



MEETING MINUTES

Utah Local Food Advisory Council

Thursday, August 26th, 2021: 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Hosted virtually via Google Hangouts and streamed on Facebook Live from the

Utah Department of Agriculture & Food (UDAF) Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/utahagriculture/>

Anchor location for those who wish to view the virtual meeting in person:

Main Conference Room of the UDAF Building (350 N Redwood Rd, Salt Lake City, UT, 84116)

Voting Members In Attendance

Alison Einerson

Garrick Hall

Gene Davis

Jack Wilbur

Kelsey Hall

Craig Buttars

Tamra Jorgenson

Janae Duncan (joined after voting ended)

Jordan Riley (joined after voting ended)

Voting Members Excused

Steve Handy

Bjorn Carlson

Gina Cornia

Clare Collard

Non-Voting Members In Attendance

Colleen Dick

Regan Emmons

Ruby Ward

Symbria Patterson

Non-Voting Members Excused

Ashley Patterson (Georgina Griffith-Yates)

1. Welcome & Introductions - Senator Gene Davis (*Excused*, Representative Steve Handy)

- a. Roll Call.
- b. Regulations, *Commissioner Craig Buttars, UDAF*
 - i. Some feedback regarding regulatory practices was received recently in a LFAC workgroup. As a department UDAF is a service organization, but also has regulatory responsibilities put in place by the legislature to ensure a safe and abundant food supply. The goal is to ensure regulatory processes are more familiar to those marketing a product. UDAF is in the process of creating a regulatory pathway. This will create an easier process and ensure employees are responsive to the public.
- c. Review and approve meeting minutes from June 2021 meeting

- i. Motion to accept- Jack Wilbur. Roll call vote: Alison Einerson, Garrick Hall, Senator Gene Davis, Kelsey Hall, Craig Buttars, and Tamra Jorgenson - Accepted.

2. Co-Packing Presentation - *Lara Gale & Dr. Karin Allen, USU*

Dr. Karin Allen:

- Contract packaging (co-packing) is a way for small to midsize companies, entrepreneurs, and farms to process their food. Can assist in meeting regulatory, capacity, and/or buyer concerns.
- The USU Extension Food Quality & Entrepreneurship program and the Utah's Own program field many requests to find co-packers.
- Current study is to understand the availability of different types of co-packing services in Utah.

Lara Gale:

Survey of Utah food manufacturers:

- Contact lists from Utah Manufactured Food Program and Utah's Own 393 unique businesses on 8/2/2021. 15 respondents were willing to provide contact information to be connected to those looking for co-packers. Survey questions addressed processing conditions, product types, and capacity.
- Majority are able to process at room temperature, hot and cold processing are limited. Most varieties of packaging were represented by respondents.

Dr. Karin Allen:

- The survey is open until September 2021.
- Database of willing co-packers will not be made public at this time, but Utah's Own can assist with identifying appropriate co-packers.
- Final report will be available mid-October.
- Lack of capacity for acidified (salsa, canned tomatoes, pickled veggies, BBQ sauce, etc.) processing is apparent.
- Currently developing an online course to assist entrepreneurs to begin co-packing business.

3. Specialty Crop Block Grant Special Funding Announcement - *Calli Forsyth, UDAF*

- USDA set up a secondary Speciality Crop Block Grant this year referred to as "Covid Funding".
- Awards will be issued as a one time award for 3.5-4 year projects.
- The RFA is planned to be launched on October 15, 2021, with a deadline of December 15, 2021. Total amount: approximately \$450,000.
- Unlike traditional funding, this grant can benefit private organizations to a certain extent.
- The limit request is 50% of the full amount to be awarded by USDA.
- UDAF plans to have a webinar walking applicants through the application process.
- USDA offers a list of "speciality crops" on their website, although it is not comprehensive.
- A maximum of four projects will be chosen from the following categories:
 1. Innovative distribution for speciality crops.
 2. Innovation production.
 3. Consumer recognition of specialty crops in the marketplace.
 4. Gap certification and vouchers.

