



# Community, Local, and Regional Food Systems (CLRFS) Forum Report





# Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

## Community, Local, and Regional Food Systems (CLRFS) Forum Report

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### Acknowledgements

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# VCE Community, Local, and Regional Food Systems (CLRFS) Forum

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Virginia's food system directly impacts the survival and viability of farms and farmland; the economic development of rural and urban communities; the care, restoration, and resilience of ecological resources such as local waterways; and critical health issues. We use the language of community, local, and regional food systems to broadly define a complex and interconnected set of systems and pathways that comprise sustainable food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management to bring about social, economic, and ecological change that benefits all residents. A more community-focused food system must be cultivated and nurtured by local leadership encompassing strong community ties that are inclusive of a diversity of voices and ideas. This approach involves the establishment of collaborations and partnerships to create more resilient, vibrant, and equitable food systems and economies.

Dr. Ed Jones, Director of Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE), established a temporary steering committee for a Community, Local, and Regional Food Systems (CLRFS) team in November 2015. His charge to this committee was to identify current VCE programs and program activities related to CLRFS and develop a workable and inclusive organizational structure for supporting these efforts across the Commonwealth. The steering committee realizes that Extension programming related to CLRFS is already happening throughout the state and in partnership with many

organizations, groups, and agencies. However, many people are unaware of existing food systems related programming being conducted by colleagues across the state, which not only limits current possibilities but also new opportunities to work toward a shared vision in Virginia.

Through a group process, the purpose of the VCE CLRFS Steering Committee has been to develop an action plan based on the collective impact framework to identify, enhance and promote community, local, and regional food systems resources, information, and partnerships to VCE specialists, agents, and community partners supporting "systems-level farm to table" work. To assess the breadth and variety of VCE programs in community, local, and regional food systems across Virginia, we developed a meeting space and time for VCE professionals to share interest and/or current work in the area of food, farming, and community at the CLRFS Forum. For our first Forum, we focused on projects in which VCE had an active role, but presenters were encouraged to include or invite their community and local partners in the project. Approximately 85 people attended the Forum held Tuesday, March 29, 2016 at the Carillon Bell Tower in Byrd Park, Richmond, Virginia.

The CLRFS Forum featured 24 presentations of diverse Extension educational programming related to the development and strengthening of Virginia's community, local, and regional food systems. The goal was to facilitate dialogue and a shared understanding of the innovative

approaches and collaborations that comprise food systems work in Virginia to collectively bring about social, economic, and ecological change that benefits all residents. Presentation abstracts including all presenters along with a summary of the presentations and list of participants are included in the full Forum Report.

The CLRFS initiative is based on the framework of Collective Impact (CI), an emerging theory of social change put forth by Kania and Kramer (2011, 2013). In practice, CI illustrates and results from a commitment of a group of people and organizations from different social sectors to develop a common agenda for addressing a complex issue or a “wicked problem.” A CI framework is well suited for issues that are more endemic and systemic rather than linear or technical in nature. A CI framework is currently being used to guide a number of initiatives and address a wide variety of societal issues in which require capacity building and evaluative thinking as foundational processes for social change including healthcare, poverty, food security, and environmental sustainability (Niewolny & Archibald, 2015).

The CLRFS Forum concluded with a World Café session. In general, responses during this session related to the value of networking and teamwork, as well as learning about the diversity of collaborative CLRFS projects already underway in Virginia. These themes were reiterated in the Forum evaluation responses. One response sums it well, “The forum fostered an atmosphere of collaboration, communication, and effective dialogue that enabled participants to see first-hand the idea of collective impact.” Participants noted the low number of community partners, the lack of research based projects, and lack of focus on the food “system” as defined by the food system wheel graphic of Community, Local, and Regional Food Systems as perhaps weaknesses of the Forum. These weaknesses can be interpreted as opportunities to be more

inclusive and foster more of a “sense of community” around CLRFS as we move forward.

With respect to next steps, participants said that the CLRFS Steering Committee needs to organize and facilitate more local or regional meetings focused on CLRFS work to encourage more collaboration among VCE personnel and community partners. Participants want to continue networking, via online resources, to allow them to share their projects and learn about other projects and resources (including personnel involved) across the Commonwealth. Perhaps the formation of additional working groups to address more specific areas of the food system wheel would move the process forward more quickly and cohesively. Development of interactive project resources along with an expert database were suggested.

Based on recommendations from Forum participants and additional input from our CLRFS Working Groups (Outreach, Growth, & Inventory; Structure & Organizational Process; Data Collection, Research, & Evaluation; and Communication & Engagement), the CLRFS Steering Committee has identified the following “next steps” in the process of reaching our goal of facilitating VCE’s CLRFS educational programming at the community, local, and/or regional level:

**On or before September 30, 2016:**

- Complete and widely distribute the summary report for the CLRFS Forum.
- Develop a database of persons interested in or working with community, local, and regional food systems that promotes statewide learning and participation.
- Develop and promote marketing tools and resources for CLRFS efforts, including a website, blog, and written materials covering items such as the model of CLRFS wheel diagram and action plan.

**On or before December 31, 2016:**

- Organize and conduct four district-wide in-service training/listening sessions in October 2016 and additional community stakeholder sessions during October through December 2016, to continue learning about local efforts and how to form a VCE CLRFS organizational structure.
- Develop a workable online format for sharing information on CLRFS projects, resources, contacts, and funding.

**On or before March 31, 2017:**

- Develop and distribute assessment tools for local program evaluation that can contribute to the development of a collective impact statement for CLRFS statewide.
- Compile and distill listening session input from VCE and community partners for presentation at the 2017 VCE Statewide Conference.
- Develop an agent's CLRFS facilitation toolkit, a compilation of program and personnel resources to assist VCE agents and their community partners to plan, develop, and sustain community, local and regional food system programs.
- Draft a VCE CLRFS organizational proposal for release at the 2017 VCE Statewide Conference to focus on partnerships, core working groups on food system topics, and emergent issues.

Since the Forum, we have created new ways to communicate our work together and engage across the Commonwealth. To follow our ongoing work, we invite you to visit:

**VCE CLRFS Topic Page:** <http://www.ext.vt.edu/topics/food-health/nutrition-wellness/clrfs/>

**VCE CLRFS Facebook Page:** <https://www.facebook.com/VACLRFSS/>

**CLRFS VCE Blog:** <http://blogs.ext.vt.edu/clr-food-systems/>

**CLRFS VCE Listserv:** [clrfs-vce-g@vt.edu](mailto:clrfs-vce-g@vt.edu)

**Report links:**

**VCE CLRFS Forum March 29, 2016**

**Presentations (pdfs of presentations):**

<http://www.ext.vt.edu/topics/food-health/nutrition-wellness/clrfs/index.html>

**2016 VCE CLRFS Forum Report (full report):** <http://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/ALCE/ALCE-156/ALCE-156.html>

**2016 VCE CLRFS Forum Report Executive Summary:** <http://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/ALCE/ALCE-157/ALCE-157.html>

**VCE CLRFS Model (wheel diagram):** <http://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/ALCE/ALCE-154/ALCE-154.html>

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# Background





## BACKGROUND

### The VCE Community, Local, and Regional Food Systems (CLRFS) Initiative

Dr. Ed Jones, Director of VCE, established a temporary steering committee for a Community, Local, and Regional Food Systems (CLRFS) team in November 2015. His charge to this committee was to identify current VCE programs and program activities related to CLRFS and develop a workable and inclusive organizational structure for supporting these efforts across the Commonwealth. The steering committee realizes that Extension programming related to CLRFS is already happening throughout the state and in partnership with a number of organizations, groups, and agencies. However, many people are unaware of existing programming. The VCE CLRFS Steering Committee has, therefore, established the following vision, purpose, and goal statements:

**VCE CLRFS Vision Statement:** We facilitate innovative and interdisciplinary approaches and collaborations that span the agricultural and food systems landscape in Virginia and beyond to attain a more holistic understanding of food system complexity to collectively bring about social, economic, and ecological change that benefits all Virginia residents.

**The Purpose of the VCE CLRFS Steering Committee is to:** Develop an action plan based on the collective impact framework to enhance and promote community, local, and regional food systems resources, information, and partnerships to VCE specialists, agents, and community partners supporting “systems-level farm to table” work.

**The primary goal of the VCE CLRFS Steering Committee is to facilitate VCE’s CLRFS educational programming at the community, local, and/or regional level by:**

- Providing guidance and instruments of program planning, development, evaluation, and reporting
- Compiling and making CLRFS resources available through an online platform
- Expanding existing knowledge and creating opportunities to enhance community, local, and regional food systems, while building capacity with a diversity of community stakeholders.

The VCE CLRFS Steering Committee as initially formed includes: Kim Niewolny (VT) and Joyce Latimer (VT) as co-chairs, Kelli Scott (VCE), Sarah Morton (VCE), Caitlin Miller (VCE), Eric Bendfeldt (VCE), Theresa Nartea (VSU), Leonard Githinji (VSU), Karen Gehrt (VT), Crystal Tyler-Mackey (VCE), and Bobby Grisso (VT). As our work developed, several other individuals joined the effort in various working groups (see page 7) established to address different aspects of our objectives. These include: Virginia Tech students, Adam Anderson, Bradley Turner, Robert Bass, and Lorien MacAuley; Chris Mullins (VSU), Charley Maxwell (VCE), Meredith Ledlie Johnson (VCE), Leanne DuBois Harrow (VDACS), Joell Eifert (VT), Lori Greiner (VT), and Karen Vines (VT).

## WHAT ARE COMMUNITY, LOCAL, AND REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS?

Extension, research, and policy efforts are focused more than ever on building food and agricultural systems that stem from a range of disciplinary perspectives and programmatic approaches (e.g., Allen, 1993, 2010; Alkon & Agyeman, 2011; Constance, et al., 2014; Feenstra, 2002; Hendrickson, & Heffernan, 2002; Hinrichs, 2003; Lang, 2009; Kirschenmann & Falk, 2010). Communities and organizations at the grassroots have been particularly accredited with the emergence of alternative food movements (Allen, 2004). These movements use such terms as local and

regional food systems (Clancy & Ruhf, 2010), community food work (Slocum, 2007), community food security (Hamm & Bellows, 2003), food sovereignty (Patel, 2009), and more.

We use the language of community, local, and regional food systems to more broadly define a complex and interconnected set of systems and pathways that comprise sustainable food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management to bring about social, economic, and ecological change that benefits all residents. A more community-focused food system must be cultivated and nurtured by local leadership encompassing strong community ties that are inclusive of a diversity of voices and ideas. This approach involves the establishment of collaborations and partnerships to create more resilient, vibrant, and equitable food systems and economies.

Because food and agriculture are so fundamental and closely interconnected to the health, wealth, and capacity of a particular place, a more concerted, integrated effort is needed to develop much needed infrastructure, strategies, programs, and policies to optimize the development of our community, local, and regional food systems. Our aim is to facilitate innovative and interdisciplinary approaches and collaborations in a comprehensive way to strengthen farms and communities; nourish healthy individuals and families; empower communities; revitalize local economies; and protect natural resources across Virginia and beyond. From this perspective, community, local, and regional food systems topics and issues may include

- Community Gardens, Farmers Markets, & Community Supported Agriculture
- Conservation Agriculture
- Consumer Food Preparation and Preservation
- Models of Food Distribution and Aggregation (e.g., Food Hubs)
- Food Processing, Distribution, and Safety

- Food Justice and Food Sovereignty
- Food Security at the Household and Community Level
- Food and Agriculture Policy
- Innovation in Educational Approaches, Processes, and Evaluation
- Institutional Food Procurement & Preparation (e.g., Farm-to-School, University, and Hospitals)
- Marketing and Markets
- Nutrition Education and Health Promotion
- Supporting Producers/Growers with Start-up and Sustainability
- Resource and Waste Recovery
- Urban Agriculture

For the purposes of our CLRFS work, we acknowledge *community food systems*, *community food security*, *community food work*, and the *whole measures for community food systems* as applicable concepts and “community-level” discourses and conversations to better understand the ways we can facilitate positive change in our food systems. First, we would like to point out that the *community food systems* concept has often been in the forefront of food and farming conversations nationally (Feenstra, 2002; Feenstra & Campbell, 1996). Feenstra (2002) described a community food system as “a collaborative effort to build more locally based, self-reliant food economies – one in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution and consumption are integrated to enhance the economic, environmental and social health of a particular place” (p. 100). The system described here focuses on local and regional food systems with the additional emphasis on social wellbeing and health.

Related to the idea of community food systems is *community food security*. Here we point to Hamm and Bellows’ (2003) definition as “a situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable,

nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice” (p. 37). Following the emergence of the local food movement in North America, we see a growing concern for our ability to fairly and justly address and frame the “wicked problem” of food security (Hamm, 2009). Since the 1990s, publicly and privately funded initiatives have surged to tackle the complex issues of food access and availability with/in limited resource communities under the umbrella of community food security (Allen, 2004).

We also draw from Slocum (2007) to utilize the terminology of *community food work* due to its inclusive meaning that embraces both the processes and end goals of food, farming, and community work. Slocum refers to four domains that focus on: 1) farm sustainability – related to connecting small and mid-scale farmers to markets; 2) nutrition education – with emphases on the prevention of diet-related illnesses; 3) environmental sustainability – related to the development and support of more ecologically sound agricultural production; and 4) social justice – which consists of producer/worker rights and hunger/food insecurity. Slocum termed the integration of each of these approaches as community food work. Tanaka et al. (2005) further acknowledge both processes and goals in defining community food work as “facilitating concerned citizens, activists, and professionals to build capacity to define and address food-security challenges in their own communities” (p. 2).

Lastly, we utilize the *Whole Measures for Community Food Systems (CFS)* as a way for us to plan, organize, evaluate, and talk about community, local, and regional food systems work (Abi-Nader et al., 2009). *Whole Measures Community Food Systems* emphasize six attributes and practices that comprise a community food system: **justice and fairness, strong communities, healthy people, vibrant farms, thriving local economies, and sustainable ecosystems**. It is through these attributes and

practices that we conduct and support the work of urban gardening, nutrition education, community capacity building, environmental protection, and more (Slocum, 2006). It should be noted that the first two attributes and practices reinforce the latter four (Embry et al., 2012).

In conclusion, we suggest that these concepts and terms are not exhaustive nor mutually exclusive. We value their meanings and their intersections. To that point, in the spirit of the *Whole Measures for Community Food System*, we created a model to reflect the many ways in which VCE and partners work to support and engage the development of CLRFS.

Our model here was the result of a vast literature review and an interactive mapping exercise we conducted at the March 29th VCE CLRFS Forum (see page 10). It not only shows *how* we work together across the food system through a number of support functions and processes, but it emphasizes *where* this work falls along the food system value chain. Lastly, this model emphasizes the value-based impacts that stem from a growing number of projects, programs, and research initiatives that cut across our departments, offices, and historical program areas in VCE.

## VCE Model of Community, Local, Regional Food Systems



Key: Inner dial: Food System Value Chain, Outer dial: Values Based Impacts, Arrows: Support Process and Function.

Adopted from CS Mott Group at MSU Whole Measures for Community Food Systems Value-Based Planning and Evaluation.

