Cooperative
- Norman Suverly, WSU Extension Okanogan County, and Albert Roberts, Pinestump Farm

**Note taker/facilitator:** Colleen Donovan, Heifer International

**Take home messages:**

- Consumer education about where their meat comes from and the “behind the scenes” battles farmers face
- There is hope farmers. Need to hang in there long enough to change the paradigm.
- Organizing a team of partners is key strategy.

**Discussion notes**

There is an overall lack of processing options for direct marketing. Consequently, many people operate “under the radar.” Quality control during processing is essential for quality in the meat.

Skills Needed:

There is a serious need for quality, skilled butchers (and slaughtermen). Some are trained, and then leave. Others are aging.

The Puget Sound Meat Producers Co-op strategy is to make butchers part of the MPU team.

They are also taking an “onion” approach to leadership so that there are many layers to work with.

There is also a need over workforce training in deli and baking.

Inspection & Certification:

When processing meat, types of inspection/certification include USDA, WSDA, organic. Need to keep requirements straight and needs clear re: processing.

Working with WSDA Food Safety inspectors is key.

The availability of inspectors is complicated by lack of staff at WSDA food safety. They also charge more for exceeding 25 mile radius.

**Farm-to-Foodbank/Gleaning**

Challenges:

- Food rotting in the fields
- Time and distance for produce pick-ups
- Limited distribution radius

- Shortage of volunteers/difficulty of coordination
- Poor economy = greater demand on Emergency Food System

Ideas:

- Listserve for interested local volunteers
- Engage high school community service groups
  - Could piggyback farm-to-school ideals/efforts
- Harvest Against Hunger can help provide infrastructure
- Second Harvest is a contact for growers who have extra produce
  - Plus, they pick-up
- Chelan County Court Probation Office - Community Service
- Hospitality House
  - Not much transportation?
- WA Welfare Office
- Wenatchee Food Bank
  - Gets food from NCW Food Distribution Center
    - Connect with new administrators
    - Increased demand, reduced supply

Evaluations;

Closing remarks/thanks:

-Announcements:

- Women in Agriculture
- Small diary tour
- Farm-to-School Training for Extension Agents or Ag. Professionals
- State Farmers Market Conference