

Indiana Grown Commission Mtg

August 8, 2014

Attendees:

Mark Straw

Bob White

Debbie Trocha

Chris Baggott

Margaret Davidson

Cheryl Carter Jones

Pete Eschelman

Sara Yelich

Jeanette Merritt

Chelsea Marburger

Ted McKinney

- Welcome from Ted McKinney
 - Celebrate diversity in food sourcing.
 - Glad to have the Commission developed and excited to know what it can become.
 - We are asking for funding from the budget to take this program to what it should be.
- Introductions
- Policy/Legislative update from Aly Wells
 - o Designed to market and promote Indiana products to Indiana markets.
 - o Overview of Commission structure and membership.
 - o Creation of the IN Grown fund – designed to fund the initiatives of the Commission
 - o Wanted to also have geographic and gender diversity, as well as different sectors of the interested groups. Members chosen by the Lt. Governor.
 - o The fund is a dedicated fund, not reverting.
 - o Annual report must be filed around November timeframe.
 - o The creation of the program does not have a sunset date.
- Laura Buck - Need to figure out program model, name, membership requirements, promotional/ad goals, promotions, intellectual property issues will be handled by the LG's office.
- Will do membership requirements in September, promotion and advertising in October, working with other groups to discuss in November as well as preparing for legislative session.
- ISDA plans to start "soft" recruitment for the program.
- Current IN Grown will sunset at end of 2014. Current members have option to continue.
- Summer of 2015 – plans to have full scale deployment.
- Question from the group to consider grants or public funding? – it is an option but one for the commission to consider.

- Another question – can they start to look at sponsorships, etc now or does it need to wait? Yes, it can begin, similar to the soft opening of the program now. But, we will not be ready to bring in membership until after the mtg in November when the program is fully developed.
- Members seem to be interested in having a more aggressive schedule to meet and hasten the timeline
- All funding comes into one fund, whether it is private source or public
- Discussion on what is considered a successful program - market access, demand creation, premium sometimes can be also added.
- 5 basic models
 - o One unified program – original IN grown program from 2012 is an example, tend to be inclusive – raw product, value added, soaps, lotions, etc. Other examples are Idaho preferred, Utah’s Own, Minnesota Grown, Kentucky Proud. Some do only focus on specialty crops, but typically is a large, inclusive program.
 - o Partner programs – examples Arkansas Grown, Arkansas Made; Made in Montana, Grown in Montana. The product lines are separated, but the logo/label is slightly different, yet still recognizable.
 - o Bifurcated programs – two names, two logos. Example is Illinois. They are rare and not necessarily recommended. Also Virginia and Hawaii. They have “plus” programs.
 - o Spin off programs – can also have a big program, but then smaller niche programs. Colorado Forest Product, Native American Made in Montana, KY has several: Udderly KY, Appalachia Proud, Homegrown by Heroes (KY Proud is the parent for each)
 - o Private programs – New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island. Tends to be run through a cooperative group that includes the State Dept of Ag, but is not headed by the Ag state agency.
- Common program elements
 - o Food guides and directories are generally used by most. A lot of them are now online to make costs lower.
 - o Wholesale directories have gained popularity. Rhode Island is also using Market Mobile – takes the wholesale order directly to the restaurant
 - o Featured members – highlights based on membership level
 - o Financial arrangements or support for members. Offers of business guidance and resources. Other common elements - Guidebooks, new business assistance, workshops.
 - o Restaurants – reimbursement programs, marketing and cross promotion (table tents, menu labels). Downside of reimbursement program is lots of manpower and paperwork. **TO DO** - How much was paid out through restaurant rewards?
 - o Retailers - Some have their own stores in parks, along highways, rest stops.
 - o Consumers – social media very common – no advertising cost. Some use apps, but that does cost. Some newsletters/magazines – also online availability. Offer cooking and recipe options to encourage consumption. Try to offer knowledge to live seasonally (charts, seasonal picks, etc.)
- Remarks from the Lt. Governor
- Open discussion

