

**MINUTES**  
**LINN COUNTY FOOD SYSTEMS COUNCIL**  
**Thursday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019**

The Linn County Food Systems Council meeting was called to order at 9:00 A.M. in conference room 3A/3B at the Jean Oxley Public Service Center, 935 2<sup>nd</sup> St. SW, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

**ROLL CALL:**

**PRESENT** Laura Seyfer, At-Large, Co-Chair  
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RaeAnn Gordon, ISU Extension  
Lynette Richards, Restaurant/Institution  
August Stolba, Feed Iowa First, Co-Chair  
Chris Thoms, At-Large  
Joe Stutler, At-Large  
Emma Johnson, Grower/Producer  
Sofia Mehaffey, Horizons

**ABSENT:** Pam Oldham, Medical Provider/Registered Dietician  
Kim Guardado, HACAP

**OTHERS** Scott Koepke, Facilitator  
**PRESENT** Stephanie Schrader, Community Well Being Liaison  
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Sung Hee Grittman, Sales Coordinator, Iowa Choice Harvest  
Tammy Eibey, Executive Director, Jones/Linn County Farm Service Agency  
Lonnie Janecheck, Farm Loan Manager, Buchanan/Linn County Farm Service Agency  
Christine Fangman, Loan Officer, Buchanan/Linn County Farm Service Agency

**STAFF:** Mike Tertinger, Linn County Planning and Development, Staff  
Jessie Black, Recording Secretary  
Jake Kundert , IVRCD

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion by Thoms, seconded by Richards and carried, all members present voting yes, to approve the April 25, 2019 LCFSC minutes as submitted.

**Monthly Budget Report**

Tertinger said the remaining account balance as of month end is \$3,975.00.

## **Update on Wellmark Small MATCH Grant for Linn County Food System Assessment**

Tertinger stated that Charlie Nichols will send in grant application by June 6<sup>th</sup>. The idea is to apply for a small grant that will help with a community food systems assessment. Nichols requested letters of support from some members of the council. Tertinger added that the current plan is to roll over funds at the end of the fiscal year and use some of new allocation for assessment, as well.

Emrich informed the council that Linn County Public Health was asked by the Board of Supervisors to keep a food rescue project moving forward. Although the grant was not funded last year, the Board of Supervisors still considers the work of interest. Emrich explained that there are funds set aside for FY20 to work on food rescue projects; food assessment, educational session, and implementation of a food rescue app such as ChowBank.

## **Learning Session (Part VI) with guest facilitator Scott Koepke**

### **Sung Hee Gritman, Sales Coordinator, Iowa Choice Harvest**

Gritman introduced herself and Iowa Choice Harvest to the council. They are based out of Marshalltown and have been in business for six years, specializing in locally sourced all-natural fruits and vegetables. They pride themselves on harvesting and freezing food on the same day. The company is currently moving into small batch processing. Gritman explained that one of their biggest hurdles is finding new farmers. A few other issues are the price of equipment, lack of knowledge of local food systems within the general public, and the higher price of local products. She emphasized the importance of buying local, no matter the product.

Koepke wondered if Gritman had any suggestions on policy recommendations that might help a company like Iowa Choice Harvest expand their market. Gritman was unsure, but reiterated the need for better education of the general public about local foods and their benefits.

### **Tammy Eibey, Executive Director, Jones/Linn County Farm Service Agency**

Tammy introduced herself to the group as the Executive Director of Farm Service Agency. Her and her husband own a farm near Manchester. She passed out some informational handouts to the members of the council about the services provided by Farm Service Agency and fact sheets on organics, disaster assistance, etc.

Eibey insisted that weather is a very serious issue for her as a farmer. She added that the market is another. Since the recently imposed tariffs, prices of commodities have decreased, therefore income has dropped. Eibey also mentioned the poor conditions of rural roads due to the harsh winter we had; producers are unable to get their products out on semis. Mental health among farmers is another issue; the suicide rate of farmers is astounding. She stated that FSA has put programs in place to help alleviate financial stressors for farmers.

Tertinger asked Eibey if the goals of the Food Systems Council (increase diversification, increase producers, reduce issues working against new farmers trying to get land, etc.) were

worthwhile goals, or if she thought they were unattainable and a waste of time. Eibey suggested taking baby steps towards goals, but agreed that the proposed ideas were worthwhile.

**Lonnie Janecheck, Farm Loan Manager, Buchanan/Linn County Farm Service Agency**

Janecheck passed out informational handouts on direct and guaranteed loan programs. He briefly summarized his role as the Farm Loan Manager at Farm Service Agency and touched on a few of the key points stated in handouts. He said that FSA currently has about 190 borrowers.

Christine Fangman, Loan Officer, introduced herself to the council and discussed some of the most commonly applied-for loans.

The group discussed the different types of loans and who would be the best candidate for each type of loan.

**Adjournment** - The meeting adjourned at 10:43 AM

Respectfully submitted,

Approved,

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Jessie Black, Recording Secretary

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, Co-Chair