

## 2018 Michigan Good Food Summit

### Breakout Session #9: Lightning Talks

1:45 pm

**Moderator:** Kathryn Colasanti

#### Session 9-A: Addressing Food Insecurity through Community Engagement

**Nancy McCrohan, PhD**, Senior Project Manager, Public Policy Associates, Inc., Lansing, MI

- Feeding America West Michigan → Be Healthy Berrien
- Food insecurity - lack of access at times to a sustainable and nutritious food source
- 43% of Berrien County is food insecure
  - This is triple the rate of food insecurity in the US
  - The mortality rate in Berrien county is double that of the US
- Organizations are looking for a model to address the food environment
- One potential model is the food club - a pantry that looks like a small grocery store
  - Food is free to member
  - Promotes healthy eating and customers' choices
  - Requires an assessment of community's food environment
    - Testing resident acceptance of the idea of food clubs
      - Focus groups asked questions about location, freshness of food, member fees, volunteer opportunities, etc.
    - See opportunities for including a commercial kitchen, community gathering spaces, etc.
- Important to keep beneficiaries involved in next steps and to make sure to stay responsive to their needs

#### Session 9-B: Urban Food Production With Exceptional Students: The Gardens at Drew

**Michael Craig, MA**, Special Education teacher/Director of Horticulture Program, Charles Drew Transition Center/Detroit Public Schools Community District, Detroit, MI

- Michael is a horticulture teacher at Drew Transition Center
  - The education program serves special needs adults age 18-26
  - Provides vocational, skill-based learning for students until they age out of the program
- Goal is to showcase to students that there are many ways to grow food
  - Hydroponics, wall growing, hoopouses, etc.
  - Ensure people in wheelchairs and people with physical disabilities are also able to participate
    - Bringing the jobs to the students, not the students to the job
- Gardens make sales to restaurant clients - especially from hydroponics production
  - 3000-4000 heads of lettuce every week
  - Teaches students to make value-added food products
    - Spice rubs, seed tapes, seed bombs, 5 bean dried soup
- Program is receiving corporate financial support
- Has a new logo

- Look for their products at Westborn Market and Whole Foods!

### **Session 9-C: Transforming School Culture from Inside Out**

**Matthew Hargis**, Program Supervisor, Detroit School Garden Collaborative and Office of School Nutrition

- Detroit has a rich agricultural history
  - Urban farms developed by French settlers, victory gardens, etc.
- Now, there are over 1,400 farms and gardens in the city supported by Keep Growing Detroit
- City has a large food economy, but also low food security
- Detroit students are lagging behind in many educational areas
- Office of School Nutrition participates in:
  - 35-40% local food sourcing
  - Breakfast, lunch, and dinner program
  - Fresh fruit and veg program
  - About 50% of budget is spent on food itself - this is high for most food providers/restaurants/similar organizations and industries
  - School garden expansion
  - Teacher trainings
- Detroit School Garden Collaborative has goal to establish gardens for every school in the school district
- 20,000 pounds of food grown at Drew farm, organically produced (not certified)
  - Drew Transition Center contributes to this production
- Long term goals
  - Establish satellite farming sites
  - Implement district-wide composting program to utilize cafeteria waste
  - Re-develop a district agri-science program
  - Increase summer Farm to School Assistant program
  - Integrate school gardens into curriculum

### **Session 9-D: Invisible Workers: Slavery, Gender Violence and Poverty in Food Labor**

**Jonathan Roberts**, Community Organizer, Detroit, MI

- Jonathan is a member of the Detroit Food Policy Council
- Some issues are invisible, but turn out to be ubiquitous
- Tells the story of his ancestor, Sarah Snider
  - She was born in 1805 in Charleston, SC
  - Woke up at 4 AM every day to work in fields from sunrise to sunset, prepared food for the people who enslaved her
  - Jonathan finds himself experiencing similar injustices in his work in the restaurant industry
- Our society tends to see the customer before the worker; but the worker underlies it all
  - “Existence on the periphery”
  - While they are often invisible, there are 13 million workers in restaurant industry
- Workers face political and economic disenfranchisement

- Sexual violence, physical violence
- Restaurants have an analogous relationship to prisons - new sites of the plantation system
  - Some prisoners make only 20 cents per hour for their work
- Related to immobility, immigration
- Food is treated as a private good, not a human right
- Treatment of house slaves and field slaves is analogous to back of house workers and front of house workers
  - Treated differently by customers and employers
- Food justice is not just tied to the consumer
  - Need to ask: Who cooks food? Who serves food? etc.

### **Session 9-E: Advocacy for Healthy Checkout Aisles**

**Jane Kramer, BA**, Advocate for Healthy Checkout Aisles, East Lansing, MI

- Story begins with Jane trying to communicate with Meijer corporate offices to ask them to offer healthy checkout aisles
  - Organized Walk for Healthy Checkouts
  - Mailed over 700 postcards
  - Petition with over 2400 signatures
- Assessments of 6 Meijer stores revealed that:
  - $\frac{2}{3}$  of beverage options were sugar-sweetened drinks
  - Less than 3% of offerings qualified as healthy
  - Express aisles offered 32 ounce cups for pop
- Why should Meijer offer healthy checkouts?
  - Health checkouts align with Meijer values
  - They are the 7th largest food retailer in the country
  - Meijer has the flexibility to make the change
- Some Aldi stores already have dedicated healthy checkouts
  - Competitive advantage
  - Distinguishes them as responsive to consumers
- Why are healthy checkouts important?
  - Improve access to healthier options
  - Support customer health
  - Promote food equity
  - Support smaller, local businesses
  - Easier for families to navigate
- Full report on campaign website: [bit.ly/askmeijer](http://bit.ly/askmeijer)