## CLRFS NETWORK DEVELOPMENT: TOWARD A COLLECTIVE IMPACT

The CLRFS initiative is based on the framework of Collective Impact (CI), an emerging theory of social change put forth by Kania and Kramer (2011, 2013). In practice, CI illustrates and results from a commitment of a group of actors and organizations from different social sectors to develop a common agenda for solving a complex issue or a “wicked problem.” A CI framework is well suited for issues that are more endemic and systemic rather than linear or technical in nature. A CI framework is currently being used to guide a number of initiatives and address a wide variety of societal issues, including healthcare, poverty, food security, and environmental sustainability.

According to Niewolny and Archibald (2015), the approach of CI is placed in contrast to “isolated impact,” where groups primarily work alone to solve social problems. According to Kania and Kramer (2011, 2013) there are five conditions that work together to lead to meaningful results from CI. First, the group requires a “common agenda” where cross-sector participants have a shared vision for change including a collective understanding of the problem and a united approach to solving it through educational and organizational

actions. Second, CI requires “shared measures” for collecting data and evaluating results consistently in the collaborative, ensuring that efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable for the action. Third, CI requires “mutually reinforcing activities” where differentiated participant efforts are coordinated through a reciprocal action plan for learning and educational programming. Fourth, “continuous communication and learning” with appropriate feedback loops and follow through to build trust and transparency that provides communication to be sure that the mutual objectives of stakeholders are being met, and processes are continually improved. Lastly, a “backbone organization” must be mutually identified by stakeholders to support the CI framework, facilitate collective developmental and organizational processes, and enhance coordination of the entire initiative.

CLRFS are often embedded in conditions of social, economic, and environmental complexity. We suggest exploring the possibilities of CI to help us “see and frame” food system issues and conditions within this complexity to enact and create new spaces of action for more robust and resilient outcomes. This will rely on our ability to embrace collaborative ways of working together, the power of evaluative thinking and action, and more results-based accountability across disciplines and programs.

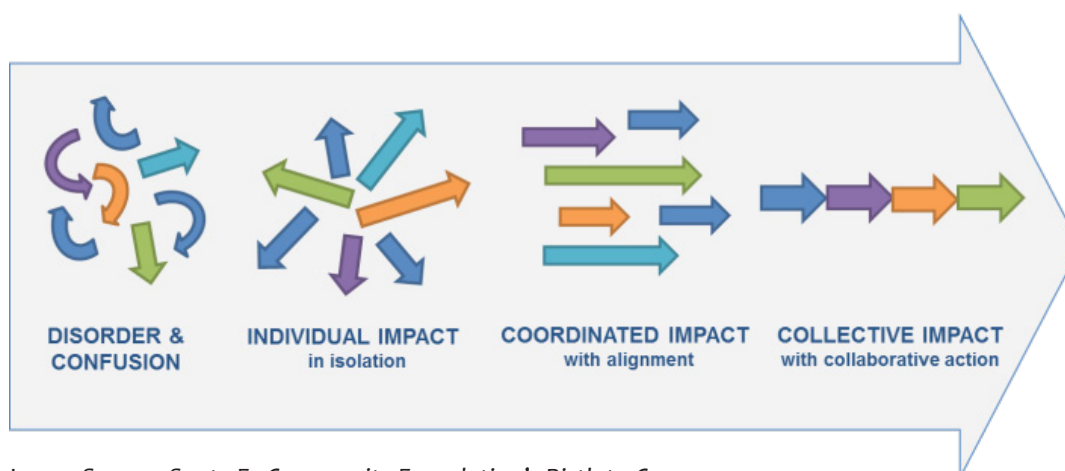


Image Source: Santa Fe Community Foundation's Birth to Career Success Program. <https://www.santafecf.org/birth-to-career>

## MOVING THE WORK FORWARD: VCE CLRFS WORKING GROUPS

The primary work of the CLRFS Steering Committee started with a retreat in November 2015 facilitated by Dr. Martha Walker, VCE, where we developed an outline of our overall purpose, goals, and primary objectives based on a discussion of the primary issues/trends in CLRFS and the common categories of food systems work. Based on this outline, we grouped our goals and objectives into three primary areas and developed working groups to address each area as detailed below. Steering Committee members self-selected their Working Group according to their interests. The fourth Working Group on Communications and Engagement was added as we further developed our plan for the Forum and identified the need to be more intentional in our communication and engagement with VCE faculty and volunteers and community stakeholders.

These Working Groups focus on specific tasks or activities and are encouraged to include additional members as interested persons and/or specific expertise needs are identified. The Working Groups report back to the full Steering Committee regularly. All meeting summaries of Working Groups and the Steering Committee are posted on a Google drive to keep all members up to date.

### ■ Outreach, Growth, & Inventory

Key Tasks:

- Host a public CLRFS forum. A convening opportunity to expand existing knowledge that enhances and promotes community, local, and regional food systems resources, information, and partnerships to Virginia Cooperative Extension specialists, agents, and community partners supporting “farm to table” work.

- Identify mechanisms of “buy-in” from all VCE faculty and volunteers, and community partners working in CLRFS (Forum, Forum evaluation, listening sessions)
- Create an online, “living” resource of CLRFS projects, resources, and people that is easy to use, accessible to, and inclusive of, all CLRFS efforts in Virginia
- Use this collected resource to enhance and expand work in CLRFS across the Commonwealth.

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### ■ Structure & Organizational Process

Key Tasks:

- Build relationships and trust with stakeholders to create shared space, knowledge, and activity for CLRFS work and impacts.
- Explore new ways to work together across Virginia & regionally
  - e.g., MSU Center for Regional Food Systems
  - e.g., eXtension CoP for CLRFS
- Address core areas, processes, and emergent needs
  - » Food Desert Initiative
  - » Beginning Farmer Start-up
  - » Capacity building, community assessment, evaluation

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## ■ Data Collection, Research, & Evaluation

Key Tasks:

- Gather what existing data is available (i.e., knowledge, skills, behaviors, conditions changed)
- Create a data resource matrix to assist in gathering and aggregating data,
- Develop a template for key common measures to help shape strategies and programs at local and state level.

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## ■ Communication & Engagement

Key tasks:

- Engage with stakeholders to identify and align appropriate communication tools/vehicles/processes for CLRFS work and impacts
- Interface evaluation and communication processes
- Develop action plan for mobilizing community assets and partners in order to bring people and resources together

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# Summary of the CLRFS Forum





## SUMMARY OF THE CLRFS FORUM

One of the primary charges of the CLRFS Steering Committee was to assess the breadth and variety of VCE programs in community, local, and regional food systems across Virginia. Our approach was to develop a meeting space and time for VCE personnel to share their interest and/or work in local foods. For our first Forum, we wanted to focus on projects and programs in which VCE had an active role, but presenters were encouraged to include or invite their community and local partners in the project. Therefore, VCE, in cooperation with community partners, hosted the 2016 Community, Local, and Regional Food Systems (CLRFS) Forum on Tuesday, March 29, at the Carillon Bell Tower in Byrd Park, Richmond, Virginia.

Registration and presentations were invited and solicited by email to all VCE staff, by personal invitation, and through presentations at the VCE Statewide Meeting. Ninety-five people registered for the Forum. As part of the registration survey, we asked registrants to rank their top three topics of interest for potential inclusion in roundtable or open space discussions. A summary of those weighted selections is in the table below.

Approximately 85 people actually attended the Forum with 20 submitted presentations/posters, some with multiple presenters, and four invited or VCE presentations. The top five topics listed above were illustrative of some projects shared. However, the topics submitted for presentation at the Forum did not entirely follow the topics of interest identified in registration survey. In that

Preferred Roundtable or Open Space Discussion Topics (weighted by rank, highest number most selected)	
Community Gardens	81
Supporting Producers/Growers with Start-up and Sustainability	44
Urban Agriculture	42
Food Security	42
Nutrition & Health	39
Innovation in Educational Approaches, Processes, and Evaluation	31
Food & Agriculture Policy	24
Conservation Agriculture	23
Marketing & Markets	20
Institutional Food Procurement & Preparation (e.g. Farm-to-School)	18
Food Processing and Safety	18
Consumer Food Preparation and Preservation	14
Distribution & Aggregation	12
Food Justice & Food Sovereignty	11
Resource & Waste Recovery	6
Other	2

light, it is important to note that the survey results do not capture the full depth and breadth of the kinds of project and program work people are involved in and shared at the Forum. With only two submitted presentations focused on community gardens, we grouped the eight oral talk submissions loosely into Food Systems & Food Security or Innovation in Educational Approaches, Processes and Evaluations. These were followed by six roundtable discussion topics loosely grouped under Food Access and Security or Soils, Farming, and Food Safety. The Poster Session had a variety of topics. We had one Open Space topic arise on Urban Agriculture.

The agenda and abstracts of the presentations are included as Appendix A and B, respectively. Graduate students served as note takers during the sessions and session moderators prepared the following summaries of the oral presentation sessions. The presentations are posted as pdf documents on the CLRFS website.

### Opening CLRFS Exercise: Mapping Virginia's CLRFS Activities

Our “mapping” activity launched the day’s event by way of setting up flip charts and questions for the participants to respond to as they walked into the meeting room. Our goal was to generate feedback and shared learning about the kinds of work we do and the impacts we believe we have in our communities. These questions and prompts included:

Q1/flip chart: From your current work, what CLRFS-related issue or project are you most excited about?

Q2/flip chart: What one impact do you most hope to see come to light from your CLRFS-related work?

Q3/CLRFS Graphic: Where and how do you “do” the work?



Results of the Mapping Activity- participants were asked to place a dot on the model that reflects where and how they might conduct or perform their CLRFS work

For this last question, we created a poster-size version of the draft food system model previously developed by the CLRFS Steering Committee. Participants were asked to place a dot on the model that reflects where and how they might conduct or perform their CLRFS work. They were also encouraged to write on sticky notes if they did not see a place to include dot. The image here illustrates those responses, which helped guide the updated VCE CLRFS model. This new understanding was then recycled into a new draft, which you can now see on page 4.

### Opening the formal Forum: Virginia Voices: Let the Stories Be Told.

Speakers: Brittany Council and Twandra Lomax-Brown, Richmond City Virginia Cooperative Extension, and Dr. Morris Henderson, 31st Street Baptist Church

The VCE CLRFS Forum opened with a powerful success story of communication and cooperation between VCE and the community. Brittany Council and Twandra Lomax-Brown of Richmond City VCE were approached by Dr. Morris Henderson of the 31st Street Baptist Church. Dr. Henderson had a great vision to use his church property, members and volunteers to help feed citizens in Richmond food deserts, but he needed the depth and breadth of knowledge, technical assistance, and networking that VCE could provide. Dr. Henderson was initially assisted by Amber Morgan, 4-H Agent, and Joe Logan, Youth Family Nutrition Program Associate, both of Richmond City VCE, who provided some basic educational resources such as soil sample kits, growing guidance and assistance. They worked with the Mayor's Conservation Corps Youth who were assigned to 31st Street Baptist Church as summer interns. Eventually, the Richmond City VCE connection with Virginia State University added another valuable component to the process. This collaboration provided the community with yet another resource that was essential in the success of Dr. Henderson's vision of the urban farm at 31st Street Baptist Church, Richmond. For more detail on this story, watch for the upcoming blog on the CLRFS Blog site.

### Summary of Presentations and Roundtable Discussions Organized by Theme

Notes were taken at each session by facilitator or discussion leaders. What follows is a summary provided by those leaders for each roundtable discussion or oral session to share. The PDF versions of the invited and submitted presentations, along with materials presented by the Steering Committee, can be accessed on the CLRFS Forum tab on our website at: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/topics/food-health/nutrition-wellness/clrfs/index.html>. A list of participants in the CLRFS Forum is included as an Appendix.

### ■ Programs in Food Systems & Food Security

*Family Nutrition Program's Food Access and Availability Initiative: Statewide Work on Increasing Access to Farmers Markets.*  
Speaker: Meredith Ledlie Johnson.

Notes: Farmers markets are a great spot for communities to come together and support their local farmers while getting fresh food. In some localities, there are barriers surrounding the market that may not be obvious to everyone in the community. One of these barriers is needing to pay with a SNAP/EBT card. There may not be a SNAP/EBT machine at the market or individuals may not feel welcome depending on the typical socioeconomic status of the market patrons. As part of the Food Access and Availability Project (FAAP), Meredith Ledlie Johnson and a team of Extension Agents in the Central District are working to guarantee all Virginians equal access to food that is culturally appropriate, nutritious, and affordable. This project takes a melody of approaches to support and encourage SNAP families to shop at farmers markets. Through FAAP, participants have been educated through cooking demonstrations at the market and an orientation to farmers markets for adults who have not previously been patrons. The FAAP also brings technical assistance to the market manager through an EBT Tool Kit, providing them with resources on accepting SNAP/EBT, marketing strategies and accounting. Over 40 people have collaborated across the Central District to work with markets on requesting free EBT machines, encourage SNAP clients to become market patrons, hold demonstrations and plan special events at these markets. To date, the impacts of the project have been impressive. By making themselves accessible to SNAP families, larger markets increased their overall sales by at least 10%. The FAAP will continue to work with these communities in the future to strengthen these programs.

*Eradicating Food Deserts in the City of Suffolk. Speaker: Marcus Williams.*

Notes: Marcus Williams, Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent for Suffolk, has been working to understand and help the food deserts in the community he serves. Self-awareness is a key component to changing the food desert conditions that are reality to many. Commuting over 1 mile in an urban area or 10 in a rural area may not seem like a large hurdle to jump in order to acquire fresh food, but that is a daunting task for some. Williams is working with community partners, such as Social Services, in Suffolk to begin to understand the local food deserts and methods to increase access to fresh food. They were awarded a planning grant in the amount of \$25,000 to start addressing the food deserts in the City of Suffolk. Data was collected by citizens to determine their food preferences, specific educational needs, and their interest in a mobile food market that would come to their area in order to create community based solutions. In the next two years, Williams plans to develop an area food hub, establish the mobile market, and offer SNAP training to local farmers. 100% of the people who were surveyed in the food deserts wanted to increase their fruit and vegetable intake; a goal that can be accomplished through the community coming together to identify needs and collectively making a change.

*Food Demonstrations at your Local Food Bank and Farmers Markets. Speakers: Pauline Stokes and Ann Vargo.*

Notes: The Family Nutrition Program is a program within Virginia Cooperative Extension and works to serve low-income families in Virginia. Family and Consumer Sciences SNAP-Ed Agents, Pauline Stokes and Ann Vargo teach youth and adults basic nutrition, food safety, and how to budget in the grocery store. Food demonstrations have shown to be an effective way for patrons to try a new fruit or vegetable while also teaching them how to prepare it on

their own. There are multiple venues where these demonstrations can take place in order to increase fruit and vegetable consumption such as farmers markets, community gardens, and grocery stores. Stokes and Vargo also outline what it takes to have a successful demonstration. Planning is a key component for the cooking demonstrations; planning what you are going to promote and practicing the recipe will help the demonstration run smoothly. Food demonstrations are also an avenue for relationship building within the community. Talk to the patrons while cooking, listen to their food needs, and always remember to thank them for participating! Consistently providing food demonstrations can lead to patrons trying new foods and buying more local foods.

