



Agile Agriculture Summit Report

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.

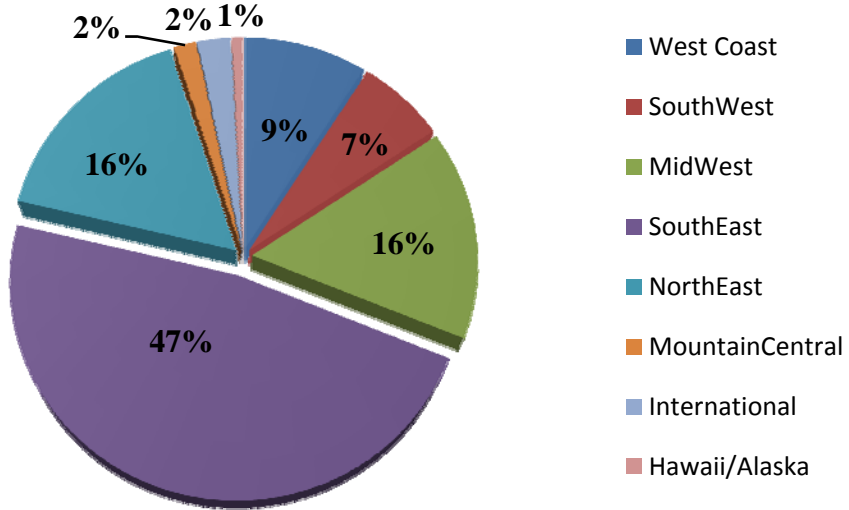
The Summit was structured and facilitated using the Appreciative Inquiry process to quickly form teams and design discrete, measurable projects. All projects take into account the foundations of Agile Agriculture:

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

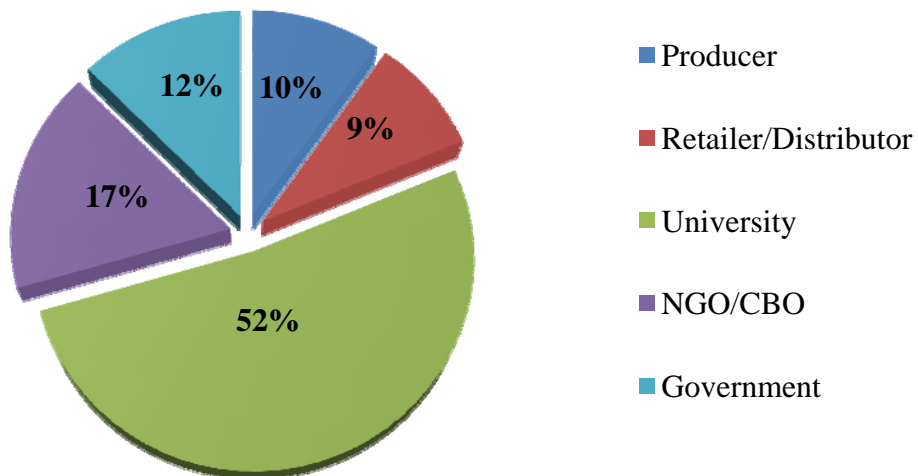
The Summit was conducted by the University of Arkansas Applied Sustainability Center and sponsored by Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., National Agricultural Law Center, University of Arkansas Center for Agricultural and Rural Sustainability and Drake University. Additional in-kind support was provided by Wallace 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.

Total Summit attendance was 131 with participation from 27 U.S. states including Washington, D.C., also Canada and France. Summit design paid particular attention to engaging a variety of experiences and viewpoints and considered participant background as well as geography when making invitations.

Agile Ag Summit Participation By Geographic Region



Agile Ag Summit Participation By Sector



Agile Ag Projects

Each of the Agile Agriculture projects that resulted from the Summit is described below. The Applied Sustainability Center will provide initial support and assistance for each:

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.

