

Agricultural Support & Farmland Preservation



February 16, 2011

POLK COUNTY
OFFICE OF AGRICULTURAL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PHILOSOPHY

- THE BEST WAY TO PRESERVE FARMLAND IS TO KEEP IT ECONOMICALLY SOUND
- THE RESIDENTS WANTED TO KEEP THE COUNTY RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL
- DEFINE WHAT IS NEEDED IN POLK COUNTY, NOT THE STATE OR THE NATION.



GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

1. TO RECONNECT THE COMMUNITY WITH AGRICULTURE
2. TO ENHANCE EXISTING AGRICULTURE BUSINESSES
3. TO CREATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR AGRICULTURE
4. FARMLAND PRESERVATION

GOAL STRATEGY

- Do you really know what is in your county?
- Make an assessment that fits your county
- Tap into the wealth of resources (University, Extension, NCDOACS, Nonprofits)
- Make the connections for your farmers
- Cooperate, collaborate and work as a team
- Treat agriculture as an economic engine
- Tell the story!

WHAT'S BEEN DONE?



RECONNECTING COMMUNITY – TWO YEARS LATER

- PARTNER WITH ON GOING PROGRAMS SUCH AS ASAP, HERITAGE COUNCILS, MARKETING GROUPS, UNIVERSITY, DEPARTMENT OF AG ETC.
- AGRICULTURE IS PART OF THE ARTS, COMMUNITY EVENTS, HISTORY, CIVIC GROUPS, REAL ESTATE, COTTAGE INDUSTRIES
- SCHOOLS
- OUTREACH MINISTRIES
- AMERICORPS
- FARM TOURS
- NEW/OLD TRUCK AND TRAILER
- 35 HOME GARDENS
- 14+ COMMUNITY GARDENS

FARM TO FORK DINNER



COLUMBUS FARM FESTIVAL



ENHANCING EXISTING FARMS –

TWO YEARS LATER

- 6 NEW GREENHOUSE OPERATIONS
- 30 ACRES OF INTENSIVE VEGETABLE PRODUCTION
- 15 GRANTS – 4 DIRECTLY TO GROWERS
- NEW FARMERS
- FARM FESTIVAL
- INTENSIVE PRESS COVERAGE
- THREE CSAs
- NEW CROPS
- MILL SPRING SCHOOL
- FRIENDS OF AG BREAKFASTS
- KEEP THE FARM WORKSHOP

Have Fun!



NEW OPPORTUNITIES—

TWO YEARS LATER

- FARMERS MARKETS – 2 EXISTING & 3 NEW ONES
OVER 100 VENDORS PER WEEK AND 130+
VENDORS HAVE PARTICIPATED
 - Estimated over \$600,000 direct sales
- COMMUNITY COLLEGE COURSES
- SPECIAL MEETINGS –CROPS AND OPPORTUNITIES
- AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT WITH BIZ WORKS
- FARMLAND GENERATIONS FORUM & GUIDE

Stony Knoll Community Garden



MILL SPRING AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT CENTER



COMMUNITY SPIRIT



WHAT NEXT?

- VALUE ADDED PRODUCTS
- COMMERCIAL KITCHEN & RETAIL SPACE
- MARKETS BEYOND POLK COUNTY {4 grants}
- TWO YEAR DEGREE PROGRAMS
- AGRI-TOURS AS A PRIVATE BUSINESS
- INCREASE SKILLS
- INCREASE RESOURCES

SET THE STAGE

- Polk County Started In 1992
- Start With What You Have
- HUSTLE!

Thank You