*Community Gardening on the Peninsula. Speaker: Caroline Herath.*

Notes: Caroline Herath has been working in the cities of Hampton, Newport News and Poquoson and York County on community gardens. These areas that make up the Virginia Peninsula are primarily suburban and recognized as containing food deserts. In each of the localities Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) worked with other local government agencies, Master Gardeners, and Grass Roots Organizations. The community gardens have been utilized for demonstrations, educational programs and seminars in addition to providing food for the gardeners. Workshops have included starting seeds, producing vegetables, and managing compost. These communities also had to come together to create memorandum of understandings for the space, eradicate soil contaminants, and find partners to be successful. Herath has demonstrated several ways that VCE Agents and Master Gardeners can work together in building communities around these gardens while also providing a wealth of educational opportunities.

## ■ Innovation in Educational Approaches, Processes and Evaluations

*Local Food Systems Graduate Course for Extension Agents: A Sustainable Agriculture Collaboration of North Carolina, Virginia, and South Carolina. Speaker: Joanna Lelekacs.*

Notes: Joanna Lelekacs shared about a recently developed course for extension educators which is intended to increase competency in educating the public, including farmers, about the benefits and challenges of localized food systems so that they can facilitate the growth of the local food system through a collaborative process based on local context. The course was offered to agents in North Carolina, Virginia, and South Carolina. Students met six times for two day sessions over the course of six months in 2015. Field trips and activities were incorporated into curriculum for both in person and on-line participants. Students reported using information from the course in planning and evaluation of food hubs, and on counseling community members on local food hub success. The online course is being improved by implementing more interactive student reporting related to community projects that apply to the curriculum. Future steps also include working with the North American Food Systems Network to develop a professional certification program in food systems for all food safety professionals.

*Southwest Virginia's Community Food Security Assessment: An Appalachian Foodshed Project Initiative. Speaker: Phil D'Adamo-Damery.*

Notes: The Southwest Virginia Community Food Security Assessment focused on actions needed to improve the food security of Southwest Virginia by 2012. Methodology included group conversations with key stakeholders, key informant interviews, and community work sessions across southwest Virginia. The findings support emphasis on

increased networking in both digital and face-to-face spaces, on-going evaluation, and emphasis on incorporating both expert and local knowledge in creating the food system. It is suggested that Extension play a role as a connector because of its strength in building connections between expert and local knowledge. The Appalachian Foodshed Project was a result of this assessment.

*The Food Innovations Program Network. Speaker: Joell Eifert.*

Notes: The Food Innovations Program Network works to share University research-based knowledge with food producers and processors. The long term goal for the program is to attract new food businesses to Virginia. Modules are being developed and implemented to provide training related to the Food Safety Modernization Act. More consumers are buying specialty foods, making specialty providers competitors with traditional mainstream food companies. Specialty foods can be found in major retail outlets including grocery stores. The Network, which is made up of a growing number of Extension agents, helps entrepreneurs decide whether or not to go into business and advises them along the way if they decide to proceed. Consultation is provided without charge as part of an Extension and Outreach program. Other areas of effort include working with VDACS to make processing for smaller scale producers appropriate to accommodate food service size packaging.

*Advancing the Success of Virginia's Food Entrepreneurs. Speaker: Caitlin Miller.*

Notes: This session featured a day-long Food Entrepreneur workshop. The workshop was developed to increase the length of time individuals pursuing value-added processes remain in business. Currently many of these producers go out of business within their first few years. Workshop topics included business planning,

inspections, kitchen space access, labeling, marketing, recipes, and food safety. Through evaluation the participants shared the most knowledge gain about recipe development and food safety. In addition, eleven product lines resulted from the 92 program participants.

### ■ Food Access and Security Roundtable Discussions

*Extension's Roles in Building Capacity, Nurturing Food System Development and Informing Policy: Councils, Networks, Working Groups and Coalitions Policies. Leader: Eric Bendfeldt.*

Notes: Eric Bendfeldt gave an explanation of food councils, working groups, coalition, and network development across the Commonwealth. The discussion covered how these diverse groups can begin to create/define a critical mass, assess the needs, desires, and feasibility of the community/region, while working in collaboration to improve policy. Discussion and thought provoking questions included:

- How do VCE employees interpret our roles as educators?
- How does VCE fit into the role of policy?
- As educators, we are trying to build relationships and provide some evidence/resources to those who are making decisions.
- How can extension lend greater credibility to community issues?
- Where are resources and opportunities?

*Evaluation of the Family Nutrition Program's CLRFS work. Leader: Sarah Misyak.*

Notes: Sarah Misyak discussed how to properly evaluate your activities, projects, and programs from the beginning. Often folks don't think they have much to evaluate at the start for a project so they leave it to the end. But, in fact if evaluation had been

thought about and outlined from the beginning, the project would have a stronger foundation and benchmarks to determine success, reach, and next steps. Discussion and thought provoking questions included:

- Is there data on what is working or not working around your project?
- What are your short and long term goals?
- What do you want to measure? What are your indicators?
- Provide examples and framework for Quantitative and Qualitative evaluation methods and measures

*The Farmacy Garden, a Unique, Integrated Collaboration between New River Health District, Virginia Family Nutrition Program, and Virginia Cooperative Extension-Montgomery County. Leader: Kelli Scott.*

Notes: An explanation of the thought process and origin behind The Farmacy Garden and development of community partnerships necessary to serve a target audience. A description of what has been learned over the three years of the project. Discussion and thought provoking questions included:

- How do garden prescriptions work? What's the process?
- How is The Farmacy Garden connected to the WIC (Women, Infant, and Children program) and the Health District?
- How can VCE reimagine partnerships to increase food access in a more organized way?
- How can the Farmacy Garden work with a cohort of participants to enhance networking, peer to peer learning, and long term evaluation of the project?
- Future creation of a Farmacy Garden Tool-Kit

## ■ Soils, Farming, and Food Safety Roundtable Discussions

*Amendments for Improving Urban Soils. Leader: Greg Evanylo.*

Notes: Development is causing major issues in urban soils. There aren't many spots of natural soils. There are many contaminant issues. So, what do we test for? Contaminants may include: Lead, Zinc, Arsenic, and other heavy metals. So we need to know how the land has been used (industrial, military, residential (lead paint)), brown fields/hot spots, petroleum products (leaking, etc.). Use standard protocols to collect samples – the soil at schools has to be tested throughout the engineering process, but retest for certainty. Maintain a comprehensive view of the contamination levels and eliminate sites based on test results, or find really good native soil spots. Sample results need to be suited for the environment, plants, etc.

What do you compare your results to? When things are analyzed, they subject it to heavy acids that way you get the total (lead, zinc) levels. Human consumption levels and plant uptake levels need to be considered. Lead does not end up in the edible parts of a plant. Nickel, copper, or zinc kills the plant. Identify resources about this information. Use soil screening levels (total contaminant levels) where anything below that particular level is safe. Be aware that amendments to the soil can be applied to make the soil safe. Additional suggestions are to mulch where you're not gardening; bring in clean soil that is amended to garden (discard old soil, but be sure to measure both before making any major changes); prepare and distribute Extension publication on how to test soils and interpret results in urban soils in a language that is easily understood by homeowners and community planners.

*Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program (VBFRC): A Participatory Approach to Beginning Farmer Start-up and Sustainability. Leader: Kim Niewolny.*

Notes: The Beginning Farming issue in Virginia mirrors similar concerns for start-up and sustainability nationally. What are we doing in Virginia to support the diversity of new and beginning farmers who have a wide variation in interest, experience, and community support to begin and thrive? The VBFRC is a coalition-based program where Cooperative Extension provides the backbone to the coalition. Currently, a total of 26 organizations, agencies, land-grant universities, and farm businesses make up the VBFRC. This participatory approach to program development in Extension is unique to the VBFRC but can also be used in other program areas where complex issues require a collective and dynamic approach to problem solving and cross-sector implementation. Coalition partners spoke about their organization's programming and connection to the coalition itself:

- **Andy Sorrell from VDACS, Office of Farmland Preservation, and Advisory Group member of the VBFRC.** Access to Farmland is a core issue in Virginia and this is being addressed through one of the 5 VBFRC whole farm planning team efforts, titled "Certified Farm Seeker" – a partnership between VDACS and Farm Bureau and the VBFRC. The *Farm Tenure and Acquisition module* is the primary whole farm planning curriculum tool they use in their trainings with a focus on short and long term goals on why you want to be in business, and how to create a business plan. It is important to help new and beginning farmers to think long term and strategically about land use and transfer. The program is also making an update to the farm link database (seekers and owners connection), which is followed with Katie Meyer helping owners and seekers

to identify the best fit through site visits and more. Highlighted a May 16th in-service training for farmland transitions for extension and other ag professionals.

- **Adriana Vargo, Local food Hub and Advisory Group Member of the VBFRC.** Shared the importance of supporting new and beginning farmers through marketing, food safety, and regulatory compliance to be sustainable in the marketplace. The Local Food Hub has been able to leverage resources as much as possible through the VBFRC, which has supported the LFH's capacity in direct services and trainings with their community of beginning farmers. LFH received a mini-grant through the VBFRC to support farm-led training programs/workshop series for 2016.
- **Andy Seibel, Catawba Sustainability Center.** CSC partners with the VBFRC to support a number of land and market-start up issues in their programming. They received a mini-grant through the VBFRC to offer educational Programming – June 14th (Natural Beds training), September 14th (no-till trans-planter). They are able to connect with the VBFRC community to help address and answer questions effectively and correctly.

*Food Safety Programming from Farm to Fork. Leader: Amber Vallotton.*

Notes: Food safety needs to be a part of planning and implementation at all stages of produce production and handling. We are focused on a team approach that allows for natural growth and progression of efforts. Our goal is to provide nutritious food that is also safe food. One size does not fit all, farmers don't have to do every single bullet point in a food safety plan. They need to address the ones that are relevant to their operation. Producers are gaining invaluable help from Extension in GAP (good agricultural practices) certification process. Training is crucial to assure producers

that they don't need to fear food safety and regulation. Extension also has introductory level food safety training programs to introduce producers and produce handlers to food safety practices and the scientific reasons behind the regulations. Training programs include: farm to fork safe food; information on handouts; publication on food safety in regards to community garden; and ServSafe.

### ■ Open Space Breakout Session

*Transforming Food Insecure Neighborhoods through Urban Agriculture. Moderator: Leonard Githinji; Assistant moderator: Jayesh Samtani; Note taker: Lorien MacAuley.*

Notes: The moderator, who is also the PI for the recently awarded USDA-NIFA grant, outlined the objectives and proposed activities of the grant that aims at solving the food desert situation in Virginia. He explained that the goal of the project is to increase food production in Virginia to mitigate the food desert situation, with supportive objectives of conducting extensive workshops, demonstrations, and hands-on training on urban agriculture, in selected regions of Virginia that are within the food deserts, viz., Arlington, Charlottesville, Newport News, Petersburg, Richmond, and Suffolk. However, the project may be flexible to cover other areas within Virginia, as long as they are defined as food deserts. One participant identified Prince Edward County as one of the areas she would like to see the project extended to. Other participants were encouraged to send more information on other food desert areas that they suggest would fit into the program. One topic of discussion was identifying the challenges encountered by urban agriculture projects. Some specific challenges were outlined by the group pertaining to implementing a successful urban agriculture project within the commonwealth of Virginia. These include:



- **Economic sustainability:** the group noted that most urban agriculture projects are managed by institutions and nonprofit organizations, and it's therefore difficult to evaluate their economic sustainability. The group suggested that there is a need to develop and share research information on how urban agriculture projects can be managed and operated for profit.
- **Labor:** the group identified labor as one of the significant constraints limiting urban agriculture projects, since these projects are usually operated on a small-scale basis, hence the operations are usually non-mechanized, relying on human labor and which is often unavailable.
- **Funding:** inadequate funding was identified by the group as another limiting factor for successful implementation of urban agriculture projects.
- **Lack of communication:** the group identified a lack of communication as another limiting factor for successful operation of urban agriculture projects.

Participants shared some of their experiences with their existing community gardens. One noted that community gardens are visible to community members and are a symbol that something good is happening in the community. As a symbol of hope, the gardens have to be kept looking nice, and can't become a weedy patch or else they are no longer a visible symbol of hope, so require more maintenance than home gardens. Another community garden is having challenges because it is a Snap-Ed education garden, and they expressed concern that the local Extension agent has put them on low priority for help. They lack expertise, funds, and need volunteers. They could really use help from the Master Gardeners but that group does not seem interested. They are having trouble connecting to other agencies.

So how can this group move forward? The moderator asked the group: *Can Community Gardens be for profit? Can the community garden financially sustain itself?* The group responses included: 1) Maybe the community can make money off of the produce from the garden which could also increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables in the community; 2) Charging money would substantially change the mission of the urban community garden. Community gardens are to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables, promote physical exercise, build community, and increase community capacity in other ways. Charging money would create barriers to access for low-income people. Many would not be able to pay for the fruits and vegetables if they were sold rather than given; 3) Selling the fruits or vegetables, if in the same retail outlet as other farmers (farmers market, for example), might outcompete the farmers, which is counterproductive to creating a viable local food system. The moderator asked the group: *How can Extension gain access to the public land space that is controlled by other governmental bodies (Department of Parks and Recreation, for example)?* The group responses included: 1) Maybe Extension can simply pay the fee in order to rent the plots at the Department of Parks and Recreation's community garden (a fee-for-plot garden); 2) Maybe other governmental agencies should coordinate to give them some more space to have a community garden; 3) One community garden in Alexandria (through the Department of Social Services) had its fee waived because the Parks and Rec Department thought it was a good cause. The consensus was that this was a good discussion, and we will all keep in touch via email. All who would like to keep in touch placed a check mark next to their name on the general contact list, which was kept by the moderator.

# Recommendations and Accomplishments



## RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

We collected participant input on the value of this work and how to keep the process moving forward using multiple methods during the CLRFS Forum. Methods included a subsequent evaluation survey after the event and a World Café event at the end of the Forum. During the World Cafe we asked participants to identify insights gained over the event, and how we should proceed with expanding CLRFS programming (for a full list of responses, see Appendix D). In the post-Forum evaluation survey, we asked for the strengths and weaknesses of the Forum and the “next steps” that the CLRFS Steering Committee should take to keep moving this effort forward (Responses are included in Appendix E).

In general, responses during the World Café event related to the value of networking and teamwork, as well as learning about the diversity of collaborative CLRFS projects already underway in Virginia. These themes were reiterated in the Forum evaluation responses. One response sums it well, “The forum fostered an atmosphere of collaboration, communication, and effective dialogue that enabled participants to see first-hand the idea of collective impact.” Participants noted the low number of community partners, the lack of research based projects, and lack of focus on the food “system” perhaps as defined by the food system wheel as weaknesses of the Forum. These weaknesses can be interpreted as opportunities to be more inclusive and foster more of a “sense of community” around CLRFS as we move forward.

