



Applied Sustainability Center

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Agile Agriculture Program Summary

The Agile Agriculture Summit was conducted June 30 & July 1, 2009 in Fayetteville, Arkansas. The Summit brought together diverse stakeholders to design and launch projects bridging the gap between market desire for local food products and lack of supplies; attainment of this goal can have far-reaching positive benefits to agricultural producers, food distributors and retailers, and consumers.

Land-grant universities and other academics, agricultural producers and food distributors, NGO's and CBO's, and government agencies from across the United States were represented.

The Summit was conducted by the University of Arkansas Applied Sustainability Center and sponsored by Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., National Agricultural Law Center, University of Arkansas Center for Agricultural and Rural Sustainability and Drake University. Additional in-kind support was provided by Wallace Center/Winrock International, L&M Companies Inc., Michigan State University, University of Wisconsin, Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, National Center for Appropriate Technology and University of Nebraska.

The Summit was structured and facilitated using the Appreciative Inquiry process to quickly form teams and design discrete, measurable projects. All projects take into account the foundations of Agile Agriculture:

- Promoting sustainable agricultural production systems
- Ensuring profitability to producers and distributors
- Providing social benefits of local food
- Delivering healthy products to consumers

Agile Agriculture Projects

The product of the Agile Agriculture Summit is a set of projects, each of which will be implemented by a multi-disciplinary team.

Governance-creation of necessary structures and processes to support the overall program (funding, organization, etc.) and provide project management resources to insure long-term viability.

Policy- Creation (or assistance in creation) of a federal inter-departmental and inter-agency task force to address opportunities and challenges in areas including farmer support, regional food infrastructure, health & nutrition, extension & education, regulatory issues, tax policy and transportation.



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Agriprenuership-creation of a farming incubator infrastructure to enable new and existing producers in development of successful farming systems and marketing enterprises that are adapted to local ecological and social characteristics.

Entrepreneurial Livestock Business Model- creation and development of a business model to serve as a resource, focused on regional processing facilities and diverse branded products.

Production Technology- assessment and development of small and medium scale production and processing technologies.

Supply Chain Transparency- harmonizing fresh produce GAP (Good Agricultural Practice) audit standards into an accepted industry-wide system.

Financing the Food Shed- helping the existing infrastructure to assist & support the needs of the new and developing food systems

Social Benefits – Collection of primary and secondary data to assess social benefits of local food systems in four pilot locations.

Consumer Engagement- designing a regional information network in a model community that promotes dialogue and empowers and informs consumers to enable them to make healthy food choices for their families and communities.

Produce Hub-development of a successful fresh produce distribution hub.

Marketing and Finance Education- education development and deployment to value chain participants that will insure appropriate decisions regarding engagement in emerging marketing venues.