

## **Session #8: Lighting Talks**

### **Kath Clark: 8A—Finding a Market for Your #2s**

Food Programs Manager, Food Bank Council of Michigan

- Food Bank Council of Michigan brings together Michigan's 7 food banks and more than 3,000 partner agencies to collectively create a state of food security
- The Michigan Agricultural Surplus System (MASS) grant focuses on distributing food to those who need it and featuring Michigan-grown agricultural products
- The MASS grant has invested \$5 million into Michigan agribusiness in the last 5 years, rescuing and distributing over 21 million pounds of food in 2016 alone

### **Nick McCann: 8B—Michigan Good Food Fund: Successes and Opportunities**

Agricultural Specialist, MSU Center for Regional Food Systems

- The Michigan Good Food Fund is a public-private partnership providing \$30 million in healthy food financing to serve underserved communities across Michigan
- Designed for impact, the Good Food Fund sets out to increase access to healthy and affordable foods while driving economic development and job creation
- Financing ranges from \$5,000 to \$6 million and includes both technical and business assistance, from one-on-one counseling to business boot camps and workshops

### **HC. Michelle Byrd, PhD: 8C—Spatial Population and Asset Representations Guide for Public Health Program Planning**

Diabetes and Obesity Epidemiologist, Michigan Dept. of Health and Human Services

- The Michigan Farmers Market Project aims to address food insecurity to improve healthy food access for families in need
- Byrd used mapping and analysis to identify areas throughout Michigan with the greatest need and least healthy food access, in order to focus efforts to accept SNAP at farmers' markets on areas with the greatest potential impact
- Prospect regions were ranked by the number of families eligible for need and accessibility to healthy food retailers, identifying region 5 as that with the highest need and potential for improvement in food access
- In summary, this methodology can be used to learn about a community, issues surrounding food access, and venues for intervention

### **Sam Plotkin: 8D—Cultivating Opportunity: Land Transfer Tools to Support Land Access for Beginning Farmers**

Farm Programs Manager, Leelanau Conservancy

- As older farmers in Michigan age, more agricultural land is becoming available; however, cost and conversion to other land uses pose barriers to acquisition by the next generation of farmers

- Two programs show promise for increasing agricultural land access to new farmers:
  - Conservation buyer program: sale of agricultural land at a restricted value to a qualified buyer, managed by a land trust
  - Option to Purchase at Agricultural Value (OPAV): sale of agricultural land at its agricultural value (less than economic value) to a qualified buyer

**Becky Kwasteniet: 8E—From Seed to Plate: A Farm to Institution Journey**

Food Program Manager, Baxter Child Development Center

- Baxter Child Development Center is an early childhood center for children ages 0-5, which until 18 months ago, served entirely processed foods
- 70-80% of snacks and meals served are now locally sourced, primarily through the West Michigan Farm Link and Cherry Capital Foods
  - Example: Sloppy joes featuring Michigan tomatoes, local grass-fed beef, and buns from a local bakery
- Preparing a majority of menu items from scratch minimizes waste, allowing foods to be prepared daily based on the amount needed

**Andy Bass: 8F—Harnessing the Power of Data to Help Michigan’s Local Food System Thrive**

Chief Technology Officer, Local Orbit

- Local Orbit is the leading e-commerce and software platform for the food economy, supporting organizations in using data to move them forward
- 4 Cs and a V for making the most of your data:
  - Understand the **C**ontext: what does the data represent?
  - **C**onnect the dots: pull together pieces of data into a network to understand commonalities and patterns
  - **C**ompare and **C**ontrast: compare information against other information
  - **V**isualize: look at the data to get the full picture and present it in a dashboard

**Laura Gossiaux: 8G—Eat Safe Fish**

Health Educator, Michigan Dept. of Health and Human Services

- We all eat or know someone who eats fish: MDHHS tests sport-caught fish from throughout Michigan to assess their chemical content and provide recommendations for which types of fish should be eaten, as well as how often and how much
- While fish are a great source of lean protein and omega 3 fatty acids, chemicals such as PCBs, mercury, and dioxins are reasons for concern
  - Accumulated in the environment, these chemicals are associated with impaired brain development, some cancers, and heart and thyroid dysfunction

- Eat Safe Fish materials are free and readily available to the public, serving as a guide to fish consumption in Michigan

**Cary Junior: 8H—Addressing Food Insecurity with a Local Food System**

General Manager, SouthEast Michigan Producers Association

- 10 corporations control most of the food available throughout the world, while just 9% of the US population controls 66% of farmland and 50% of cropland
- Improving the availability and accessibility of local foods requires producers to work together, which Agriculture Cooperatives and Producers Associations aim to do
- The SouthEast Michigan Producers Association (SEMPA) brings together rural farmers, full of knowledge and experience, and new urban growers, who lack skills and farm access, to produce and distribute food in SouthEast Michigan

**Joe Van Alstine: 8I—Traditional Foods in the USDA Food Distribution Program**

President, National Association of Food Distribution Programs on Indian Reservations

- The USDA Food Distribution Program is a SNAP alternative for those living on Indian reservations
- Manoomiin, a spirit food of the Great Lakes Region, has been requested by the Food Package Review Group since the program's creation in 1973
- An appropriation in the 2014 Farm Bill finally set aside \$5 million for the inclusion of wild rice, bison, wild-caught salmon, and blue cornmeal in the program
  - As possible, efforts have been made to connect this money with Native American producers to support reservation communities (example: wild rice from the lakes of Minnesota)