With respect to next steps, participants said that the CLRFS Steering Committee needs to organize and facilitate more local or regional meetings focused on CLRFS work to encourage more collaboration among VCE personnel and community partners. Participants want to continue networking via online resources that allow them to share their projects and learn

about other projects and resources (including personnel involved) across the Commonwealth. Perhaps the formation of additional working groups to address more specific areas of the food system wheel would move the process forward more quickly and cohesively. Development of interactive project resources along with an expert database were suggested.

Based on recommendations from Forum participants and additional input from our CLRFS Working Groups, the CLRFS Steering Committee has identified the following “next steps” in the process of reaching our goal of facilitating VCE’s CLRFS educational programming at the community, local, and/or regional level:

### **On or before September 30, 2016:**

- Complete and widely distribute the summary report for the CLRFS Forum.
- Develop a database of persons interested in or working with community, local, and regional food systems that promotes statewide learning and participation.
- Develop and promote marketing tools and resources for CLRFS efforts, including a website, blog, and written materials covering items such as the model of CLRFS wheel diagram and action plan.

### **On or before December 31, 2016:**

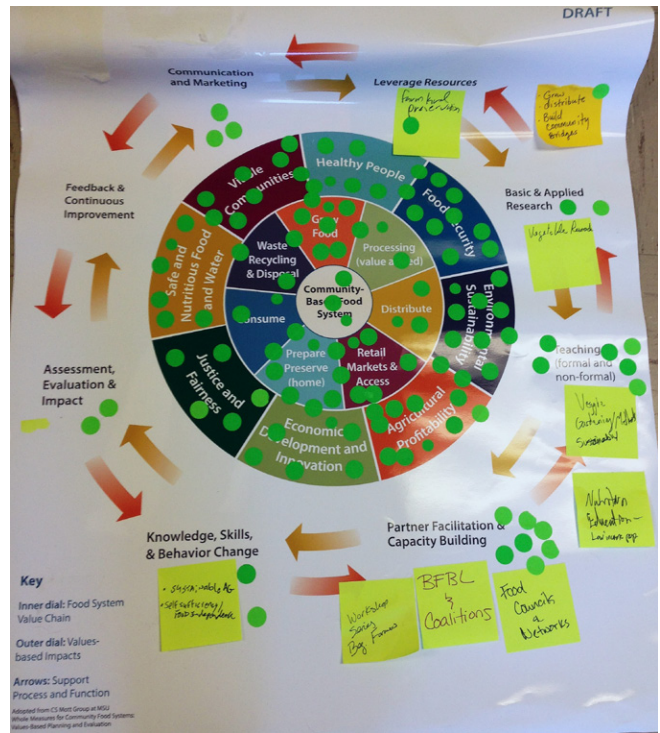
- Organize and conduct four district-wide in-service training/listening sessions in October 2016 and additional community stakeholder sessions during October through December 2016, to continue learning about local efforts and how to form a VCE CLRFS organizational structure.
- Develop a workable online format for sharing information on CLRFS projects, resources, contacts, and funding.

### **On or before March 31, 2017:**

- Develop and distribute assessment tools for local program evaluation that can

contribute to the development of a collective impact statement for CLRFS statewide.

- Compile and distill listening session input from VCE and community partners for presentation at the 2017 VCE Statewide Conference.
- Develop an agent’s CLRFS facilitation toolkit, a compilation of program and personnel resources to assist VCE agents and their community partners to plan, develop, and sustain community, local and regional food system programs.
- Draft a VCE CLRFS organizational proposal for release at the 2017 VCE Statewide Conference to focus on partnerships, core working groups on food system topics, and emergent issues.



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### A. Updating the VCE CLRFS Model

Our model started as a draft concept that the steering committee developed using a wide array of literature with a focus on the Whole Measures for Community Food Systems and the C.S Mott Group’s model for community-based food systems. After the Forum, we used the info from our “mapping activity” (top) to revise our model (bottom).

### B. VCE Communication Tools

Since the Forum, we have created new ways to communicate our work together and engage across the Commonwealth. To follow our ongoing work, we invite you to visit:

VCE CLRFS Topic Page: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/topics/food-health/nutrition-wellness/clrfs/>

VCE CLRFS Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/VACLRF/>

VCE CLRFS Blog: <http://blogs.ext.vt.edu/clr-food-systems/>

VCE CLRFS Listserv: [clrfs-vce-g@vt.edu](mailto:clrfs-vce-g@vt.edu)

VCE Model of Community, Local, Regional Food Systems



### **C. Report/presentation Links**

VCE CLRFS Forum March 29, 2016

Presentations (pdfs of presentations):

<http://www.ext.vt.edu/topics/food-health/nutrition-wellness/clrfs/index.html>

2016 VCE CLRFS Forum Report (full report): <http://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/ALCE/ALCE-156/ALCE-156.html>

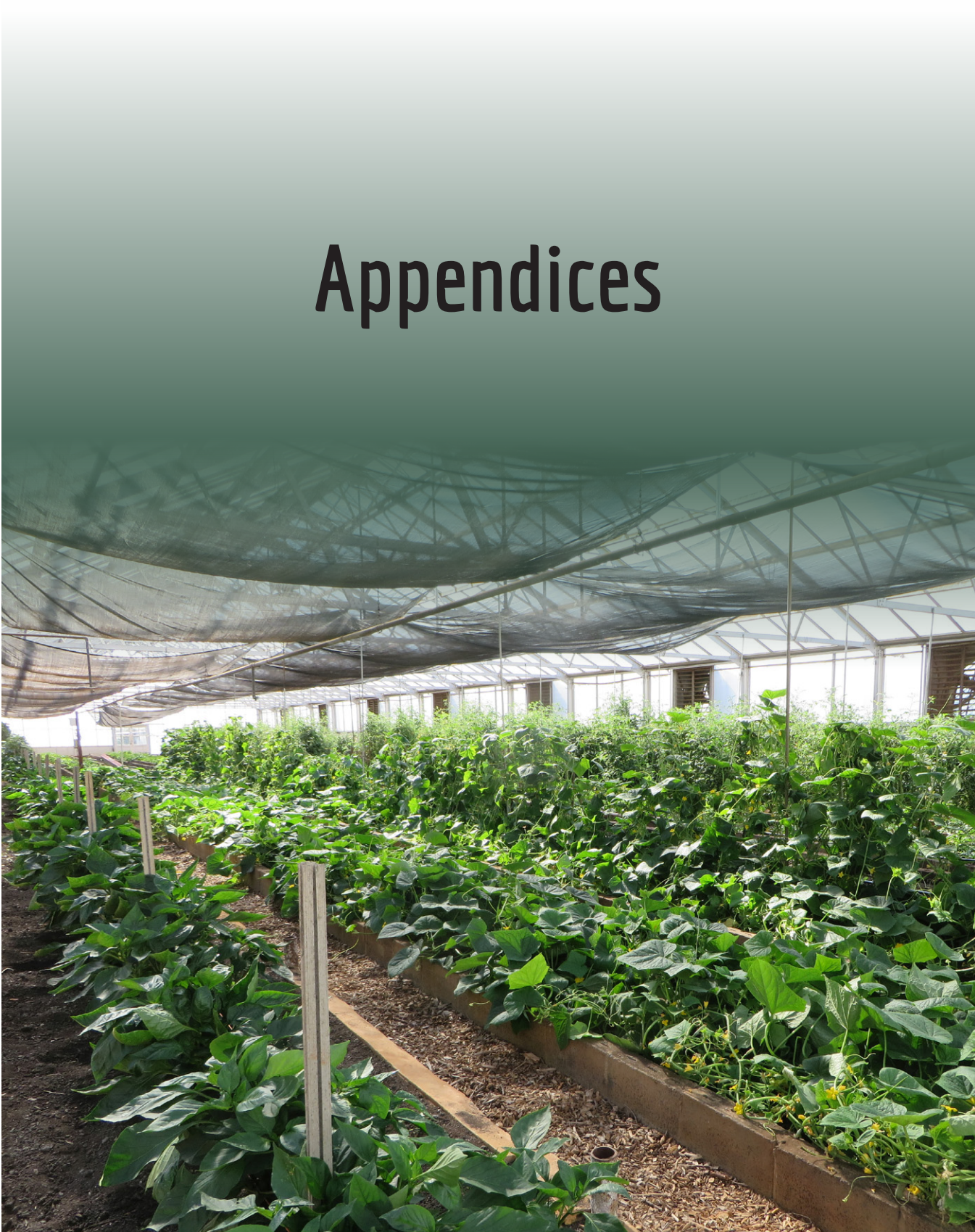
2016 VCE CLRFS Forum Report Executive Summary: <http://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/ALCE/ALCE-157/ALCE-157.html>

VCE CLRFS Model (wheel diagram): <http://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/ALCE/ALCE-154/ALCE-154.html>

### **D. Planned Listening Sessions**

We are currently organizing four district-wide VCE in-service training/listening sessions for October 2016, along with several community stakeholder sessions, for October through December 2016 to provide additional local or regional meetings focused on CLRFS work to encourage more collaboration among VCE personnel and community partners. The VCE in-service training sessions will cover the definition, value, and assessment of short, medium, and long term impacts and indicators in CLRFS that are important to funding agencies, and to developing statewide collective impact messages.

# Appendices



## APPENDIX A: CLRFS FORUM AGENDA

# Community, Local, and Regional Food Systems (CLRFS) Forum

Tuesday, March 29, 2016, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Carillon, Byrd Park, Richmond

## Agenda



**Virginia  
Cooperative  
Extension**

Virginia Tech  
Virginia State University

- 
- 8:30 – 9:00 a.m.** Registration and Networking (continental breakfast) **Foyer, Round Room**
- 9:00 – 9:30 a.m.** Opening CLRFS Exercise **Eastside A & B**
- 9:30 – 9:45 a.m.** Introduction and Housekeeping – *Sarah Morton, Program Director, Growing 4-H Science*
- 9:45 – 10:15 a.m.** Virginia Voices: Let the Stories be Told – *Brittany Council and Twandra Lomax-Brown, Richmond City Virginia Cooperative Extension, and Dr. Morris Henderson, 31st Street Baptist Church*
- 10:15 – 10:30 a.m.** Welcome – *Dr. Ed Jones, Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension*  
*Dr. Ray McKinnie, Virginia State University*
- 10:30 – 11:00 a.m.** Presentation: VCE CLRFS Vision and Purpose – *CLRFS Steering Committee Members*
- 11:00 – 11:15 a.m.** Refreshment break **Round Room**
- 11:15 – 12:15 p.m. Concurrent Break-out Sessions:**
- Eastside A Programs in Food Systems & Food Security**  
*Moderator: Charley Maxwell (Session is a mix of oral and Ignite presentations.)*
- 11:15** Family Nutrition Program's Food Access and Availability Initiative: Statewide work on increasing access to Farmers Markets – *Meredith Ledlie Johnson*
- 11:30** Eradicating Food Deserts in the City of Suffolk – *Marcus Williams*
- 11:45** Food demonstrations at your local Food Bank and Farmers Markets – *Pauline Stokes*
- 11:52** Community Gardens on the Peninsula – *Caroline Herath*
- 12:00** Group Discussion
- Westside B Innovation in Educational Approaches, Processes and Evaluations**  
*Moderator: Karen Vines (Session is a mix of oral and Ignite presentations.)*
- 11:15** Local Food Systems Graduate Course for Extension Agents: A Sustainable Agriculture Collaboration of North Carolina, Virginia, and South Carolina – *Joanna Lelekacs*
- 11:30** Southwest Virginia's Community Food Security Assessment: An Appalachian Foodshed Project Initiative – *Phil D'Adamo-Damery*
- 11:45** The Food Innovations Program Network – *Joell Eifert*
- 11:52** Advancing the Success of Virginia's Food Entrepreneurs – *Caitlin Miller*
- 12:00** Group Discussion
- 12:15 – 1:15 p.m.** Box Lunch – free networking time or participate in an "Open Space" topic of your choice

*CLRFS Forum agenda continued*

- 1:15 – 1:30 p.m. Poster session (authors present at their posters) East-West Connector**
1. Establishing a Curriculum for Sustainable Vegetable Gardening – *Katy Overby*
  2. Food For Thought: A Plant-Based Partnership with Roanoke City Public Schools and Master Gardeners and Master Food Volunteers – *Kimberly Butterfield*
  3. Urban Food Deserts: Working Across Disciplines to Address Food Insecurity – *Twandra Lomax-Brown*
  4. Urban agriculture as an avenue for transforming food insecure neighborhoods – *Leonard Githinji*
  5. Water, Food and Farm Commons: Collectively Improving Watershed Health and Nutrient Pollution across the Shenandoah and Rappahannock River Basins – *Kenner Love*
  6. Vegetable Crops Research and Extension Program at the Eastern Shore AREC, Virginia Tech – *Ramon A. Arancibia*
- 1:30 – 2:35 p.m. Concurrent Break-out Sessions:**
- Eastside A Food Access and Security Roundtable Discussions**  
*Moderator: Kelli Scott*
- 1:30** Extension's Roles in Building Capacity, Nurturing Food System Development and Informing Policy: Councils, Networks, Working Groups and Coalitions Policies – *Eric Bendfeldt*
- 1:52** Evaluation of the Family Nutrition Program's CLRFS work – *Sarah Misyak*
- 2:14** The Farmacy Garden: A unique, integrated collaboration between New River Health District, Virginia Family Nutrition Program, and Virginia Cooperative Extension-Montgomery County – *Kelli Scott*
- Eastside B Soils, Farming, and Food Safety Roundtable Discussions**  
*Moderator: Chris Mullins*
- 1:30** Amendments for Improving Urban Soils – *Greg Evanylo*
- 1:52** Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program: A Participatory Approach to Beginning Farmer Start-up and Sustainability – *Kim Niewolny and VBFRC*
- 2:14** Food Safety Programming from Farm to Fork – *Amber Vallotton*
- Westside A&B Open Space Discussions**
- 2:35 – 2:45 p.m. Refreshment Break Round Room**
- 2:45 – 4:00 p.m. Insights and Next Steps – CLRFS Steering Committee Eastside A&B**

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## APPENDIX B: CLRFS FORUM PRESENTATION DESCRIPTIONS BY SESSION

*Submitted Presentation Descriptions by Session*

March 29, 2016

### 11:15 – 12:15 Concurrent Break-out Sessions:

#### 1 - Programs in Food Systems & Food Security

##### **Family Nutrition Program's Food Access and Availability Initiative: statewide work on increasing access to Farmers Markets.**

*Meredith Ledlie Johnson, VCE-Family Nutrition Program, meredil@vt.edu, Sarah Misyak, VCE-FNP, smisyak@vt.edu; Kelli Scott, VCE-Montgomery County, kescott1@vt.edu; Ashley Nauta, VCE-Halifax, aswolfe@exchange.vt.edu*

FNP's Food Access and Availability Initiative has been working on the issue of increasing access to healthy locally grown food for low income Virginians for 4 years. We would like to present on the initiative's work across Virginia to ensure that all agents are aware of the tools and funding available to them through this project including the EBT Tool Kit and social marketing campaigns. Partnering agents will present their experiences as well.

