

Connecticut Food Policy Council
Minutes
May 14, 2009
Department of Agriculture Conference Room
165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT

Present:

<u>Council Members</u>	<u>Representatives</u>	<u>Others</u>
Linda Drake	Ellen Sloan	Jean King
Linda Hubeny	Stan Sorkin	
Teri Dandeneau		
Rick Macsuga		
Lucy Nolan		
David Yandow		
Michael Keilty		
Mary Parizo		
Dennis King		

The meeting was called to order by Linda Drake at 1:15 p.m.

Mary Parizo made a motion to approve the minutes for the April 9, 2009 meeting. The motion was seconded by Rick Macsuga. The minutes were approved.

Legislative Update

Healthy Food Certification

Teri Dandeneau indicated that due to her position at the Connecticut State Department of Education, she could not voice an opinion or vote on issues relating to the Healthy Food Certification (HFC). Discussion took place on the HFC letter that was drafted and issued by the Connecticut Food Policy Council (CFPC). Recommendations were made to contact representatives ASAP.

State Legislative Proposal on Nutrition Labeling

Linda Drake and Lucy Nolan attended a conference on obesity and the legislative proposal addressing nutrition labeling was discussed. The legislative proposal is to have chain food service establishments (having 15 or more sites nationally) list the total calories of the food items on the menu. This would involve only those foods that are served on a regular basis – not daily specials. Discussion surrounded the pros and cons to this legislative proposal. Grocery stores are exempted. Lucy Nolan made a motion to support this proposal. Michael Keilty seconded the motion. Seven members voted in favor and three opposed. The motion passed and an e-mail showing the CFPC's support will be drafted and distributed.

HB 5819 An Act Allowing the Production and Sale of acidified Food Products on Residential Farms

HB 5819 was proposed by the Connecticut Farm Bureau. The bill would permit farmers to sell locally grown canned food items such as pickles. Discussion surrounded food safety issues and processing. More information is needed and the CFPC decided not to bring this to a vote at this time.

Other Business

Michael Keilty mentioned that there was a Connecticut Farm Bureau meeting on the evening of May 14th. Requirements for Farmer's Markets was the topic of the meeting.

The recent recall of sprouts in the Northeast due to contamination with listeria was discussed. David Yandow indicated the company in Bridgeport was still in business but were impacted financially due to the recall. The product is currently available again.

Dairy legislation addressing state price supports to help subsidize the dairy farms in Connecticut was discussed. Linda Hubeny mentioned that UHT (Ultra-Heat Treatment) milk would be available to the schools as a government commodity item. However, the schools would not be able to use this shelf stable milk to replace or reduce fluid milk purchases or compete with fluid milk sales in the school Child Nutrition Programs.

Teri Dandeneau provided an update on the school garden question that was asked during the April 9, 2009 CFPC meeting. Linda Hubeny contacted USDA for guidance on schools purchasing produce from a school or community garden. USDA's response was "There is no Federal prohibition against using the school's locally grown fruits and vegetables in the NSLP as long as State and Local food safety and sanitation standards are met and HACCP procedures are adhered to. In short, this is a local decision."

Rick Macsuga suggested that school gardeners work with their Cooperative Extension Service and the Master Gardener Program. David Yandow suggested that the school food service programs be involved with Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for training. David Yandow offers workshops in GAP for farmers.

Teri Dandeneau shared parts of Tracey Weeks' e-mail addressing this question. In general, Tracey indicated that most CT farms do not follow GAPs. For farms to sell to distributors or major chains they often have to go through a certification program, which most could not meet without following GAPs, HACCP plans, modifications to their operations and lab analysis of produce samples. Additionally, any processing of the produce such as washing, cutting, drying, packaging, etc., would fall under the jurisdiction of the Department of Consumer Protection and would have to be processed in a licensed commercial kitchen to be considered from an approved source by DPH.

Michael Keilty indicated that he spoke with one Superintendent who was concerned about school gardens because of the possible contamination of the soil. Discussion took place on soil testing and the implications. The testing of soil is costly and there are no current standards for heavy metals.

Rick Macsuga mentioned that the Dept. of Agriculture was in the process of writing a grant to provide funding for future GAP training with local farmers.

Mary Parizo pointed out that the Department of Social Services (DSS) was implementing expanded categorical eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Lucy Nolan announced that End Hunger CT! will be having a fundraiser at a the Tyrone Farm in Pomfret, CT on June 25, 2009 from 5:00-8:00 p.m. More information will be forthcoming.

Stan Sorkin indicated that WIC's new food package would take place on October 1 instead of the original date of July 1, 2009.

The next meeting has been **changed to June 4, 2009** and will be either at the Dept. of Agriculture or at a local farm. Details will be provided.

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Teri Dandeneau