4. Appropriations Updates

- a. **Utah Produce Incentives - Natalie Loots, Utah Dept. of Health**
 - This season, \$50,200 has been distributed to SNAP customers in Double Up Food Bucks. This is over double the amount at the same time last year.
 - Will be collecting data on demographics of customers, and additional feedback. Will share with LFAC later this year.
- b. **Food Hub Start-Up Grant Opportunity - Linda Gillmor, UDAF**
 - The deadline for the Local Food Start Up grant opportunity is August 27, 2021 at 5 pm. Three applications have been submitted thus far.
- c. **Farm to School Legislation - Kate Wheeler, USBE**
 - Bill is currently being drafted. Need statewide collaboration to be able to push the movement forward.
- d. **Apple Crunch Day Announcement - Kate Wheeler, USBE**
 - October is national “Farm to School” month. Celebrate with an “Apple Crunch” on October 20th by crunching into a Utah apple.
 - An event at The Capital with school children is tentatively planned. Additionally, local schools will hold cider pressing events across the state. More information will be posted to the Local Food Advisory Facebook page.

5. Food Security Task Force Update - Senator Escamilla

- When Covid-19 pandemic began, Senator Escamilla realized that her district was disproportionately impacted by food security and hunger issues. There was a 300% increase of people saying they didn't have food security in Utah during the pandemic.
- Senate Bill 141 aims to develop a task force to address the gaps and ensure food security. Task force to bring state agencies together and determine who should be in charge of food security. Ensure people have access to local and nutritious food, and also ensure cultural appropriateness.
- Report of findings will be public on October 1, 2021.

Subcommittees:

- *Outreach Committee*
- *Economic Stability*
- *Policy and Access to Healthy Food*

6. Local Food Advisory Council Work Group Updates

Ag Land Preservation- *Calli Forsyth*

- Last meeting was scarcely attended. No specific updates, but some people have been added to the groups to address both Rural and Urban farms.

Statewide Community Food Assessment - *Natalie Loots & Brad Belnap*

- No updates. (Natalie and Brad were not in attendance to present.)

Innovations in Production- *Jack Wilbur and Kelsey Hall*

- The presentation seen today on co-packing came from the production work group.
- New this quarter to the Local Food Advisory Facebook page is legislative updates.
- Working with USU Extension to look into paid advertisement and create more outreach for the page and boost posts.

Innovations in Distribution, *Ruby Ward*

- Brett Behling from Utah Farm Bureau met with the group to discuss his work with the Utah Food Hub program. Will schedule similar presentations in the future.

7. RRAP Update - *Thayne Mickelson, UDAF*

Regional Resilience Assessment Planning looks for possible risks, gaps, and vulnerability that can cause problems in the food supply chain. Currently focused on dairy, beef and greens. It has been identified that there are several challenges when it comes to processing local meats. Near the end of 2022, will have comprehensive outlook and recommendations to reduce Utah's vulnerabilities and increase food security through a better food supply chain.

8. Open Discussion

Q: Symbria Patterson: Any updates on Regulatory training offered by either USU or UDAF?

Linda Gillmor - Plans to create something internally which will compliment what USU already does. Karin Allen from USU will partner and provide any training materials and/or information which has already been developed.

Q: Senator Gene Davis: What barriers are preventing Production Kitchens from being started?

Lara Gale - There is a need to better understand what type of processing requirements are needed. The way to capture this is with a more in-depth survey.

Jack Willbur - Suggested the Speciality Crop Block Grant could be requested to complete the suggested in-depth study.

Q: Jack Wilbur: This council is set to end November 2022. Are there any plans to continue it?

Senator Gene Davis - Senator Davis and Representative Handy plan to ask for reauthorization of this committee going forward.

Q: Laurie Seron: Food producers don't have enough open markets to sell too. Even if they grow more, they have to go out of state to sell. We need to help local food get more market share. We need to cut margins and make local food more competitive. With the lack of the food system, we have food being wasted. If there were several Food Hubs across the state, farmers have the ability to become the aggregator and the distributor of food.

Senator Gene Davis - There also needs to be more market for "ugly produce". The loss greatly falls on farmers who don't have anywhere to sell this "undesirable" produce.

Ruby Ward - The Invocations in Distribution workgroup have been working on something preliminary related to this conversation, and will share at the next meeting.

9. Closing Remarks - Senator Gene Davis

Meeting adjourned until October 21, 2021. Senator Gene Davis calls a motion to adjourn. Jack Wilbur seconds. All in favor. No opposed.