##### **Eradicating Food Deserts in the City of Suffolk.**

*Marcus J. Williams, VCE-City of Suffolk, mjwil@vt.edu, Theresa Nartea, VCE, Virginia State University, tnartea@vsu.edu; Karen Munden, VCE-City of Virginia Beach, kmunden@vt.edu*

Through the conduct of a City of Suffolk mobile farm market food distribution and life skills educational program, local produce will be sold and delivered through a pre-order system or cash and carry fashion to four or more food desert locations. In addition to local produce

deliveries, monthly life skills classes will be organized and taught through community educational partnerships. During delivery times, customers can pick up what they purchased in advance, or select produce from the sales display. At select deliveries and during classes, participants will be asked to fill out informational surveys to determine if they have increased produce in their diet, or adopted healthy cooking styles on a daily basis. To achieve program results the following activities have been proposed: 1) Develop a social media presence to promote program goals, seek donations, educate public, and advertise mobile farm market delivery sites; 2) Create partnerships with local businesses to supply or sponsor produce purchases for individuals who are unable to afford produce; 3) Review, adopt, or develop a life skills program suitable for low literacy audiences to educate on health, nutrition, financial literacy, cooking, and weight management techniques; 4) Establish a vegetable and small fruit educational garden to provide hands-on training on food production and marketing; 5) Start a mobile farm market delivery to sell local produce in food deserts neighborhoods ; 6) Identify corner stores in city to initiate a City of Suffolk corner store program; 7) Identify local farmers to sell their products in the mobile farm market; 8) Train farmers and equip them to access governmental food program benefits, such as SNAP and WIC, and elderly food benefits; 9) Use the Cooking Matters Curriculum as the core of the nutrition, financial, and food identification aspect of the project.

##### **Food demonstration at your local Food Bank and Farmers Markets.**

*Pauline Stokes, VCE-Family Nutrition Program SNAP-ED, pstokes@vt.edu and Anne Vargo VCE-FNP SNAP-ED*

We will present on the impact of food demonstrations at your local food banks and farmers markets and how it will increase participation.

**Community Gardens on the Peninsula.**

Caroline Herath, VCE-Newport News, [cwherath@vt.edu](mailto:cwherath@vt.edu) and Megan Tierney, VCE-York, [megank@vt.edu](mailto:megank@vt.edu)

Presentation of Community Gardens in which VCE Master Gardeners are involved in Newport News, York County, and Hampton.

**2 - Innovation in Educational Approaches, Processes and Evaluations****Local Food Systems Graduate Course for Extension Agents: A Sustainable Agriculture Collaboration of North Carolina, Virginia, and South Carolina.**

Joanna Lelekacs, North Carolina Cooperative Extension Coordinator of Local Foods, NC State University [jmleleka@ncsu.edu](mailto:jmleleka@ncsu.edu); Dara Bloom, NC State University Department of Youth, Family, and Consumer Sciences, [jdbloom@ncsu.edu](mailto:jdbloom@ncsu.edu); Emma Brinkmeyer, NC State University Department of Youth, Family and Consumer Sciences, [eebrinkm@ncsu.edu](mailto:eebrinkm@ncsu.edu); Eric S. Bendfeldt, Virginia Tech/Virginia Cooperative Extension, [ebendfel@vt.edu](mailto:ebendfel@vt.edu); David Lamie, Clemson University Cooperative Extension, [dlamie@clemson.edu](mailto:dlamie@clemson.edu)

This two year Sustainable Agriculture Research Education Professional Development (SARE-PDP) project focused on designing, implementing, and evaluating a graduate course for Extension educators on local food systems. The overall goal of this course was to increase the capacity of Extension educators to work with and educate growers, buyers, and community members in the development of high performing local food systems. In year one of the project, we collaboratively designed and planned the course based on a facilitated, trans-disciplinary participatory process that would engage more than 40 local food system stakeholders from NC, VA, and SC. The course structure consisted of six (6) two-day sessions, with

each session focused on an overarching theme important to local food systems development.

The course utilized interdisciplinary and systems approaches to local food education, including dialogue about environmental, societal, and economic impacts. Invited lecturers and panelists, site tours, readings and homework assignments, small group activities, and in-class and online discussions were incorporated to reinforce each session topic. The course was conducted from February through July 2015. Recorded lectures and panel presentations were captioned and organized into modules available for viewing through the NC State Extension Local Foods web portal.

This presentation will engage Extension and Forum participants on the next phase of the project to develop an online community, local, and regional food systems course based on similar course topics, but also includes parallel case studies, initiatives, and projects from North Carolina, Virginia, and South Carolina. Participants will be asked to complete a short survey on their educational needs and what they would like in an online course.

**Southwest Virginia's Community Food Security Assessment: An Appalachian Foodshed Project Initiative.**

Phil D'Adamo-Damer, Appalachian Foodshed Project, [pdadamer@vt.edu](mailto:pdadamer@vt.edu); Danny Boyer, Grayson LandCare; Mike Burton, Food/Ag Systems Consultant; Kathy Cole, GraysonLandCare; Nikki D'Adamo-Damery, Appalachian Foodshed Project; Kim Niewolny, Dept. of Agricultural Leadership & Community Education; Debbie Lineweaver, Southwest (SO) Virginia Fresh; Jerry Moles, Grayson LandCare; Michelle Pridgen, Independence Farmers Market; Kelli Scott, VCE-Montgomery County; Kathlyn Terry, Appalachian Sustainable Development

The Appalachian Foodshed Project (AFP) aims to address community food security in

western North Carolina, southwest Virginia, and West Virginia. As part of this integrated and regional USDA grant project, the AFP conducted community food assessments across the three-state region. Our southwest Virginia assessment is an illustration of extension, university, and community stakeholders responding to the desire for increased local and regional collaboration around food security in southwest Virginia. In this presentation we will focus on our learning from a series of community work sessions that we planned and hosted as a combined community/extension/university assessment team. We will share highlights from our assessment report and explore how we are using the research process to develop and implement practical strategies for self-organizing regional food security work. We will also discuss the relationship between the assessment the Appalachian Virginia Food Systems Network and how our community-university-extension stakeholder experiences continue to inform our work.

### **Vegetable Gardening in City Soils. (withdrawn)**

*Victoria Campbell, City of Richmond Community Garden Coordinator, victoria.campbell@richmondgov.com*

I would be speaking to safe urban agriculture techniques and city liability and best practices. How we developed the community garden program, what problems we've had, how we've solved them and what we can do to promote participation in gardening for city residents.

### **The Food Innovations Program Network.**

*Joell Eifert, Virginia Tech Department of Food Science and Technology, joell.eifert@vt.edu and Sandy Stoneman, VCE, Wythe County, sandyst@exchange.vt.edu*

The Food Innovations Program is an extension/outreach program in the Department of Food Science and Technology. Its goal is to provide the assistance needed for Virginia's food

processing industry to produce high quality, safe, and innovative food products and foster growth of the Virginia food industry. The program also strives to increase the awareness of Virginia's food producers to matters of food safety, pertinent food regulations, and general concerns associated with starting and sustaining a viable food business. Extension Agents and Specialists have worked with and referred Commonwealth citizens to the Food Innovations Program for over 15 years. The Food Innovations Program Network has been developed to formally coordinate the efforts of the Food Innovations Program so that VCE can provide a more cohesive, coordinated and effective response to citizens wishing to start a new food business as well identifying needs for developing and existing food businesses that drive the economy of each locality. This workshop will cover:

- Overview of the Food Innovations Program Network and how Extension Agents can participate
- Examples of food business start-ups
- Educational workshops offerings
- Program support material
- Important discussion for identifying agent needs for supporting an effective Food Innovations Program Network

### **Advancing the Success of Virginia's Food Entrepreneurs.**

*Caitlin Miller, VCE-Prince Edward County, cgracem@vt.edu; Joell Eifert, Food Science & Technology, Virginia Tech, joell.eifert@vt.edu; Allie Hill, Virginia Food Works, alliehill@hotmail.com*

In coordination with the non-profit organization Virginia Food Works (VFW), a one-day Food Entrepreneur Workshop was hosted in Prince Edward County. In addition to VFW and Virginia Cooperative Extension, the workshop featured speakers from Longwood University

(LU) Small Business Development Center, LU Graphic Design, Virginia State University, and Virginia Tech. Topics included business planning, marketing methods and opportunities, recipe development, food science, inspection requirements and exemptions, food labeling, and connecting with buyers through Buy Fresh Buy Local and Farmer-Chef Express. Also covered in the workshop were the advantages and disadvantages of renting versus owning commercial kitchen space. The program concluded with a complete tour of the Prince Edward County Cannery and Commercial Kitchen. The Food Entrepreneur Workshop was funded in the amount of \$2,500 by the Ballyshannon Fund.

Of the participants that do not currently own a food business, over 50% reported the workshop positively influenced their decision to start one. Comments include:

“Now I have all the information needed to take product from farm to table, I’m ready to get started.”

“It added to my confidence to start. Gave me answers to lingering questions.”

“It revealed the high level of ground-work required to successfully launch a small food business.”

“It influenced my decision to continue moving forward with product development.”

“The Prince Edward County Cannery sounds like a really achievable option to get started.”

Those owning existing food business reported that they will make the following improvements: adhere more closely to regulations, improve record-keeping, get products tested, edit current food labels, rethink packaging and product range, apply targeted marketing strategies, rewrite business plan, improve system of batch coding.

**Poster session (authors present at their posters 1:15 - 1:30 p.m.)**

### **Establishing a Curriculum for Sustainable Vegetable Gardening.**

*Katy Overby, VCE-Prince Edward ANR, hawthoks@vt.edu and Caitlin Miller, VCE-Prince Edward Local Foods FCS, cgracem@vt.edu*

Due to the increased interest in the local food movement, along with the numerous questions that come through the extension office pertaining to vegetable gardening, a need has been identified for more vegetable gardening instruction in Prince Edward County. In 2013, the ANR Extension Agent with a background in horticulture, joined the Prince Edward County Unit and teamed up with the Local Food Systems FCS Agent to create a sustainable vegetable gardening series utilizing the area just outside of the office for an operational demonstration garden. According to extension research, the learning-by-doing approach is the preferred method to targeted clientele when it comes to teaching methods. For this program, the agents conducted both lectures and demonstrations on a monthly basis from spring to fall both in 2014 and 2015. Topics pertaining to growing and maintaining a sustainable vegetable garden included, but were not limited to, principles of organic gardening, building soil health, seed starting, attracting beneficial insects and pollinators, weed control, water management, trellising, square foot gardening, companion planting, harvesting and storage, as well as food preparation and preservation. Over the last two years, a resilient curriculum has been established consisting of sustainable vegetable gardening presentations, demonstrations and resources that can be used in extension programming for years to come.

### **Food For Thought: A Plant-Based Partnership with Roanoke City Public Schools and Master Gardeners and Master Food Volunteers.**

*Kimberly Butterfield, Family and Consumer Science Agent, VCE-Roanoke/Salem mskimb8@vt.edu; Mary Harshfield, Master Food Volunteer; Linda VanLuik, Master Gardener; Anna Beebe Sachs, Roanoke City Public Schools*

The Food For Thought program is an elective offered at James Madison Middle School in the Roanoke City Public School system. Established in 2013, the elective spans three classes ranging from sixth to eighth grade. The coursework for the Food for Thought program is specifically designed with consideration towards Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Healthcare (STEM-H). It includes elements of agriculture, earth science, ecology, anthropology, biology, nutrition and hands-on chemistry and math. The school also has an on-site garden.

Roanoke's VCE office partners with the school to provide Master Gardeners (MG) and Master Food Volunteers (MFV) to co-teach a series of classes focused on soil, flowers and seeds, companion vegetable planting and insects; and companion herb planting in the vegetable garden. MGs first work with the students to learn about one of the topics. Two weeks later, MFVs return to the class to offer a hands-on cooking session connected to that topic. Students prepare the food and sample each dish. Each session is approximately three hours per day, totally eight days each semester that students interact with VCE volunteers.

### **Urban Food Deserts: Working Across Disciplines to Address Food Insecurity.**

*Twandra Lomax-Brown, VCE-Richmond, twandra@vt.edu, Brittany Council, VCE-Richmond bcouncil@vt.edu; Crystal Tyler Mackey, VCE-Community Viability, cmt Tyler@vt.edu*

With more than 25 food deserts in urban Richmond, Virginia, it has one of the highest percentages of food deserts in the country. Approximately, 40,020 residents in Richmond City are food insecure and lack access to enough healthy food to encourage an active healthy lifestyle. Roughly 20 percent of the total city population, compared to 11.8 percent in Virginia and 16.6 percent nationally. Food security and access are central metrics of Richmond City's health status, environment, and economy. Access to affordable, nutritious foods is the leading cause of the increase in childhood obesity and diseases among adults. Low income households, minorities, children living in single family households especially single mothers, disabled and people without health insurance are all at risk for diet-related health problems. Given the high level of risk factors in Richmond, it is no surprise that the city currently has disproportionate levels of diet-related health problems among the total population. Those most at risk from becoming food insecure based on economic or socio-demographic factors are disproportionately living in neighborhoods that either are designated as food deserts by the USDA or are in areas with moderate to extremely high poverty rates and some portion of the population is isolated from healthy food. These at risk populations have ready access to convenience stores and fast food stores in their neighborhoods, where retailers predominantly sell high caloric, high fat, high sodium foods that are known to contribute to obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. The city's small inventory of grocery stores is almost exclusively located in the West End neighborhoods where income levels are higher. Analyses show that Richmonders isolated from healthy, reasonably priced foods and grocery stores are most at risk of poor diets. The impoverished -- children in single family households, households with no vehicle access, households without complete kitchens, and SNAP (food stamp) beneficiaries are concentrated in areas where there are no grocery stores. The task

force established recommendations and initiatives are underway to address the food desert issue in Richmond, Virginia. The City also recognizes Extension's unique role to address them, Richmond City Council allocated \$25,000 to Richmond City Extension budget specifically to educate communities on how to make food accessible to their neighborhoods. This poster will present the task force recommendations, key initiatives and strategies that Virginia Cooperative Extension and its local partners are implementing to address the food access and availability across the City of Richmond.

### **Urban agriculture as an avenue for transforming food insecure neighborhoods.**

*Leonard Githinji, Virginia State University, lgithinji@vsu.edu; Billie Brown, ACE Garden, billie.excel@verizon.net; Dave Close, Virginia Tech, dclose@vt.edu; Marcus Comer, Virginia State University, mcomer@vsu.edu; Greg Evanylo, Virginia Tech, gevanylo@exchange.vt.edu; John Freeborn, Virginia Tech, freeborn@vt.edu; Caroline Herath, Virginia Cooperative Extension, cwherath@exchange.vt.edu; Marc Jolley, Second Baptist Church, marcajolley2u@gmail.com; Ann Jurczyk, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, AJurczyk@cbf.org; Christopher Mullins, Virginia State University, CMullins@vsu.edu; Theresa Nartea, Virginia State University, tnartea@vsu.edu; Laban Rutto, Virginia State University, lrutto@vsu.edu; Jayesh Samtani, Virginia Tech, jsamtani@vt.edu*

With over 17 percent of Virginia population living in food deserts, or areas with limited access to affordable and nutritious food, it is imperative to mitigate the situation by investing in urban food production. Offering continuous extension education that involves hands-on training is the key to increasing urban food production leading to enhanced food security. The Sustainable and Urban Agriculture Program (SUAP) at Virginia State University in conjunction with other partners is providing comprehensive urban agriculture education across

the state to increase knowledge and hands-on skills of extension educators. To accomplish this, the program is conducting regular workshops, field days, and hands-on training on various urban agriculture topics. In addition, the program is establishing demonstration sites across the state for displaying appropriate techniques, as well as developing and disseminating various educational resources. The expected long-term project outcomes are increased urban food production, enhanced food security, reduced cost of food, improved health through access to fresh foods, and increased local incomes. The success of the project is being evaluated continuously using appropriate tools such as pre/post tests, questionnaires, surveys, and follow up interviews.