## Session 9-F: Can a Lansing-Grown Label Unify Urban Farmers and Catalyze a Robust Food System?

**Eric Schertzing**, Board Member and Ingham County Treasurer & Land Bank Chair, Lansing Urban Farm Project and Ingham County

- Profit is an important part of farming, including urban farming → small growers are entrepreneurs
  - Can experience entrepreneurship poverty
  - Most growers are not entirely dependent on their income from the farms
- Ingham County Land Bank finds use for vacant land
  - Many Lansing urban farms found land this way
- Lansing Grown label is about the growers and what it can do for them
  - This is different from the goals of the Lansing Urban Farm Project
- Organized pop-up markets during the summer to try to raise excitement
  - Want to make their enterprises more profitable because of the time they invest in them
- Purpose of the label
  - Seal of approval - confirms that food is hyperlocal
    - Price premium?
    - Inspection/Certification?
  - Grower coordination - deciding what gets grown, to make it easier for people to
  - Restaurants can use this for marketing
  - Profitable experience

## Session 9-G: Sources of Microbial Contamination on Produce in Farm Operations

**Mark Hodorek**, Food Safety Specialist, MI Food Safety

- Mark has 28 years of experience
- Food is not good food unless it is free from contamination that can make people sick!
- Potential sources for microbial contamination:
  - Water
    - Agricultural waters led to contaminated romaine lettuce in summer 2018
    - Flood waters can contaminate vegetables
  - Animals
    - 2006 outbreak in spinach
      - Source is from wild pigs
    - Use fencing to keep animals out of crop areas!
  - Manure and composting are important parts of farming but must exercise caution
    - FDA regulations require *at least* 90 days between application of compost/manure and harvest
  - Frozen foods can still carry contaminants
    - Outbreak in hepatitis connected to frozen strawberries
  - Improper hand-washing
    - Only 3% of participants followed all necessary steps to properly wash their hands

- Personal training is important for food safety
  - Equipment
    - Must be properly cleaned
  - Produce that is normally eaten raw and not eaten raw should not be cross-contaminated
    - Store separately
    - Process separately
- Take a Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training course

### **Session 9-H: Impact of New Work Requirements on SNAP and Food Access**

**Jess Wunsch, MPP**, Urban and Regional Planning/Public Policy Graduate Student, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

- There is a work requirement policy that has been rolling out for SNAP recipients since 2017
  - Policy change requires able-bodied adults to work 80 hours a month or be enrolled in a job training program
  - If requirement is not met, they are only eligible for 3 months of SNAP over a 3 year period
  - Change raises concerns about how social service and food alleviation services will step in
- Surveys with people who lost SNAP benefits in the initial counties where changes were implemented
  - Fewer individuals than expected lost benefits completely
  - Organizations were affected in different ways
  - Organizations that offered more wraparound services saw an increase in clients
    - Include client management, food assistance, etc.
- SNAP dollars reach into the wider economy and allow people to meet other basic needs
  - People have to make tradeoffs when deciding to buy food or pay for other expenses
- Double Up Food Bucks sales went down in Washtenaw county in 2017 - 20% decrease
  - Implications of SNAP funding cuts on local farmers markets and farms
- What's next?
  - Rolling out changes in the rest of the counties by end of October 2018
    - Less affluent counties than Washtenaw (where study took place) may be differently impacted based on the availability of non-governmental assistance programs
- Check out rest of 2017 policy brief: <https://poverty.umich.edu/research-publications/policy-briefs/rolling-out-the-snap-work-requirements-in-michigan-the-washtenaw-county-experience/>

## Q&A

### **Question(s) for Jonathan Roberts:**

*What goes into the transition to make invisible workers visible?*

- Collective unity within a workplace
  - Recognition that many workers are facing similar issues: wage theft, risk of deportation, risk of raids
  - Coworkers need to understand that issues are not isolated - affect everyone in the workplace
- Unionization is extremely low in the restaurant industry
- Organizers need to focus on policies but also need to create a sense of economic empowerment within the workers
  - Collective organizing is the main strategy

### **Question(s) for Jonathan Roberts:**

*How do you convince restaurant owners that raising workers' wages will be better for their business in the long run?*

- Statistics
  - Raising wages cuts turnover in half
  - Training new employees is one of the biggest expenses in the industry
- Ask ethical questions
  - Should we allow businesses to exist if they depend on the exploitation of workers?
  - Is it justified to have a business modeled off a plantation economy in 2018?

### **Question(s) for Jess Wunsch:**

*How does the decline in the use of SNAP at farmers markets relate to overall decline in sales at farmers markets?*

- Is not sure, but there was an increase in statewide use of SNAP in 2014-16, which may have increased participation in farmers markets

### **Question(s) for Matthew Hargis:**

*How are you using produce from school gardens/farms for school lunch and breakfast programs?*

- Menu advisory programs
- Evaluate what they currently serve
- Look at crop plans
- Have found it's easy to introduce the food in:
  - Salad bar initiatives
  - Ready-to-eat produce can be minimally processed and served raw