

Indiana Grown Commission Mtg
11-10-2014

Attendees:

Chelsea Marburger
Cheryl Carter Jones
Deb Trocha
Bob White
Pete Eschelman
Jodee Ellett
Mark Straw
Ted McKinney
Sara Yelich

Opening from Melissa, review of last meeting

Intro of David King, he gave his background

Ady Study Executive Summary passed out – encouraged to read on their own time, but it did not have as much depth as we were expecting, not much new to present.

Membership value roundtable

Cheryl – concerns with cost. 20% were ok paying whatever, large group would only pay ~\$25. Concerns on what would be included, but liked the name depending on the definition. If the name is Indiana Grown, it should actually be grown in Indiana. Very supportive of the program. **The program needs to provide the marketing.

Bob – key question was what's in it for me? PR/Media. Price point was all over the board. He reached out to producers and organizations.

Pete – talked with chef/restaurant owners, every restaurant is looking to bring new customers and new business. They would want marketing. But not likely to get \$1000 to join.

Chelsea – Farmers Markets/small scale producers have so much to do and such few resources to see value in the program. We need to give them a defined program.

Jodee – reached out to lots of dual role folks, they want quality oversight, coordination and communication. If use Indiana Grown, it should have a standard of quality. Regulatory application one-stop shop. (universal application)

Mark – don't spread yourself out too far. "Grown" can limit membership. If there is a way to help small producers navigate the regulatory environment, that would be a major benefit.

If the program is strong enough, it may carry regardless of “grown” in the name. Kentucky did have this same question b/c they started as Kentucky Grown. It was changed to be sure it was encompassing all products.

Thought – go to the organizations (commodity groups, etc) to help define for each of those types of commodities. Let the consumers drive it. But will it just make it all confusing by having each org define their own.

Concerns that if we move at the level of Wal-Mart/Kroger, producers are not ready to move at that pace.

Affidavit might be an idea to help with the certification. But, peers are always a great “self-policing” entity. Consumers are also somewhat of a policing entity. Farmers Markets will not have a complete uniformity, but there will be an internal honor system as well.

Consider recertification process?

BOAH update – They have the framework for Saturday inspection – the processor just needs to ask. They have not turned down any Saturday inspections.

Presentation from Indiana Tourism

- Not just representative as a tourism brand. It is designed to be a consumer brand at many levels.
- Unified identity, umbrella consumer brand for all of Indiana, designed to be versatile.
- Honest to Goodness gives a lifestyle focus
- Mockups presented and concepts identified on how to go about marketing the program
- Honest to Goodness is promoting wineries and breweries, but there are no defined partnerships currently.
- He does not see confusion on the part of the consumer by the combination of tourism and retail.
- Ideas to include the Honest to Goodness mark but make it the tagline and not the headline. Co-branding efforts.
- Some changes can occur to the mark, but it would need legal paperwork, which they would be open to doing.

Presentation from Michael Lewis, Food Safety & Quality Manager, Piazza Produce

- Piazza is a food service only company; does not sell retail
- Growers need to meet high standard to be sold to restaurants
- GAP education is very important
- There is an attempt at standardization of standards, but it still is very dependent on the factors
- An Indiana Grown program would probably be of more value to the producer than Piazza, but they would use it and promote it.
- Locally grown can potentially be in conflict with food safety

- They would love to sell more local than they currently do.
- Most retailers/distributors see local as different from Indiana-produced. They tend to think more regionally.
- They are heavily involved in the Kentucky Proud program in the Louisville area.

Presentation from Adam Moody, owner – Moody Meats

- Farmer initially, then branched out to processing and Farmer's Markets. Added retail locations and also helped create Husk Foods for produce.
- On a retail level, Indiana Grown probably wouldn't affect. It would affect wholesale and be of value. Customers assume you are local at a small retail location. It is a direct-across the counter relationship. The personal connection trumps any other certification. For wholesale, it could mean something.
- The program must be market driven or it won't be sustainable.
- They are having concerns with restrictions. USDA limits trade across state lines. They also have so many regulations to fulfill and inspections from multiple agencies.
- They would consider increasing production, but the market needs to be able to sustain it.
- Can use institutional buyers to purchase the less "prime" product. In animals, premium pricing on the filets, etc, but ground meat can be sold to an institution.
- Institutions have to have USDA certification, and b/c of the cost and difficulties with USDA process, they have no desire to be USDA certified. USDA tends to be far more of a policing entity.

Logo discussion

- Main fear of Chelsea is that Honest to Goodness would lose steam. It does not have a track record of sticking through political administrations. Nurtured in Indiana, Feeding Hoosier First
- Bob agrees – Honest to Goodness has not been proven. We have our own funding, should do collaboration, but we should stand on our own. A coupling could be done in the future.
- Pete believes we should work together with Honest to Goodness. He thinks it would be difficult to marry up later. Make the Indiana Grown program center and put Honest to Goodness as a tagline.
- Can we maintain Honest to Goodness even if the state drops it? Yes – it is owned by the state, not Tourism.
- Should make it a large unveiling/splash to be sure public knows
- Sara has a gut reaction in opposition to Honest to Goodness, but she can't put a finger on why. She could be persuaded otherwise.
- Mark is supportive of cobranding and copromotion.
- Words are important – they need to have sticking power. -Jodee

ISDA will work on definitions for the Commission to pick apart.