### **Water, Food and Farm Commons: Collectively Improving Watershed Health and Nutrient Pollution across the Shenandoah and Rappahannock River Basins.**

*Kenner Love, Virginia Cooperative Extension - Rappahannock County, klove@vt.edu; Eric S. Bendfeldt, VT Department of Crops and Soil Environmental Sciences, ebendfel@vt.edu; Peter Callan, VCE-Culpeper County, peter.callan@vt.edu; Tim Mize, VCE-Fauquier County, tmize@vt.edu; Tim Ohlwiler, VCE-Fauquier County, tohlwile@vt.edu; Kim Niewolny, VT Department of Agriculture, Leadership, and Community Education, niewolny@vt.edu; Kim Morgan, VT Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, klmorgan@vt.edu; Jim Pease, VT Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, jim.pease@vt.edu; Doug Harpole, Northern Virginia 4-H Educational Center, dharpole@vt.edu; John Ignosh, VT Department of Biological Systems Engineering, jignosh@vt.edu; Cyndi Marston, VCE Northern District Office, cmarston@vt.edu*

This signature project seeks to reduce nutrient and sediment loads and enhance the ecological resilience of riparian areas and natural resources in the Shenandoah and

Rappahannock River basins by finding common ground around water quality improvements, soil quality, and farm-to-table connections. The project is specifically addressing barriers to best management practice (BMP) adoption among small and mid-sized farms, whole-farm nutrient balances, soil quality and improved integrated infrastructure to improve water quality and generate economic growth for farming communities. The project is examining ways that farmers can add value to a basic farm resource (i.e., food) either through market development, value-added processing, food recovery, and prevention of harvest losses at the farm level. The nutrient and sediment reduction goals during the project are to reduce N losses by about 40% or 30 lb/A/yr of N and 2lbs/A/yr of P from 20 small acreage farms. The average farm is about 75 to 80 acres so we anticipate N load reductions of 48,000, P load reductions of 3,200 and 2,000 tons of sediment reduction from cooperating farms. Participating farms are diverse representing the agriculture of the middle sector and include farms involved with wholesale vegetable production with acreage ranging from 1 to 30 under production.

### **Vegetable Crops Research and Extension Program at the Eastern Shore AREC, Virginia Tech**

Ramon A. Arancibia, Eastern Shore AREC and Horticulture, raran@VT.edu; Steve Rideout, ESAREC and Plant Pathology, srideout@vt.edu; Mark Reiter, ESAREC and Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences, mreiter@vt.edu; Thomas Kuhar, Entomology, tkuhar@vt.edu; Laura Strawn, ESAREC and Food Science and Technology, lstrawn@vt.edu; Charles Cahoon, ESAREC and Weed Science, cwcahoon@vt.edu

Virginia ranks tenth in overall vegetable production nationwide and in the top five for fresh market tomatoes, including organic production. The majority of vegetables produced in Virginia are grown on the Eastern Shore, but production across Virginia also plays a

role in local communities and regional food systems. The faculty and staff at the Eastern Shore AREC are dedicated to food production systems research, extension, and education. Areas of expertise include Horticulture, Crop & Soil Environmental Sciences, Plant Pathology and Weed Science, Food Science and Technology, and Entomology. Our goals are:

- Developing and promoting production practices to improve sustainability in vegetable crops
- Educating stakeholders on soil and nutrient management and environmental sustainability
- Identifying diseases and applying control tactics to serve producers and homeowners
- Informing stakeholders on food safety and microbiological quality of produce
- Promoting weed control technologies to reduce the development of resistance to herbicides
- Establishing novel approaches for managing arthropod pests of vegetables

### **1:30 – 2:30 Concurrent Break-out Sessions:**

1- Food Access and Security Roundtables (20-min discussion topics)

#### **Extension's Roles in Building Capacity, Nurturing Food System Development and Informing Policy: Councils, Networks, Working Groups and Coalitions Policies.**

Eric S. Bendfeldt, Department of Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences and Virginia Food System Council ebendfel@vt.edu; Theresa Nartea, VSU/VCE and Virginia Food System Council, tnartea@vsu.edu; Crystal Tyler-Mackey, VT/VCE and Virginia Food System Council Food Access Work Group, cmt Tyler@vt.edu; Nikki D'Adamo-Damery, Appalachian Foodshed Project, nikkid11@vt.edu; Kelli Scott, VCE Montgomery County and Appalachian Food

System Network, [kescott1@vt.edu](mailto:kescott1@vt.edu); Caitlin Miller, VCE Prince Edward County, [cgracem@vt.edu](mailto:cgracem@vt.edu)

Virginia Cooperative Extension, with its close ties with community partners, organizations, and statewide presence, is particularly poised and well-positioned to strengthen Virginia's food system more comprehensively and systematically through assessment, education, development and policy. However, there can be personal and professional tension and discomfort in assuming new roles especially if the roles seem to transcend strict educational programming and be more centered on economic development and policy. This presentation and discussion will focus on and explore Extension's emerging roles in building community capacity, nurturing food system development, and informing policies through councils, networks, working groups, and coalitions. Presenters will share their experience and perspectives in working with the Virginia Food System Council, Appalachian Virginia Food System Network, Virginia Food Desert Task Force, Shenandoah Valley Food and Farm Work Group, and Heart of Virginia Buy Fresh Buy Local.

### **Evaluation of the Family Nutrition Program's CLRFS work.**

Sarah Misyak, Virginia Family Nutrition Program, [smisyak@vt.edu](mailto:smisyak@vt.edu) and Judy Midkiff, Virginia Family Nutrition Program, [jmidkiff@vt.edu](mailto:jmidkiff@vt.edu)

Virginia Cooperative Extension's Family Nutrition Program has numerous CLRFS initiatives including promoting the use of EBT at farmers markets, planning for healthy retail, and community gardening. In this session the Program Manager and Research and Evaluation Coordinator will discuss the various forms of formative, process and outcome evaluation for these projects.

### **The Farmacy Garden: A unique, integrated collaboration between New River Health District, Virginia Family Nutrition Program, and Virginia Cooperative Extension-Montgomery County.**

Kelli Scott, VCE-Montgomery County, [kescott1@vt.edu](mailto:kescott1@vt.edu); Meredith Ledlie Johnson, Virginia Cooperative Extension - FNP, [meredil@vt.edu](mailto:meredil@vt.edu); Sarah Misyak, Virginia Family Nutrition Program, [smisyak@gmail.com](mailto:smisyak@gmail.com); Maureen McGonagle, New River Health District, [Maureen.McGonagle@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:Maureen.McGonagle@vdh.virginia.gov)

The Farmacy Garden is a community garden located in Christiansburg, Virginia. Built in 2014, this garden was created as a way to promote health, increase food security with vegetables, and cultivate a sense of community amongst individuals at or below the 200% poverty line. The Farmacy Garden serves numerous programs with targeted outreach (including SNAP, EFNEP, area food pantries and low-income housing communities), while emphasizing outreach through the WIC program, as well as to patients at the Community Health Center of the New River Valley—a federally qualified health center that writes garden 'prescriptions' to their patients as part of their wellness program.

## **2 - Soils, Farming, and Food Safety Roundtables**

### **Amendments for Improving Urban Soils.**

Greg Evanylo, Crops and Soil Environmental Sciences, Virginia Tech, [gevanylo@vt.edu](mailto:gevanylo@vt.edu); Karl Berger, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, [kberger@mwkog.org](mailto:kberger@mwkog.org); Bill Brower, DC Water, [William.Brower@dcwater.com](mailto:William.Brower@dcwater.com)

Locally-generated wastes (biosolids, green/yard trimmings, food residuals; composted and/or digested) can be an economically viable and agronomically valuable source of organic matter and nutrients for disturbed, sometimes contaminated urban soils. Our research-extension program is beginning a project that will test the value of such products in urban agricultural



soils at community gardens in Blacksburg, Washington, DC, and Maryland. We will additionally use these sites to extend educational programs on assessing and remediating urban soils for safe and productive gardening.

### **Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program: A Participatory Approach to Beginning Farmer Start-up and Sustainability.**

*Kim Niewolny, Ag., Leadership & Community Ed, Virginia Tech, [niewolny@vt.edu](mailto:niewolny@vt.edu); Adrianna Vargo, Director of Grower Services, Local Food Hub; Allyssa Mark, Virginia Tech; Amy Fannon-Osborne, Virginia Cooperative Extension; Andrew Sorrell, VDACS; Andy Seibel, Catawba Sustainability Center; Jim Hankins, Fauquier Education Farm; James Hilleary, Virginia Cooperative Extension; John Fant, Cattle & Sheep Farmer, Virginia Forage & Grasslands Council; Josh Nease, Catawba Sustainability Center; Katie Myer, Certified Farm Seeker Program; Kathlyn Terry, Appalachian Sustainable Development; Kelli Scott, Virginia Cooperative Extension; Kim Morgan, Virginia Tech; Lorien MacAuley, Virginia Tech; Matt Lohr, Director of Knowledge Center, Farm Credit of the Virginias; Natalie Cook, Virginia Tech; Patrick Johnson, Virginia State University Small Farm Outreach Program; Ray Pickering, Department of Agricultural Development, Fauquier County; Ron Saacke, Virginia Farm Bureau; Rose Jeter, Jeter Farm; Steve Bridge, Service Coordinator, AgrAbility Virginia; Tamara McNaughton, Appalachian Sustainable Development; Tiffany Drape, Virginia Tech; William Crutchfield, Virginia State University Small Farm Outreach Program*

The scale and complexity of the beginning farmer issue raises critical questions about the strategies and frameworks required to achieve long-lasting impacts for beginning farmers. The Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program (VBFRCP) utilizes a participatory approach to enhance start-up and sustainability opportunities for a diversity of new farmers across Virginia. This approach centers on a state-wide coalition to provide whole farm

planning curricula and trainings, farmer networking and mentoring, and capacity building opportunities with the coalition partner organizations. With Virginia Cooperative Extension serving as the backbone organization of the VBFRCP, coalition partners work together in a number of ways to support their beginning farmer communities. From a collective impact perspective, this work requires broad-sector coordination and a more networked approach to allow collaboration and communication, while at the same time allowing autonomy for differentiated programming and activities that serve the goal of supporting the next generation of farmers and the communities in which they reside. In this roundtable presentation, we aim to discuss how VBFRCP works across the state, the ways in which coalition partners connect and collaborate, key outcomes from our programming initiatives, and ways to better support the beginning farmer and rancher community. This includes a focus on outreach to and support for socially disadvantaged, military veteran, and young farmers in Virginia.

### **Food Safety Programming from Farm to Fork.**

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The Center for Disease Control estimates that every year 48 million people suffer from food-borne illness in the United States. Food safety education programming efforts are crucial to address this public health issue. Learn about how VCE is working with many different partners to promote a risk-based, preventive approach to food safety from farm to fork.

## APPENDIX C: LIST OF CLRFS FORUM PARTICIPANTS

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## APPENDIX D: WORLD CAFÉ ACTIVITY RESPONSES

At the conclusion of the forum, the steering committee organized a World Café activity to create an opportunity for forum participants to create dialogue and reflect on the activity of the day. This activity included two “rounds” or “rotations” took place to maximize networking and the building of ideas from group to group. Each table received a set of discussion questions:

Round 1: What insights did you learn today?

Round 2: What do you want to see happen to move this work forward?

The response to these questions were written down on large poster paper and then taken up and transcribed. Below is a summary of the responses organized along three themes: insights learned from participating in the forum, suggestions to support local CLRFS efforts, and ideas for moving the VCE CLRFS initiative forward. We invite you to read the many reactions and suggestions listed by the community of practitioners, researchers, and administrators present at the forum.

### Responses to: What insights did you learn today?

“Knowing programs Better! Understand how my program could complement other program offerings.”

“Greater understanding how work is differentiated, yet complementary.”

“Everyone sees things differently, but also similarly in many respects. There are so many great ideas on working together. Collaboration is key to success rather than isolation.”

“Great momentum going! Don’t see it disappearing anytime soon.”

“Programming ideas for individuals who live in ‘food deserts,’ ways to connect what

they’re eating with the production side. Thank you Marcus+ Dr. Nartea for the insight/inspiration. Food safety for community gardens + maybe home gardeners, too.”

“Successful community garden model + farmer’s market. Insight into the business side of farmers markets and other produce markets serving low income. Two sides: business side and client side.”

“We should consider all new/unique partnerships (faith-based, health dept., etc.) and find passionate people within those organizations to work with. Passion and dedication is important to sustainability.”

“There are a lot of new ideas and opportunities to partner with others to support new programs in my 2 counties.”

“Identifying key leads to help coordinate efforts for pieces”

“VCE is much more interested in collaborations with regional and community organizations.”

“VCE has a self-image complex and does not feel like it’s doing really good at collaborating”

“Work of 31st Street Baptist Church and their partnership with VCE”

“How to utilize the master gardeners to connect with community gardens”

“The effects of climate change on agriculture- something to consider”

“Organizing and creating/facilitating leadership to advance CLR Food Systems work in VA”

“The importance of moving towards collective impact”

“The local success stories are critically important. We must be proactive to share them broadly (e.g. 31st Baptist Church Urban Farm and the total picture of partnerships and collective work)”

“I learned the importance of working together in solving community based problems and the need for food insecurity advocacy”

“The Farmacy Garden- Connections”

“New terminology- Food recovery, utilizations”

“Awareness of what others are doing - collaborations”

“Importance of teamwork- Takes a Village”

“Sharing what’s working and implementing it across the state-- successful models (don’t recreate the wheel)”

“Connecting experienced agents with new agents-mentoring”

“Collaboration with other states = win in VA”

“The Loudoun Ag Education clearing house will be important for seeing what “canned” programs are available, ex. Enhancing the safety of locally grown produce, drinking water clinic”

“Build on community relationships - expand successful programs to include additional community partners”

“Realize different cultures and communication styles between regions, states, groups, generations”

“Interdisciplinary programming- include everyone”

“Focus on under-represented and marginalized groups- dispel misconceptions that they aren’t interested in Agriculture”

“Let teams develop organically, i.e. members invite those with whom they believe they can form productive relationships with”

“Thankful for the insight about the many resources available from the extension”

“Impressed by the level of collaboration occurring, things being done, beauty of community partnerships that extend beyond VCE”

“Amazing!!! Diversity/complexity and competence of projects/leaders”

### **Ideas for Expanding or Enhancing CLRFS Programming on the Ground**

“Suggestions for volunteer incentives”

Programs and agencies working together (no need to reinvent the wheel)”

“Communication: learn what each other is doing, learn best practices, etc.)”