Team Members:

- Mike Faupel, ASC
- Annett Pagan, Winrock
- Greg Crosby, USDA
- Beth Barham, University of Missouri
- Marty Gerencer, Wallace Center
- Laura Aune, Consulate General of Canada
- John Fisk, Wallace Center

Action Steps:

30 days:

- Report out from this meeting to the whole group, includes list of committees and leaders, info from project committees,
- Conf Call for the Governance Committee
- Touch base with primary funder and report to Gov Committee
- Establish principals of interaction for project
- Make initial inquiries to measure potential for presenting to USDA Know Your Farmer

90 days:

- Make arrangements to present to USDA-Meet Your Farmer if appropriate
- Projects submit a draft project proposal with a draft budget
- Draft funding needs assessment including needs from project groups and needs of "hub"
- Draft funding framework that tells how to select projects to fund etc.
- Coordinate project planning including facilitating cross project review and synergy
- Begin planning for annual meeting
- Establish communications mechanisms to reach out to AA participants

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.

Team Members:



- **Julia Freedgood, American Farmland Trust**
- Kate Fitzgerald, Natl. Sustainable Ag Coalition
- Marne Coit
- Susan Schneider, UA
- Stephanie Smith, USDA

Action Steps:

- Share notes and slides from Summit by July 15
- Convene conference call to discuss by July 23
- Delegate roles, tasks, set deadlines

Agripreneuership

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.

Team Members:

- **Connie Falk, New Mexico State University**
- Jennifer Fahy, Farm Aid
- Heather Friedrich, University of Arkansas
- Emily English, Arkansas Food Policy Council and Ark. Farm to School
- David Davies, Winthrop Rockefeller Institute
- Ben Burkett, Federation of Southern Co-ops
- Keith Richards, Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (SSAWG)
- Michele Halsell, University of Arkansas, Applied Sustainability Center
- Zelina Bazan, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
- Joe Wilson, Northern Missouri Pecan Growers
- Ron Rosati, Alfred State College, NY

Action Steps:

- Contact appropriate conference organizers to present this proposal.
- Write a small grant to fund a researcher to inventory and evaluate existing farmer incubator programs and facilities to determine best practices. This research should also examine existing funding streams at USDA that fund pieces of this program.
- Convene conversations with key USDA personnel.
- Discuss the option of convening a national meeting on farming incubators, and invite all existing incubator directors and managers.
- Explore the option of creating a national association of farming incubator professionals, and a farming incubator website.
- Study graduates of incubators to evaluate attributes of successful farmers.
- Write case studies of farming incubator organizations.
- Map existing incubator sites.

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.

Team Members:

- **Margo Hale , NCAT**
- Anne Fanatico, USDA
- Clay Colbert, Little Portion
- Ron McCormick , Walmart
- Alisha Staggs, ASC
- Larry Dotin, L&B Cattle
- Matt Nsrsta, L&B Cattle

Action Steps:

30 days:

- Make contacts, visit Little Portion

90 days:

- Gather info, explore funding

180 days:

- Draft business plan

360 days:

Finished business plan/case study is made available

Production Technology

Assessment and development of small and medium scale production and processing technologies.

Team Members:

- **Curt Rom, UA**
- Joe Schatzer, OK State
- Phil Crandall, UA
- Brad Venuto, USDA
- Vince Russo, USDA

Action Steps:

60 days:

- Curt and Phil will have talked to NCAT about what they are doing already and what can be done by them/ what we need to find funding/ student for.

360 days:

- Complete dataset that is publishable and available to producers and educators.

Supply Chain Transparency

Harmonizing fresh produce GAP (Good Agricultural Practice) audit standards into an accepted industry-wide system.

Team Members:



- **Michael McCartney, QLM Consulting**
- Henry Bahn, USDA
- Kathryn Boys, Clemson University
- Tom Kalchik, Michigan State
- Patrick Kole, Idaho Potato Commission
- Baudouin Niogret, CARTV
- Craig Watson, Sysco

Action Steps:

30 days:

- Identify core team members and receive their commitment
- Identify stakeholders and receive their commitments
- Create a one page project description

90 days:

- Find a consultant to facilitate the process
- Refine funding proposal
- Identify alternative funding sources

180 days:

- Summit meeting of team members and core stakeholders to confirm commitments & begin development process

360 days:

Finalize harmonized standard

Financing the Food Shed

Helping the existing infrastructure to assist & support the needs of the new and developing food systems.

