

Indiana Grown Commission Meeting
September 2, 2014

Attendees:

Mark Straw

Bob White

Jodee Ellett

Chris Baggott

Chelsea Marburger

Sara Yelich

Pete Eshelman

Margaret Davidson

Cheryl Carter Jones

Don Villwock

Ted McKinney

Deb Trocha

Jeanette Merritt

Laura Buck, Program Manager

Opening and welcome by Don Villwock

Introductions around the table and room

Takeaways from last meeting: All of IN ag, including non-food commodities, close relationship with IN Grown with the IN Food Hubs so should consider connections btw the two. Connections to Tourism? Ted – pleased it was a big tent (all of Ag), start on food. By the end of the year, want to have the process completed to report back to all audiences.

Chris – access being a top priority.

Bob – primary focus on brand and access, starting level discussions. Secondary was a discussion of all other aspects of the program and issues facing the industry

Chelsea – great representation of all aspects of ag, don't bite off more than can be chewed at the beginning

Pete – provided framework, business plan elements document.

- executive summary
- intro, fundamentals, bring to background basics, what is the breadth of Indiana Ag, current position?, support from government and industry, easy to think small but let's think big (national model), state that feeds itself
- who? Who are the potential members and constituents? Growers, producers, distributors, added value processors, sellers, consumers
- role of ISDA and day-to-day management

- marketing? Agreement on the name, logo, management of the brand, integrity of the brand, marketing materials, website development
- membership management, why would anyone want to be a member (benefits?), recruiting
- administrative and processing
- collaborations?
- Funding, ensure sustainability of the program in the future. Options with private/public? Create a budget
- Create an action plan with dates for completion
- Develop future goals and benchmarks

May want to move up funding on the “agenda.” Per Ted - ISDA has asked for \$1M a year to implement the program. It is not locked in and will be fluid because it is a budget process and is not guaranteed. Should we give legislators options? \$5M will get you this, whereas \$1M will get you this.

Add how? What are the specifics/action plans to get to the end goal. Barriers?

Beth Sheets with Indiana Alpaca – primarily fiber producers, similar to cashmere. Start with the fiber from the animal, cleaned, processed, some spinners, then finished product. Alpacas produce manure lower in nitrogen, some meat market for alpaca (very lean meat). Surveyed members in the IN group – barriers include fiber processing limitations b/c of lack of mills, lack of access to market (currently use local fairs, for the most part). They have about 20-30 farms in the Alpaca group. Market for fiber is inclusive from raw fiber, some processing to yarn, to finished product as yarn. Most market is to local craft industry. Lots of market insecurity and producers trying to specify their exact market. The benefit to the group of Indiana Grown would be market venues and connections to the final market. 6-9 month wait to get the fiber product back after sending it out for processing. Would like to see different venues for partnerships, marketing and promotion, processing assistance. For marketing - certain qualities attached to the brand for integrity to add meaning. At this point, cannot make a living using just alpacas – they would likely look to agritourism if they tried to live on just the alpaca farm.

Ray Moistner and Mike Seidl from IN Hardwoods - #1 cash crop from Indiana. Bring two things – very renewable and sustainable. The consumer doesn’t necessarily know the specifics about IN hardwood. Genesis of their branding program began in 2004/2005. No funding at that time, but the industry group hired an ad agency who did a great deal of research. Always fighting perception issues – but they specified their audiences. Generate excitement among constituents while creating the program – they are needed to add the value and awareness. Keep the “green” aspect in their logo. What is special about IN Hardwoods? –define it as part of the discussion. Conformity is very important. Get buy-in from the constituents (retailers), then go out to the audiences (final consumers). Once the word spreads that you are interested – everyone will try to pitch their program to you. We would have asked to collaborate with all groups if we had been able to do it again.

Open discussion –

- general consensus to have one unified brand. 10 ayes, 0 nos.
- agreement on general food. Include value added, food for human consumption. 11 ayes, 0 nos.
- beverages, included in human consumption
- include food produced for livestock consumption?
- include ethanol?
- good idea to ask for info for classification purposes

Kimmi Devaney gave overview of Certified Livestock Producer Program.

Mark Newman, Tourism – agriculture and culinary are key drivers for Indiana economy/tourism. You hear the food piece in Honest To Goodness tagline, you hear food in IN Grown. When people think of Honest to Goodness, they think of Indiana. Indiana has agricultural equity – we should reflect it. Some of the other elements, while good, may be distracting. Multiple brands could create confusion with consumers. Would hope the varying elements can begin to coexist with the conclusion that all are winners (don't exclude organic/non-organic). Honest To Goodness was designed to be a consumer brand to find its way into a supermarket/farmers market. Indiana is known for/associated with its pureness and quality. IN Grown has some limitations b/c it does not allow you to expand your umbrella – it speaks to just agricultural food products grown in IN. It competes with other programs in other states rather than being a larger, comprehensive program. Honest To Goodness could be an affixed label to Indiana products.

Roy Ballard, Food Hubs – consumer places order online, they can order from producer of their choice. Market then “closes,” order compiled by producers and delivered to single location. Then put into individual orders and delivered to the distribution location for pickup by consumers. Grant – purpose is to determine the role of food hubs, feasibility/look/desire for them? If there is a demand, we can start to assist the local area, not run it. Indiana Grown will help promote and show support of Indiana agriculture. One big label is a plus and shows credibility. Doubtful that some farmers would have the need for an IN Grown label. Some would, but for an established producer, it may not affect their bottom line.

How do you quantify the value? Producers/Retailers want to be part of a bigger picture, start-ups want the credibility which will come with the name. Big question – what will the ROI be? Purdue has a research scholar for two years to do research on local food impact.

Legal input/information – In Aug, we submitted a Special Initiatives package. The LG's office reviewing, then it will be forwarded to OMB. The original ask was \$1M a year. The revenue forecast is coming, and the special initiatives will be prioritized based upon the final forecast to know if the initiative will be a part of the Governor's budget. Going forward – decision making is with the OMB/Governor's team and then on to the General Assembly as part of the legislative process.

Jodi producing info for the Commission to use for stats to show opportunity.

Back to Open Discussion:

- hardwoods included (8 yeas, 0 nos)
- floraculture (flowers, ornamentals, etc) included 8 yeas, 0 nos
- fibers included 8 yeas, 0 nos
- animal food and fuel – bring in someone from IN Soy to discuss? Too many opportunities to ignore, bring back discussion at a later date. **TO DO**
- Christmas trees included 8 yeas, 0 nos
- crafts/personal care products, Indiana Artisan already doing. Want to hear from them. **TO DO**
- processors included 8 yeas, 0 no
- distributors included 8 yeas, 0 no
- retailers and markets included 8 yeas, 0 no
- restaurants included 8 yeas, 0 no
- farm suppliers – promotion partner
- associations – promotion partner
- agritourism and festivals – promotion partner

General consensus of great progress.

How to meet the needs of all scale producers? Differentiate from Honest To Goodness?

Need/want economic input.