

Mid-Region Council of Governments Agribusiness Collaborative Goals and Strategies

Mission: *To identify the current and potential contributions of agriculture to the local economy; and to establish a regional forum to address relevant conditions (i.e., market, political, technical, and environmental) with appropriate tools necessary, including public outreach and education, to achieve the maximum economic potential of local agriculture.*

Goal A: Maintain a regional forum for discussing and resolving local agricultural issues.

Strategy 1: Conduct monthly meetings and other activities of the agribusiness collaborative.

Strategy 2: Continually revise and update the agribusiness website to serve as a repository of information and to enhance networking among agricultural interests.

Strategy 3: Publicize and cross link the website through affiliate and related organizations, growers' markets, local food markets, etc.

Strategy 4: Utilize case studies and success stories about local agriculture-related activities to promote growth and more effective business practices of the local agricultural economy.

Strategy 5: Educate the public about health and safety benefits of consuming agricultural products that are grown or raised by local farmers and ranchers.

Strategy 6: Inform the public of the hidden costs (i.e., food contamination, damage to local economy, loss of cultural heritage and agricultural land, damage to the environment, increased traffic congestion, increased waste, and security threats) of buying non-local foods.

Goal B: Focus on developing new or more accessible markets for local agricultural products.

Strategy 1: Identify specific markets and market sectors interested in purchasing local food or food products.

Strategy 2: Publish a quarterly newsletter that identifies existing and potential markets, requirements of the markets, resources to meet market opportunities, and marketing success stories.

Strategy 3: Solicit information from farmers and ranchers on types of products for sale, interest levels in expanding production, and needs to be met before expanding into new markets.

Strategy 4: Conduct or participate in workshops that focus on agricultural production, business resources, and financing.

Strategy 5: Evaluate economic impacts, effectiveness of marketing system, ability of producers to meet market demands, and the markets' satisfaction with producer performance.

Goal C: Promote and support local growers' markets.

Strategy 1: Compile data and information regarding vendors, customers, and amount of sales at area growers' markets.

Strategy 2: Conduct market research to determine customer expectations and product characteristics that will attract more buyers.

Strategy 3: Implement strategies from the 2006 marketing plan to help promote the local growers' markets to targeted segments of the metropolitan community.

Strategy 4: Develop marketing materials and website links for citizens to connect with growers' markets.

Goal D: Promote and support a consistent supply of local agricultural products.

Strategy 1: Work with affiliate organizations to identify and promote programs and markets that feature local, fresh and value-added produce.

Strategy 2: Provide information on techniques for extending the growing season, expanding the range of local products, and boosting the economic value of agricultural products, while maximizing water conservation and increasing crop productivity.

Strategy 3: Convene workshops to provide farmers and ranchers with information on markets and tools for expanding production.

Strategy 4: Support the production and processing of livestock within this region, and investigate ways in which local meats processing and distribution may be increased.

Strategy 5: Identify barriers to expansion faced by farmers, ranchers, and processors of agricultural products.

Goal E: Preserve and protect agricultural lands in the region.

Strategy 1: Encourage and assist local governments in adopting regulatory ordinances that protect agricultural operations and preserve land for farming, ranching, and agriculture related activities.

Strategy 2: Identify resources that can provide funding incentives for landowners to conserve agricultural land.

Goal F: Seek and obtain funding to achieve the long range goals of the Agribusiness Collaborative.

Strategy 1: Work with affiliate organizations to identify project areas on which to collaborate.

Strategy 2: Develop dedicated and sustained funding sources.

Strategy 3: Seek grants and other funding sources that contribute to the overall goals and strategies of the task force.