“Now that the system is in process of being formed; identify experts in areas that can help in meeting successful regional, local, and community food systems”

“Avoid doing what other groups out there are already doing”

“A clear understanding that local community buy-in is an essential component to CLRFS work and must be weighed on the front end. For example, a local community leader must take interest and garner additional community support for an effort to sustain over time”

“Is there a way to look at some community programs from an entrepreneurial perspective? Shift thinking to meet a need but also create jobs or public-private partnerships? Opportunities for beginning farmers?”

“Ed programs for producers on the Food Safety Modernization Act”

“Connect more local producers to the local food network”

“More resources and technical help (trainings)”

“More programs across VA”

“Specialist availability to support programs”

“I would like to see people commit to being on the CLRFS steering committee team to increase the number of ideas/opinions surrounding the work”

“Need for better networking between extension and other non-profits, other states, multiple urban ag websites”

“Involve more community partners- to move this work forward”

“What can VCE Provide? - FNP, Program Evaluation, Farmacy Garden Model, and Youth Ed - what does a career in Ag look like?”

“Storytelling with details and accountability”

“Present successful models. What is Sustainable- details with transparency, funding”

“Connect lower income populations with healthier, affordable food”

“Increased number of collaborative research- extension projects that include specialists, agents, and non-VCE people”

“More organized, systematic way of sharing information about projects, leaders, resources”

“Develop more canned programs for Urban (rural poverty too) Ag education”

### **Ideas for Moving VCE CLRFS Forward**

“More buy-in from the local level, local agents, local community partners”

“Better communication within VCE about what is going on across the Commonwealth both at the universities and in the local units”

“Creating a template so the wheel doesn’t have to be reinvented”

“Develop solid communications strategy and tell the stories!”

“Network-development”

“System-wide objectives and evaluation”

“Sensitivity to challenges in managing priorities/time”

“More partnerships statewide and regionally”

“Take the information to other Ag Meetings”

“Networking - don’t limit your team-work with everybody”

“Trickle down - we need structured programming from specialist that fit into efars reporting template”

“Better discussions and understandings of where we fit in the food system/value chain so we can do our work in a wiser more informed way”

“Expanding organization partnerships”

“Learning that the same projects affect rural and urban at the same time”

“Creation of a portal of programs for the entire state”

“You don’t have to do it alone”

“Communication and Collaboration”

“Specific areas of needs”

“Research and extension needs to be collaborative and useful to community Ag efforts”

“Work on more collaborative efforts”

“ID our partners”

“CALS Experts Directory”

“New Partnership opportunities for different programs”

“Central connection between productions, Food Safety and Marketing- all together makes the system”

“Addressing complex community issues requires partnerships at many levels”

“Great demand for transdisciplinary collaborative programming to achieve broad goals - i.e. there is a role for me”

## APPENDIX E: CLRFS FORUM EVALUATION

### 1. How did you first hear or learn about the forum?

#	Answer	Response	%
3	Referral	1	2%
4	Email	18	43%
5	Call for presentations	6	14%
6	Invited to serve on the forum planning committee	2	5%
7	Other	7	17%
8	VCE Winter Conference session	8	19%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Other**

Post card at VCE Winter Conference

Program Partner

my boss asked me to go

Meeting in Crystal City

Another Specialist

Informed and Invited by Dr. Crystal Tyler-Mackey

Statistic	Value
Min Value	3
Max Value	8
Mean	5.48
Variance	2.79
Standard Deviation	1.67
Total Responses	42



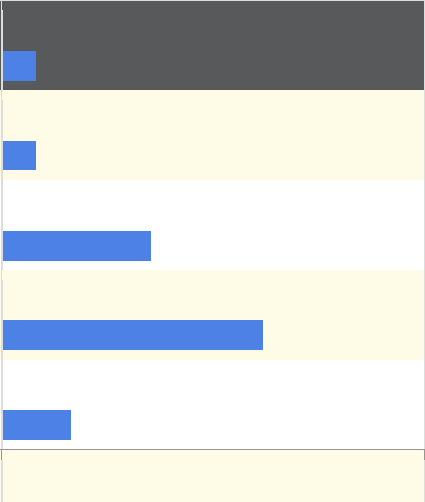
## 2. What was your main reason for attending the forum?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Content	4	10%
2	Networking	9	21%
3	Professional growth and development	9	21%
4	Speakers	0	0%
5	Presenting a session	4	10%
6	Theme/purpose of the forum	14	33%
7	Other	2	5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Other</b>			
Support Committee Work			
Most of the above			
	<b>Statistic</b>	<b>Value</b>	
	Min Value	1	
	Max Value	7	
	Mean	3.98	
	Variance	3.88	
	Standard Deviation	1.97	
	Total Responses	42	

### 3. Overall, how well did the forum fulfill your main reason for attending?

#	Answer		Response	%
11	Not well at all		0	0%
12	Somewhat well		11	26%
14	Well		21	50%
15	Very well		10	24%
	Total		42	100%
		Statistic	Value	
		Min Value	12	
		Max Value	15	
		Mean	13.71	
		Variance	1.23	
		Standard Deviation	1.11	
		Total Responses	42	

4. Overall, how useful was the forum to you?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Not useful at all		0	0%
2	Somewhat useful		13	31%
3	Useful		23	55%
4	Very useful		6	14%
	Total		42	100%
		Statistic	Value	
		Min Value	2	
		Max Value	4	
		Mean	2.83	
		Variance	0.43	
		Standard Deviation	0.66	
		Total Responses	42	

## 5. What were the strengths of the forum?

Text Response
Got to hear about what others in VCE are doing
Enjoyed the variety of topics! It was a good size group - it felt like there was a lot of opportunity to meet new people, see old faces, but move around the space as needed. I appreciated the facilitation throughout the day.
I loved to hear from the passionate volunteers and how they supported the project.
Networking time was built in. That was nice.
The opportunity to learn what others are doing was very useful. Also I was able to talk to several people I had been needing to follow up with.
The various entities that brought awareness to aspects of food systems.
The variety of individuals present. The opportunity to see what others have going on in the way of food systems. I actually loved the facility - it is cool to go new places while still getting some of these programs accomplished. The idea of bringing all of these ideas to one place and trying to gear everyone in the same direction.
The informal setting and venue in which it was provided. Love, love, love the way it was started, with a story, rather than formal stuff. To see how a "seed", a small act by one person, was transformed into something tangible that works! And how VCE programs and outreach efforts complements into many areas of the community. For me it was an opportunity to step outside my area of work and see the other side of extension - boots on the ground - the actual work that is going on in extension areas that I was not familiar with.
The presentations from the partners that have made community gardens a reality in their respective communities was excellent.
Networking with colleagues with similar interest - Learn about programs in place and potential collaborations
Networking; awareness of what work is being done in other areas, successful models; new ideas.
Expert speakers in the agriculture business
Meeting professionals from a diverse array of subject matter, most of whom perform extension and/or research associated to my area of interest.
Good networking, good sharing of ideas and projects.
Good theme, just needs to be executed differently.
Diverse people in attendance, I rarely ever go to things like this with FCS Agents present and working together.
Opportunities for networking, meeting new people, hearing what is going on throughout the state. Cool venue!
Format, Layout, Open for discussion, interaction
Good networking, concurrent sessions, opportunity to have open discussions
Networking and VCE "thinking" outside of the box to address CLRFS work.
Good dialogue

## 5. What were the strengths of the forum? (continued)

<p>The overall format was a real strength. There was a lot to try to cover in a small scope of time and space, so the opportunity to move about and explore ideas and issues with everyone was the absolute right way to go. It was structured and formal, but not overly done. The scope and depth of content was good but, again, not too much. Also, having food available all day was awesome. As was making time to allow folks like Marcus and the Farmacy Garden team to present their successes was a real value. It shows so much room for future collaboration and a sort of road map on how to get there.</p>	
<p>The forum provided a good overview of how VCE is involved in the complex food system across the Commonwealth. Perhaps this is a way to break down the silos within VCE. It was helpful to network with both VCE personnel and with partner organizations. The opening session with the Minister and VCE Richmond personnel was a fantastic discussion and a great way to start the day. The mix of presentations and opportunities to talk in small groups was great.</p>	
<p>Networking opportunities and sharing about our work</p>	
<p>Information that was being shared.</p>	
<p>Interdisciplinary knowledge</p>	
<p>Open discussion; setting the tone through the story of 31st Baptist Church</p>	
<p>Location, layout of events and local impact</p>	
<p>Diversity of topics presented. Diverse audience for forum.</p>	
<p>Enjoyed the community flavor to it - gives context to the food systems work being done on the ground within the community. World cafe sessions very productive.</p>	
<p>Diverse group of presenters. Excellent food.</p>	
<p>The general format and the opportunity to hear from colleagues. Also, seem to be a real spirit of engagement.</p>	
<p>Action by a focus team, networking and learning from other colleagues</p>	
<p>I felt the forum fostered an atmosphere of collaboration, communication, and effective dialogue that enabled participants to see first-hand the idea of collective impact. At the beginning, I remember a number of people were questioning the purpose of the forum, but one strength was the fact that after all was said and done, more people were "on board" and saw the direction Extension is trying to go in regards to a more holistic, collective direction.</p>	
<p>Good information, positive energy, good networking</p>	
<p>Nice to hear what everyone is doing and sharing information.</p>	
<p>Hearing Reverend Henderson's real-world example about the benefit of community gardens and urban farms. The networking capabilities.</p>	
<p>The forum allowed each individual to network with partners who are doing wonderful work throughout Virginia. This was one of the best forums, because it did not require you to stay seated or quiet throughout the presentations. I enjoyed this opportunity and I look forward to attending more forums from the committee. This forum provided the audiences with great knowledge of issues that are affecting our local communities and also provided ways to begin to solve these problems as a community.</p>	
<p>The opening</p>	
Statistic	Value
Total Responses	39

## 6. What were the weaknesses of the forum?

### Text Response

It was hard to network because there was not a lot of time to do so - if you heard about something in the session after lunch it was hard to find time to talk about it

During the afternoon session, it was difficult to hear the speakers on Eastside A because the voices from Eastside B carried and sort of drown out the softer voices. I realize this was probably just a challenge of the space (even though I thought it was a nice venue!) I wish more community members/organizations could have attended so that we could hear from more experiences like the 31st Street Baptist Church.

Sometimes we hear the same things over, so it was nice to hear from the community how they partnered with VCE and what their expectations were.

The timeline leading up to the forum was very tight. I would have liked more time to work on my presentations.

It seems that at these kinds of events, often the growers are missing from the conversation. I think it is important to have them there because they are one of the main reasons we are all concerned with local food.

There were none.

The setup of the forum made it hard to hear and concentrate from speaker to speaker. Changing the adjourn time to an hour later than it was on the save the date - afternoon pick-ups and plans had to be changed at the last minute. (I do understand that agendas change though) More time for posters was necessary.

Stakeholders were present. I think we should have ID them differently (different name tag color or ribbon); some inside jokes were not really something that they understood. We know who Ed Jones is but they don't. The Roundtable sessions should have been held in different areas. I could not hear the session that I was attending.

I don't think the posters were necessary, they didn't get much attention from the participants.

To list specific concern and needs of the communities to connect with specialists with expertise in those specific areas.

Having different rooms for the roundtable sessions would have been better - it was hard to hear with two groups in the same room. Also, those were more like mini-presentations versus actual facilitated roundtable discussions.

A little too open in structure and layout

Nothing for the time available for such diverse professionals to interact.

It was a little slow paced.

Not very organized. Rooms overlapped so you couldn't hear your session going on. Too long and drug out - not everyone needed to say something at the wrap up. It's called a wrap up so wrap it up!! I would suggest having it more organized, it seemed like it was just thrown together. I would suggest a different location with several private rooms.

LONG. The second half of the sessions when we were all in one room was a bit too much. It was too hard to hear.

I thought that some of the sessions were too short. I wasn't super impressed with lunch either. I thought having the roundtable discussions all in one room were not a good idea - I had a very hard time hearing some of the presenters once the other roundtable session was finished.

Noisy in breakouts, but tolerable; needed more partners there; appeared to be several who registered but did not show up as evidenced by leftover lunches.

## 6. What were the weaknesses of the forum? (continued)

More of the demonstration/hands on projects were presented. Not enough research based projects on the ongoing theme.	
I did not see a lot of "weaknesses" but it is always great to have more local partners involved. I suspect that will come in time.	
Too open ended - how to close the steering direction	
The small space and having to talk over everyone. The lack of non-VCE community partners.	
The partners weren't introduced so many got lost in the mix. It was hard to hear the speakers during the afternoon roundtable discussions. It would have been better to have the 2 discussions on opposite sides of the building.	
Really hard to hear over concurrent sessions going on; space was pretty but poorly designed for the break-outs. Also the length of the breakouts was very short to really have the kinds of discussions that could have happened.	
Needed more outside organizations, farmers and other who will benefit from this very valuable information.	
Space was beautiful but difficult to separate presentations	
screen too small for powerpoint	
It seemed to lack a coherent binding force for food system work. I thought we would have benefitted from a presentation of the food system wheel, and how these diverse types of food system work all fit together and can learn from each other in this forum. The unification of each participant's work would have made everyone feel more like they were "a part of something," and made more of a sense of community around the mission of the CLRFS working groups.	
Shared presentation space made hearing challenging in some breakout sessions. Open space time perhaps needed more time for folks to discern ideas for discussion.	
Multiple presentations at one time. Difficult to hear in the afternoon sessions.	
Only weakness would be on how to split time between concurrent sessions that I would have liked to attend.	
Lack of growers, consumers and in general other private and public institutions participation.	
I'm not sure if it's a weakness, but I felt that a lot of people left throughout the day. I'm not sure if that means they lost interest, had prior engagements, etc. I, personally, thought that the location may have been a weakness for some people that would have liked to come, and I will elaborate more in the space below.	
Hard to hear in the building at times. Sessions were a little close together.	
The logistics - for the afternoon breakout session, I had a hard time focusing on my session because the other session was so close and very loud. I wish there was more focus on the practicality of starting community gardens in our locales and more emphasis put on the pitfalls in various food systems and what we as extension agents can do to address them.	
There was no weakness with the forum.	
It wasn't what I was really expecting. I don't think it was titled very well. It isolated covered aspects of VCE involvement in food systems by not the system itself.	
Statistic	Value
Total Responses	38

## 7. What next steps, if any, would you suggest that the forum organizers take to keep the initiative moving forward?

Text Response
Regional meetings?
Find a way for people to post/share information about their projects/programs online, such as a repository for program overview, sample budgets, promotional materials, etc. If that isn't possible, maybe just an online index of things going on in each community with the corresponding agent's contact information. Some sort of online community message board would also be really helpful, so that we could post questions to the larger group and anyone with input could provide feedback.
Continue to involve new project volunteers to share their experience.
I would send out a recap of the forum. What were some of the Open Space discussions? What topics did people present on? How do folks want to move forward?
I think the opportunity to connect and network is very important. I think moving forward it would be good to have even more outside partners involved. The next gathering also might be a good place to have the world café exercise again, but this time have a longer session, and have the questions focused on specific food system challenges.
Come up with a list or database with all of the programs that were dotted on that wheel.
That complete details about types of presentations, time limit, etc. are provided to people interested in making a presentation without having to do a registration to find out what was available. Provide all details in advance, that way we can plan the presentations based on the options available.
Have a best management practices for community gardens. A tour of successful gardens would be good. Maybe Extension can have a demonstration "food garden" in each district so that if there is a request from local people to start one people can go and see before they embark on a project.
To solidify those programs already in place by participating and assisting the leaders and the communities. To continue networking and collaboration to seek logistic support for these and new projects/programs that include the participation of community, local and regional food systems.
Compile a working document - maybe on Google Drive so all can access and update - that will show what type of work and projects are going on around the state, and who the main contact is for that work. That way, if someone else is interested in doing something similar, they can reach out and gain insight, models, information, versus recreating the wheel.
Keep the participants and presenters connected electronically
I'm not sure, but we need to do something to avoid losing the momentum. Perhaps, a more structured, but speedy, vehicle for sharing our individual areas of expertise.
Development of interactive map of VA with projects posted and described by location and in map marker links with contact info so that replication can be facilitated.
Be more organized. Have a clear mission on what you want to get from the forum and the day. I felt like nothing was accomplished except some conversations.
More local meetings like Richmond Area, Nova, Charlottesville Area, NRV, etc. so that we can better figure out what's happening in our area and how we can work together.
Summarize notes and send out. Look for common connections with attendees. Consider applying for a USDA-LFPP grant in May to continue work with funding source; structured similar to Dr. Kim Niewolny's BF grant for coalition building.
Try to identify researchers who are working in this area and see if they would like to get involved through presentations or hosting workshops on a particular aspect.
Keep organizing the work groups to move ideas forward. Feels like a good way to build a team.



