**Welcome and Introductions**

Questions/Comments

Please have Traci Bruckner send information on USDA liaisons and how people can get involved.

Can we make the USDA programs more visible, give people an acronym chart?

Severine of the Greenhorns has an action letter draft based on last night’s keynote - talk to her to get more details!

Please visit the tables with displays.

Introductions

Update on NAL’s Start2Farm website

Agenda Review

Update on Barrier ID Survey (Michelle)

Update on NEbeginningfarmers.org (Erica)

Group Announcements (posted to list serve 9.20.11 10am)

PA WAGN has upcoming event for WISA – please pick up a flyer and share with your farmers or visit their website for more information.

Cornell has an upcoming marketing conference for BF – this year’s conference is on group action, business alliances within a food chain. Check out website at marketing.pwt.dyson.cornell.edu. There are scholarships available for beginning farmers. http://dyson.cornell.edu/outreach/strategic\_marketing\_conference.php

FutureHarvestCasa.org has upcoming conference in Lansdowne, MD

NOFA NY winter conf Jan 20-22 in Saratoga Springs, NY. Other NOFA states will also be holding conferences – they are all fabulous!

MOFGA Farmer to Farmer conference coming up first weekend of November, 2011.

Young Farmer Conference upcoming at Stone Barns Center Dec. 1-2, 2011. Please send your viral sub-exhibits!

PASA conference is February 1, 2012 – great for isolated groups to get involved in positive environment. Not specific BF track, but they do designate best classes in their brochure. You should go!

New Entry - BF alliance meeting November 1, 2011 for statewide initiative. Massachusetts focused, but they are really collaborative and welcome anyone else who wants to participate.

Oct 14, 2011 Black Urban Gardeners Conference. Cornell Small Farms will be doing a workshop – will be a powerful gathering for urban/peri-urban farmers from throughout the country. Please come and collaborate. Many rural southern farmers attend.

\*Send your events via the BFLN list serve. Send an email to bflearningnetwork-l.edu and it will go to all other network members. Put at date and place in your subject header!

\*Send your events out 30 days in advance! It’s too hard to promote with only one week or two. We need time to get everything into emails and newsletters.

\*Also share your other resources and announcements – we’ll share these too!

\* Send multiple promotions – while service providers need a month’s notice, farmers will check social media or calendars for what is happening this weekend.

**‘How do you measure Economic Impacts of Beginning Farms?’**

Intro/discussion in groups – speak at your tables, report back.

*Why is this important?*

* + Justifying investment
  + Recruiting young farmers
  + Agriculture is the foundation of economic growth
  + Preserving arable land
  + Giving validity to the movement
  + Making a policy argument for redistributing resources
  + Increasing the visibility of this movement for BF
  + Helping farmers get credit (increase their standing in the community)
  + Protect or increase government dollars
  + Talk to legislators & town planning boards

*What do we need to know?*

* + Not only economic, but qualitative and quantitative effects. Does preserving farm within a community improve schools, keep kids off drugs? Quantify impact of farms on socio-cultural community/community services/schools & communities, Quality of Life.
  + There is a non-economic impact study of farms from Cornell, but we want NUMBERS.
  + If you decrease health, police costs, it positively effects community.
  + Value of social & networking events happening within the community. Retention value of growing personal connections amongst farmers who participate in social communities – does this affect the community?
  + Chamber of commerce makes an economic argument for positivity of networking
  + How many dollars of healthcare expense reduction
  + How much money do farmers spend locally
  + How many on-farm and off-farm jobs are created as a result of farming
  + How long from when farmers get started until they make a profit
  + # of full time vs. part time, seasonal vs. non-seasonal jobs
  + Study – Economic Value of Open Space from Delaware & Greenspace, look at env. Issues, contiguous property values. Some things from this study might be useful to BF.
  + What consumers spend in the local economy if there is a local source of food.
  + How much money beginning farmers spend on goods and services from existing farms
  + Effect of increasing the number of farms on the cost of governmental provision of services. # of tax dollars spent on farms vs. residential land uses, how this proportion changes. Community tax/profit.
  + Long-term return on investment from incubator farms so we can track investment $
  + Net revenue per acre & s.f. (for urban farmers)
  + Value of the demand for small farm products
  + Demonstrate projected growth for beginning farmers (next step). Are they worth the investment, or do these farmers disappear (bail out) after a short time period?
  + Scale of farmer impact - How can you demonstrate the different scale of impact for very small farms vs. larger farms?
  + Relative profit per acre according to scale
  + Carbon contribution per acre according to scale
  + We need food! Number of new farmers we need to maintain rural landscapes, food.
  + Economic analysis by operation and how this affects profitability.
  + What is the stick-to-it-ness level of beginning farmers? What is the number of new farmers needed to maintain momentum and development?
  + Demonstrating the viability of farming as a small business – this data is available for other industries. Data looks similar to small businesses – what is similar/different? We need to be able to talk about our efforts as small business incubators
  + Draw comparisons between small businesses & farmers – more similar (and better retention rate than restaurants)
  + How farms affect healthcare costs
  + Demonstrate how our training programs impact farm retention