Team Members:

- **Janie Hipp, USDA**
- Gary Matteson, Farm Credit System
- Poppy Davis, USDA
- Magid Dagher, Alcorn State University
- Kevin Klair, University of Minnesota
- Scott Marlow, RAFI
- Martha Montoya, Los Kitos Produce
- Cash East, ASC

Action Steps:

30 days:

- Conference calls to develop message, beginning to reach out to key decision-makers and stakeholders

90 days:

- Internal USDA briefing, other meeting engagements, contact Y&B Farmers Advisory Board

180 days:

- Substantial planning underway for 6 month summit dedicated to rolling out programs

360 days:

- Establishment of Enterprise Zone as pilot project

Social Benefits of Local Food Systems

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

Team Members:

- **Jeff Rice, ASC**
- Anna Krithis, Arizona State University
- John Berry, Penn State University
- Marie David, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc
- Janet Bachmann, National Center for Appropriate Tech
- Dave Weatherspoon, Michigan State University
- Angela Moore, Winthrop Rockefeller Institute
- Gail Feenstra, University of California Davis

Action Steps:

- Teleconference – monthly
- Finish identifying stakeholders, 30 days
- Talk with other consumer education group, 30-60 days
- Lit. Review, 60 days
- Meet with community to build awareness, 60-90 days
- Prioritize communities' social benefits, 90-120 days
- Design metrics, 210-270 days
- Seek funding throughout the process
- Begin primary data collection

Consumer Engagement

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

Team Members:

- Steve Stevenson, U of WI
- Tom Gillpatrick, Portland State
- Joanna Seibert, UA WRI
- Doug Miller, CH Robinson
- Deaque Fields, Auburn
- Roger Hinson, LSU
- Jim Churchill, Ojai Pixie Growers
- Lisa Breneis, Ojai Pixie Growers
- Vanessa Zajfen, Occidental College

- Betsy Howlett, UA

Action Steps:

6 month goals:

- Individual group members continue their current consumer research but begin to share it with one another
- Applied Sustainability Center hires a graduate student to create and sustain information clearinghouse for consumer research around local food
- Group reconvenes via conference call in 6 months to discuss future direction.

Produce Hub

Development of a successful fresh produce distribution hub.

Team Members:

- **Dara Bloom, Penn. State**
- Jed Colquhoun, Univ. of Wisconsin
- Jody Hardin, Cent. Ark. Farmers Markets
- Ed Ragland, USDA/AMS
- Martin Anenberg, Worldwide Produce
- Robert Corshen, CAFF
- Drew Kimmell, MO Pecan Growers
- Carissa Taylor, Arizona State
- Michelle Muldoon, Wallace Center/Winrock
- Allison Campbell, Wal-mart
- Michelle Harvey, EDF
- Matt Benson, Virginia Tech.
- Jim Worstell, Delta Enterprise Network
- Adam Lytch, L&M Companies
- Rich Pirog, Leopold Center/IA State

Action Steps:

- Literature Review
- National Proposal – Survey Research
- Potential USDA-SCRI Planning Proposal
- Leads to Stage 2: Alternative Models

Marketing and Finance Education

Education development and deployment to value chain participants that will ensure appropriate decisions regarding engagement in emerging marketing venues.

Team Members:

- **Jennie Popp, UA**
- Khin Mar Cho, Cornell University
- Calvin Lewis, University of DC
- Brian Haley, Fruit Patch Sales, LLC



- Debra Tropp, USDA
- Tim Woods, University of KY
- Ron Rainey, UA
- Bud Vogt, Bud's Farm Market
- Jim Lukens, SSAWG
- Ruell Chappell, Well-fed Neighbor Alliance
- Marco Palma, Texas A&M
- David Hensley, UA

Action Steps:

30 days:

- Materials and techniques inventory
- Names of others who should be invited to participate in this process

90 days:

- Group will have reflected on their ability to participate in steps beyond the inventory assessment. Jennie Popp has suggested they reflect on how this process can be beneficial to their own marketing/finance education programs.

180 days:

- Assuming permanent group has been established, the group will move forward with forming of teams to work on new materials and delivery techniques. Remaining objectives to be more formalized through this group.