**7. What next steps, if any, would you suggest that the forum organizers take to keep the initiative moving forward? (continued)**

Focus on one or two items for the short term develop a long term strategy	
Reach out to more community partners who may have bandwidth to contribute meaningfully. Send out highlights and take homes in an email. Task a small group with identifying whether it is a good move to begin a community portal that allows members to populate with the objectives, projects, and programs they're working on in their community, or if there's already some platform that we should be using to connect better through (I think Food Care is already creating software that will accomplish this effectively and will be used across the country, but I'm not sure it's being used in VA yet).	
Some of the forum could be incorporated in the Urban Ag Summit/Conference.	
Perhaps create working groups within key areas. This needs to be aligned well with program impact team work so we aren't simply reinventing the wheel and doubling efforts and time invested.	
Foster gatherings or partnerships within districts.	
perhaps forming sub committees that focus on the categorical areas in bold print on the graphic	
Have another general-invitation meeting to hammer out a coherent set of principles and plan for action, then start working towards that plan of action.	
Although present at the forum, how can organizers rally VCE to advance this work within the state.	
Formalizing work groups that are more task and goal oriented without getting too unwieldy. It would be good to have a farm-to-table dinner with key stakeholders and legislators to make them aware of some of the efforts. How to better capture the stories from the field.	
Planning educational program around the themes that were discussed and starting workshops and conference. The Food Innovation Program has a lot of potential to offer unique solutions to both consumers and growers in Virginia.	
Forums like this one should be offered throughout the state, making it more convenient for other agents/specialists to come. I think in doing this, it would help the agents see that Extension, as a whole, is willing to come to the agent to help in the process versus the agent being expected to travel.	
Get even more local groups organized.	
Create a way for people to stay connected and report on what they are doing in their locales but also for people to get ideas as to what they can do in their own areas.	
I think the organizers should continue hosting forums and follow up meeting to begin to solve the problems that are affecting each region as a whole. Also, please share the final thoughts from the last activity we participated in as a group.	
Connect aspects of the system for greater improvement to the system. Distribution is a big part of that. Farm markets are fine but food demand and supply is largely dictated by supermarket chains. How do we get more local product on the shelves? Not just specialty items but products people need a buy every day, whole food like produce, meat and dairy.	
Statistic	Value
Total Responses	33

## 8. Please use this space to share any final thoughts about the forum.

Text Response
Overall, it was great! I think it could be expanded to a multiple day event at some point in the future, so that we could go deeper into some of the projects.
I enjoyed it!
The last session - feedback, was not very productive to me; don't know if the question's focus was too narrow or it could have just being me :)
A tour to a site would have been great. It would've enabled everyone to see the program in action. Don't know if any City people were or are involved in this effort! It would be great to hear their perspective on gardens. Include families that can "testify" on food security based on gardening unless most of the participants are "hobby farmers".
- Great networking. - Next step would be to identify those topics of concern among the communities to connect with the specialists and form working groups to address them.
A more formal setting would better insure that the participants receive noteworthy information; the informal strategy was most confusing to some
Food was great, venue was very cool.
Food was horrible.
Loved the content and the flow.
Great first steps! I think anything to try to get people across the state talking about what they are doing is great. I loved the roundtable discussions and the opportunity for just open discussion.
The greatest benefit was to work with the committee members, to see their personal sacrifices to work together and get something done, that was inspiring and I observed my VT colleagues on all levels administration to field making a difference to bring order to chaos. It was a delightful experience!
It was a good event!
Enjoyed the pastor story - hopefully it will be made into a story to share on VCE
Overall good job. Thanks and please keep it going.
I thought the forum was worthwhile, but perhaps premature and could have been planned for a later time to get better buy-in. I realize this was a first step and important so applaud the efforts. The biggest weakness was the communication about the forum, what the sessions were supposed to be about, and specific guidance for that time. Perhaps better planning and coordination with already existing efforts would give us bigger bang for the buck. A recurring problem I see with the CRLFS work is the complexity and how challenging it is to capture all the vital areas that need to be represented around the table. Having been involved with this work for over 9 years, it hasn't gotten any easier either! Guess it is the nature of the work, but think that working groups with actionable items is still the best way to go. The challenge is allowing for grassroots partnerships yet trying to have cohesive efforts--that is a hugely big charge and not sure how that is accomplished.
When advertising the forum to community partners, it would have been better to separate registration from call for proposals. I think some found that confusing.
Now we have had a forum what are the next steps .... It's time to put some action to this great work. Is it time to entertain a specialist for CLRFS???
The space was unfortunate because in the afternoon session, it was difficult to hear and focus on the speaker because the sound was travelling over from the other session.
Thank you!

8. Please use this space to share any final thoughts about the forum. (continued)

Very good initial step. Having more of an organizational structure that is nimble and gets things done will be a key. Avoid being seen as a planned program team.

Everyone did a very good job

Great job!!

Glad I was able to attend!

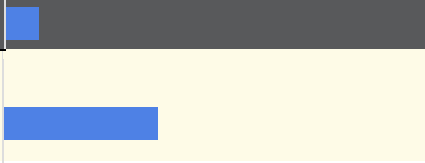
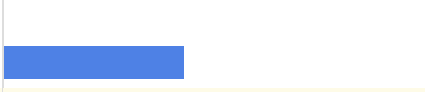
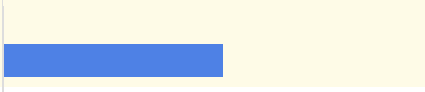



This forum was amazing and it highlighted the issues that are plaguing our local communities. Each presenter provided ways to begin to tackle the problems that individuals face on a daily basis such as hunger and poverty. Overall, I enjoyed the presentations!

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	24

9. If you are interested in being more actively involved in future community, local, and regional food systems activities, please provide your name, email address, and telephone number. Please note that your responses to the survey questions will be anonymous and will not be associated with this contact information you provide.

Text Response	
Meredith Ledlie Johnson	meredil@vt.edu X1704
Kim Butterfield,	mskimb8@vt.edu, 540-772-7524
I would like to be involved in the evaluation subcommittee.	Sarah Misyak smisyak@vt.edu 540-231-8541
Kirsten Halverson	BFBLHR.director@gmail.com 804-577-8098
Elizabeth G-Mundoma	gmundoma@vt.edu 757-382-6348
Ramon A. Arancibia,	aran@vt.edu, 757-350-1247
Charles Hester,	(charles.hester@richmondgov.com) (804) 646-6067
Greg Evanylo,	gevanylo@vt.edu, 540-231-9739 I am interested in contributing but will not have the time to take a large leadership/committee role.
Kirsten Conrad Buhls	kbuhs@vt.edu 703 539 9855 cell 703 228 6423
Sure! Why not? :)	Sarah Sharpe seweaver@vt.edu 434-985-5236
Nartea, Theresa,	tnartea@vsu.edu; 804-524-5491
already involved	
Thanks	
Toby Vernon Executive Director, The Community Food Collaborative	communityfoodcollaborative@gmail.com 804.402.3119 communityfoodcollaborative.org
At this time am just to swamped with other demands and feel my contributions to the work at hand in my program team and work goals will better move things forward.	
Ann Vargo	avargo@vt.edu 804-433-2556
Actually, I am interested in re-engaging in this work.	Susan Clark, sfclark@vt.edu; 231-8768
Eric Bendfeldt,	ebendfel@vt.edu, 540-432-6029
Reza Rafie	arafie@vsu.edu
Cyndi Wyskiewicz	Cyndiw@vt.edu (757) 393-5314
Calandra Chaney	CIChaney@vt.edu 804-751-4401
Katrida Williams	katridaw@vt.edu
Ann Hageman	ahage004@odu.edu 757.303.8136
Statistic	Value
Total Responses	23

10. Please check all the sessions you attended for which you would like to provide feedback.

#	Answer		Response	%
2	Innovation in Educational Approaches, Processes, and Evaluations		12	32%
3	Poster Session		14	38%
4	Food Access and Security Roundtable Discussions		17	46%
5	Soils, Farming, and Food Safety Roundtable Discussions		15	41%
132	Programs in Food Safety and Food Security		24	65%
137	Open Space		10	27%
		Statistic	Value	
		Min Value	2	
		Max Value	137	
		Total Responses	37	

**11. Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with the following aspects of the session: (Programs in Food Safety and Food Security)**

#	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	I found the session to be informative	0	0	1	20	3	24	4.08
2	I made thought and people connections that increased my understanding of the topics	0	0	2	19	2	23	4.00
3	I left the session with ideas for future action	0	2	3	16	2	23	3.78

Statistic	I found the session to be informative	I made thought and people connections that increased my understanding of the topics	I left the session with ideas for future action
Min Value	3	3	2
Max Value	5	5	5
Mean	4.08	4.00	3.78
Variance	0.17	0.18	0.54
Standard Deviation	0.41	0.43	0.74
Total Responses	24	23	23

**12. Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with the following aspects of the session: (Innovation in Educational Approaches, Processes and Evaluations)**

#	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	I found the session to be informative	0	0	1	7	4	12	4.25
2	I made thought and people connections that increased my understanding of the topics	0	0	1	7	3	11	4.18
3	I left the session with ideas for future action	0	0	2	7	2	11	4.00

Statistic	I found the session to be informative	I made thought and people connections that increased my understanding of the topics	I left the session with ideas for future action
Min Value	3	3	3
Max Value	5	5	5
Mean	4.25	4.18	4.00
Variance	0.39	0.36	0.40
Standard Deviation	0.62	0.60	0.63
Total Responses	12	11	11

**13. Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with the following aspects of the session: (Poster Session)**

#	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	I found the session to be informative	0	0	2	10	2	14	4.00
2	I made thought and people connections that increased my understanding of the topics	0	0	4	8	2	14	3.86
3	I left the session with ideas for future action	0	0	6	5	3	14	3.79

Statistic	I found the session to be informative	I made thought and people connections that increased my understanding of the topics	I left the session with ideas for future action
Min Value	3	3	3
Max Value	5	5	5
Mean	4.00	3.86	3.79
Variance	0.31	0.44	0.64
Standard Deviation	0.55	0.66	0.80
Total Responses	14	14	14



14. Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with the following aspects of the session: (Food Access and Security Roundtable Discussions)

#	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	I found the session to be informative	0	0	1	13	3	17	4.12
2	I made thought and people connections that increased my understanding of the topics	0	0	1	13	3	17	4.12
3	I left the session with ideas for future action	0	1	0	13	3	17	4.06

Statistic	I found the session to be informative	I made thought and people connections that increased my understanding of the topics	I left the session with ideas for future action
Min Value	3	3	2
Max Value	5	5	5
Mean	4.12	4.12	4.06
Variance	0.24	0.24	0.43
Standard Deviation	0.49	0.49	0.66
Total Responses	17	17	17

15. Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with the following aspects of the session: (Soils, Farming, and Food Safety Roundtable Discussions)

#	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	I found the session to be informative	0	0	1	11	3	15	4.13
2	I made thought and people connections that increased my understanding of the topics	0	0	2	11	2	15	4.00
3	I left the session with ideas for future action	0	0	1	12	2	15	4.07

Statistic	I found the session to be informative	I made thought and people connections that increased my understanding of the topics	I left the session with ideas for future action
Min Value	3	3	3
Max Value	5	5	5
Mean	4.13	4.00	4.07
Variance	0.27	0.29	0.21
Standard Deviation	0.52	0.53	0.46
Total Responses	15	15	15

16. Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with the following aspects of the session: (Open Space)

#	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	I found the session to be informative	0	1	3	4	2	10	3.70
2	I made thought and people connections that increased my understanding of the topics	0	0	4	3	3	10	3.90
3	I left the session with ideas for future action	0	1	3	3	3	10	3.80

Statistic	I found the session to be informative	I made thought and people connections that increased my understanding of the topics	I left the session with ideas for future action
Min Value	2	3	2
Max Value	5	5	5
Mean	3.70	3.90	3.80
Variance	0.90	0.77	1.07
Standard Deviation	0.95	0.88	1.03
Total Responses	10	10	10

**17. Please provide any comments you would like to make about this session. (Programs in Food Safety and Food Security)**

Text Response
Provide a district-wide training for the public on different Food Safety programs.
Needs to all be ignite sessions or all be 15 minute presentations.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	2

**18. Please provide any comments you would like to make about this session. (Innovation in Educational Approaches, Processes and Evaluations)**

Text Response
Speakers were great. Workshops could be built around any/all of those who spoke
Lacked a binding philosophy to tie it all together.
This was a very well organized and informative session

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	3

**19. Please provide any comments you would like to make about this session. (Poster Session)**

Text Response
We needed more time for this. There was great conversation but about 10 minutes of time.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	1

**20. Please provide any comments you would like to make about this session. (Food Access and Security Roundtable Discussions)**

Text Response	
The session was overall good, but it was difficult to hear the speakers due to the space.	

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	1

**21. Please provide any comments you would like to make about this session. (Soils, Farming, and Food Safety Roundtable Discussions)**

Text Response	
Great topics, hard to hear!	
Not much directions	

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	2

**22. Please provide any comments you would like to make about this session. (Open Space)**

Text Response	
Because of this facility, this was difficult.	
Partnerships and Collaborations	
While it was great to learn more about the other disciplines of VCE, it was great to talk and hear from community partners and to see what the issues are from the community.	
I think the open space session had good intentions, but people used it as another break. A little more structure may be needed to help facilitate more effective discussion.	
I enjoyed this session because it allowed everyone to engage in open dialogue.	

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	5

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