*What are you doing now?*

* + Not enough food to meet demand
  + Hobby vs. business, assess what is generated for the family income… own use vs. selling
  + Ken Meter, Crossroads Research Center has done some work on this
  + Ogden – working on food, in-depth analysis on the horse industry in his county, will be working around into other industries
  + Jim Ochterski, CCE – after BF classes, follow up and ask people how much money they spent on their new farm in the next 6 months (but haven’t asked where they spent it), have collected data from the last 6 years
  + Carrot Project – SARE grant to help track the impact of loans, how operations grow or change based on loans, do loans help move farm to the next level, quantify the impact of investment
  + Brian Moyer, PSU – doing customer surveys at market, age, how much money they spent, rapid market appraisal
  + Research on yields per acre
  + Multi-producer marketing collaborative to track how much money farmers are making, track changes year to year

**Presenter A:** Stephan Goetz, Penn State University, Director of Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development

“Documenting the economic importance of small, local firms (and farms)”

**Presenter B:** Todd Schmit, Cornell University

“Measuring Economic Impacts – Some IMPLAN Examples from the Field”

**Presenter C:** David Connor, UVM, Department of Community Development and Applied Economics

“Beginning farmers’ economic impact: how to tell the story”

**Beginning Farmer Skills & Competencies Workshop**

*Where we go next?*

* Review great lists, process and see what actually works
* Need to really consider how to best support through competency lists, because bf’s are coming from all over the place and we cannot set them up to fail
* Put resources in a sharable space (on-line)
* There may not be a universal tool, but a good set of tools to then tinker with to make appropriate for specific clients/region/context
* When you share a source, also add in context, who it is used for, what you think are its strengths and weakness
* Have a space for others to comment on the site
* Share in RTF if possible (about the content, not format)
* Use list serve to communicate more effectively about what we are working on or have just completed
* Is there a way to make 1 set of core competency so we collect data that can be shared/reviewed across organizations…link to other data collection
* Farmers use this tool for then getting loans…prove you have a certain amount of experience…work with FSA on drafting this doc…what would you need to see in an assessment evaluation?
* Getting FSA to agree that x course meets FSA course approved credit

Going Forward – Priority Areas of Work

Is this type of gathering worth continuing?

Energizing and informative!!

Definitely yes

What do you want to work on? (Especially organizational issues)

How do you create a ‘track’ that brings someone from ‘never heard of it before) to being ready to successful in farming

Diversified funding strategies for organizations,

Pros and cons of taking a dynamic/innovative idea and making it part of an institutional culture (i.e. within Extension/University settings)

Learning about successful models of small orgs outsourcing HR, grant-writing, or CFO services

Model-sharing in general – as the national BF movement grows, how do we replicate excellent models?

Web tutorial on how to use the Start2Farm database

How do we use the funding we have to continually educate people that we exist? We have to keep advertising, but there’s no money for this

Developing effective partnerships and collaborations to leverage resources rather than competing with each other

Finding staff appropriate for available positions

Job board for unemployed grad students and underutilized wiseass men

Articulate impact of your own program

Strategies for group conversation management – facilitation skills

Who volunteered as good at it: Mary Peabody, Jorie Porter, Michelle Hughs

Data sharing

Collaborating on things together – like economic development collaborations within a region

Shared regional goals and vision (right now we have 100,000 farmers as a goal – can we have 2,000 new farmers per state?)

Make a case that we are impacting beginning farmers – real #’s, the SO WHAT of funding

*What other places (than BFLN) do you visit to learn things together as service providers?*

Sustainable Ag Educators Network

National Small Farm Conference (next one is Oct. 6-8, 2012)

E-extension (good webinar series) – send out webinar links via list serve to BFLN

Community Food Security Coalition (NESAWG)

*Final Comments – Reactions? Specific follow up?*

When you are doing research, gathering data, white pages please consider sending a copy to the National Ag Library. That way data is all in one spot for sharing, archived purposes, available to everyone! Also send pictures.

Go visit Start2Farm.gov – national attempt to update visibility for all BF work

Send this morning’s presentations out over the list serve, also link to referenced papers and make this available.

Send copies of notes, participant lists, and referenced documents.

Our project ends at the beginning of August 2012 – we will be coming to you for letters of support!

We welcome suggestions for improvements, comments, and new people to link.

We will continue to share opportunities to learn more about Farm Bill issues through the network, help Lindsey and other groups advocate to get the base they need

More local governments are working on local food policy language – can we connect this group of people with beginning farmers groups? Mark Winne hosting this in New Mexico, people come in from all over the US. Called Food Systems and Food Policy, discussions from local to national scale. Not com-food.