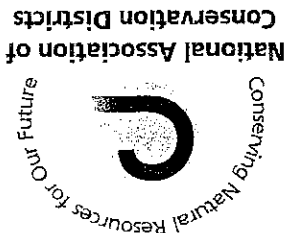


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Madam Chairman and Committee:

First of all I want to sincerely thank you for allowing me to make this presentation. I am humbled not only to be reporting to the House Committee on agriculture and natural resources but to have been chosen by the Governor to chair the Food to Farm Task Force. Also I want to thank the committee which Rep. Adam Lusker has already mentioned and all of the agencies and organizations such as the Kansas Rural Center Farm Bureau and many others a special thanks to the Kansas Department of Agriculture and the Kansas Legislative Research Center for organizing the meetings and material and for putting together this report you are seeing today.

The Task Force had a statutory directive to prepare a Local Food and Farm Plan containing policy and funding recommendations for expanding and supporting local food systems and for assessing and overcoming obstacles necessary to increase locally grown food production.

My wife, Beverly and I have been in the direct marketing food business for 14 years. Our primary farmers market is in Ft. Scott. I have twice served as president of the Kansas Vegetable Growers Association and am closely associated with KSRE Horticulture Dept. and Dr. Cary Rivard. Also I have served 32 years on my local conservation district board and past president and current board member at the Kansas Association at Conservation Districts, and currently serving on the Executive Board of the natural Assn. of Cons District and am chair at the Stewardship and education committee. I have served on the Marais des Cygnes Basin Advisory Committee as a member and chairman for several years. I am also chairman of the See-Kan RC&D in Chanute, President of Southwest States RC&D and on the board of director for the National Assoc. Of RC&D councils and represent KACD & RC&D on the Kansas State Technical Committee.

There are about 2 million farms in the U.S. About 80% are small farms and a large percentage is family owned. More and more of these farmers are now selling their products directly to the public. They do this via CSA programs, Farmers Markets, Food Coops, U Picks, farm stands and other direct marketing channels. I understand that there are now more farmers markets than Walmart stores. Quite an accomplishment.

The vast majority of Kansans do not eat healthy, existing programs are crucial but alone not enough. Today a vast majority of food consumed within Kansas is imported from out of state while the lion's share of Kansas Ag. Products are exported. Of the \$7.2 billion Kansans spent on food in 2012 90% went to food produced out of state. That same year Kansas ranked 7th in Ag exports totaling \$4.9 billion. Increasing production of fruits and vegetables for local markets would help diversify and thereby strengthen Kansas Agriculture and the Kansas economy. With the current downturn in the farm economy it could also help prop up the income of some farmers and ranchers. Can we justify growing specialty crops? According to Kansas State U. 2007 data net income from corn was \$137 per acre, soybeans \$138 p/a wheat \$108 p/a, veg. \$2631 pla.

Between 2007-2012 82 of the 213 supermarkets with a population of less than 2500 closed their doors in Kansas. Distribution trucks full of food drive by when rural grocers do not have enough volume to meet mandatory minimum orders. Thus food becomes more expensive by requiring people to drive longer distances to stores farther away affecting primarily the lower income population.

Meanwhile nutrient poor and calorie dense, highly processed foods are amply channeled to Kansas through vending machines, fast food chains, convenience stores and gas stations. In some locations these are the only nearby food outlets. Those areas have become known as food deserts.

As a producer of direct market food over the years I have seen a gradual change in the conception of farmers markets. We are now at a point that locally grown is a national by word and eating healthy is first and foremost with many families. This is perfect timing for this task force to ride the wave.

Kansas Veg. Production Acres				
2012	1982	1954	1920	
Potatoes	5178	827	1267	47,246
Sweet Potatoes	23	122	931	4,366
Veg.	4808	5330	11,173	
Total	7118	5757	7528	62,785

Although this Task Force had a sunset of Dec. 31, 2015 after we listened to the many presentations we decided there were so many things that needed more attention we would ask that the Task Force be extended and that is a work in progress.