- Focus on the goals – market access, grow market demand, stamp/seal of the program
- Definitely want to include food, discussion to include hardwoods, wine/beer, value-added ag (or say certain % has to be grown in IN)
 - If you go by percentage, it would leave out brewers. Going by law, “produced” means the beer would be included, even though the hops are not grown in Indiana.
 - Don’t grow sugar in IN, so jams/jellies would be out, if it is limited.
 - At some point, have to take the word of those in the program.
- Bifurcated program may confuse consumers, can also keep the program broad, but do spin-offs
- Needs one branding mechanism (one logo)
- List of all the ag products – go big umbrella – brand as AG, not specific
 - Food, hardwoods, wine, beer, floral, aquaculture, bees, honey, sorghum, grains, proteins, commodity crops (corn, soybeans), feed supply,
- Education to work with farmers to convey message of big umbrella? Make the umbrella so big that everyone wants in. The more people engaged, the more sustainability for the future. It can always be broken out at a later date.
- Use IN Grown? Concern with “ingrown.” Public comment – has there been any research on the use of IN Grown?
- If not IN Grown – made in IN, IN Pride, IN Connect, Hoosier Grown, IN Proud, Fresh from IN, Choose IN, Shop IN, Simply IN, Chew IN, Grow IN (it is trademarked?), Grow with Us, Indiana’s Best, IN Preferred
- **TO DO** – do a brand test on name, logo
- Intent of the bill from Don Lehe – other programs had been seen in other states, focus was expected to be on food. But don’t necessarily rule anything else out.
- One overall program – large tent, but not too large?? Priority on food, but not limit.
- Allow co-branding. But need to grow the brand with the original first.
- Experience says a single brand is the way to go, but the group can determine spin-offs, co-branding based on what resources are available.
- Should better define budget needs.
- What would it take to establish the brand? Get to retailers, producers, consumer branding? Brand rationale, social media, buy-in, hire a rep to start knocking on doors. Define what we are looking for – then go with an rfp process. Use current marketing/user lists with commission members.
- Wanted to have retailers promote – earned media
- Addressable market? What can we actually grow that people want to buy? A committee may be able to define it.
- Use incentive plan to encourage change at the retail level.
- Subcommittees: membership/recruitment, research/marketing, market access/addressable market (business to business effort rather than business to consumer), business plan (other committees inform/craft the business plan)-HOLD, HOLD on budget

- Addressable market – Chris Baggott, Margaret Davidson, Chelsea Marburger, Jeanette Merritt
 - Research and Marketing – Margaret Davidson, Chris Baggott, Jeanette Merritt, Mark Straw, Debbie Trocha
 - Membership/recruitment – Chelsea Marburger, Sara Yelich, Cheryl Carter Jones, Mark Straw, Debbie Trocha (what do they want, what is the value of the program to them?)
 - Budget – Bob White, Pete Eshelman, Ted McKinney
- Current Member insight – doesn't see much benefit to the program at the moment, "Feel good" wants to have the program grow so it is more recognizable, want it to mean more. More involvement/marketing. Should include everyone despite size, focus, etc.
- Final feedback
 - Jeanette – encouraged by inclusive nature and broad umbrella
 - Sara – excited about the access for local producers. Glad for depth and research
 - Pete – applaud Laura for work and research. Trepidations about business plan – needs to be dialed in and make sense. Don't underestimate the opportunity.
 - Cheryl – very encouraged. Glad for receptivity. Concerned with taking ideas and bring it to something solid.
 - Margaret – glad to see the state recognizing need to reinvest/reinvigorate the program.
 - Chris – we can blow the existing programs away, spending money with your neighbors
 - Debbie – look at the opportunity to look at mistakes of others. Give us the opportunity to leapfrog ahead.
 - Bob – include all ag, focus on distribution beyond local, be sure to have funding requests fully defined
 - Mark – doesn't want to see segments of ag fighting with each other, don't get frustrated with the process – keep the goal in mind.
 - Chelsea – has lots of ideas, head spinning with options. We are addressing many the questions that are being asked by the interested parties. Wish we would have a rep from NW IN – markets/farmers are different.