

Governor's Commission on Food

Progress Report

July 16, 1975

The Governor's Commission on Food was officially launched on June 6, 1975 to survey the food system in Vermont from production through distribution and marketing to consumption to recommend legislation and executive action.

Structure

The Commission is organized into five major Committees headed by a Chairperson and Resource Leader. Attached to each Committee is a Legislative Liaison member. In addition, the Commission has Advisory Board and Ex-Officio members. (See Exhibit A.) The Commission functions as a policy making body with its various members serving as resource people for other committee members. A cross fertilization of ideas and expertise is one of the goals of our Commission. The Commission, as a whole, is attempting to obtain a broad and comprehensive view of the food system (see Exhibit B); whereas the various task forces organized under each committee are addressing specific issues (see Exhibit C). Each committee will file a report which, in turn, will become part of the full Commission report. Included in this Commission report will be our recommendations.

The Commission members and Task Force members were drawn from a list of more than 150 names of interested people. Over 100 special invitations to join task forces have been sent out in our initial mailing.

As mentioned above, a Legislative Liaison person is attached to each committee. The Commission recognized from the outset the need to establish and maintain a cooperative relationship with the Legislature. These people, together with our Advisory and Ex-Officio members, are proving to be a most valuable resource to the Commission. For example, Hilton Wick, at our public meeting in Burlington, addressed the Commission and answered questions concerning the relationship between the financial institutions and the food system. At our July meeting, Representative Harry Lawrence will speak on the issues facing agriculture today and the possibilities for legislation. In August, Ronald Goldberg will discuss the problems facing retail grocers. Faire Edwards has attended our meetings and raised questions concerning the special problems of the elderly. We plan to continue to draw upon the knowledge and experience of our Legislators, Agency Heads, and community leaders.

Commission Meetings

The full Commission meets monthly at different locations around the State. The first part of the meeting includes committee reports and a "briefing" by an expert. At our June meeting, Dr. Robert Sinclair of the University spoke on "The Economics of Agriculture". In July we will hear from Mr. Robert Davis, President of the Cabot Creamery concerning the present status and future opportunities for processing dairy products, both for sale in Vermont and for export.

Our public meetings are opened by a presentation by an Advisory or Ex-Officio member, as described above. The meeting is then open to any individual or group who wishes to provide the Commission with relevant data. Before each meeting, a special invitation is sent to people and groups in the area who might be particularly interested. (See Exhibit D.) At the end of the public session, which is tape recorded, the various committees meet with anyone there who is interested in their activities. Task force meetings will be held as necessary around the State to set goals and collect data for the committee reports.

Other Activities

The Commission, at present, has two special assignments under way. The first one by Edmund Coffin of Strafford who will examine existing and proposed growth and development policies of the State of Vermont and their impact on the food system. As part of this, Mr. Coffin will undertake an inventory of State and Federal lands which either are or could be used for agricultural purposes.

The second is one undertaken by John Finley of the Department of Agriculture who will look into the possibilities of addressing the specific issues involved in the entry of young people into agriculture.

Members of the Food Commission will appear before a hearing conducted by a Subcommittee of the House Agriculture Committee chaired by Wes Carpenter. The work and goals of this committee are related to those of the Commission and, therefore, a joint effort on matters of common interest will maximize our separate efforts.

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The various Regional Commissions in Vermont have agreed to provide the Commission with data concerning the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses, region by region, where such information is available. We have also invited the Regional Commissions to appear at our meetings, to join task forces, and, in other ways, to inform the Food Commission of Regional Commission projects where we might be of mutual assistance.

Two field trips have been undertaken so far:

- A trip to a Trout Farm in New York State which is described in Exhibit E
- A trip to a mushroom producing area in Quebec which will be described in the next Progress Report

Out-of-state contacts have been established with:

- The National Cannery Association in Washington, D.C.
- The Milk Industry Foundation in Washington, D.C.
- Professor Ray A. Goldberg of the Harvard Business School (Exhibit F)

To summarize, your Food Commission, using a variety of strategies, is in the process of developing a well documented fund of information relating to the food system. We are exploring innovative processes and ideas as well as the traditional modes. Our goal is to make our final report as productive and action oriented as possible. We have involved a large number of people so far in this undertaking and plan to increase the participation as we go along.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalyn Oakes

Rosalyn Oakes, Chairperson

Vermont Food Commission

Rosalyn Oakes, Chairperson/Executive Director 828-3326; 254-8529
Brendan Whittaker, Vice Chairperson 828-3357
John Finley, Vice Chairperson 828-2100

Committees of the Vermont Food Commission

1. Food Production and Supply

Chairperson: Hugo John, 656-4280; 864-4939
Resource Leader: Winston Way, 656-2630; 862-2592; 372-6628
Legislative Liaison: Harold Billings, 775-4407
Task Forces Members to be Named

2. Transportation, Distribution, Storage and Logistics

Chairperson: Robert Gensburg, 748-9516 or 748-4457
Resource Leader: Joseph Trombley, 888-4632; 888-3515 (res.)
Legislative Liaison: Fred Westphal, 888-3366
Task Forces Members to be Named

3. Marketing

Chairperson: William Darrow, Jr., 387-5851
Resource Leader: Richard Raymond, 425-2147; 425-2538 (res.)
Legislative Liaison: Joseph Mazza, Sr., 862-4478
Task Forces Members to be Named

4. Government Institutions and Structures

Chairperson: The Rev. John Nutting, 864-0248; 244-8042 (res.)
Resource Leader: Karen McAndrew, 864-5751
Legislative Liaison: Esther Sorrell, 862-2723
Task Forces Members to be Named

5. Food Prices and Consumer Policy

Chairperson: Evangelyn Johnson, 453-2534
Resource Leader: William Pearson, 864-4066; 257-0446
Legislative Liaison: Lorraine Graham, 862-0390
Task Forces Members to be Named

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Keith Wallace
Robert Branon
Harry Lawrence

Leo O'Brien, Jr.
Martin Johnson
Paul Philbrook
John T. Morgan

ADVISORY MEMBERS

Faith Prior
Dean Dowe
Robert Davison
Craig Right

Hilton Wick
Ronald Goldberg
Faire Edwards

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Possible Issues to be Addressed by the
Governor's Commission on Food

- Should agriculture's contribution to the State's gross product be increased, maintained, or allowed to diminish?
- Should Vermont produce, process, and market more of the food consumed in Vermont?
- Should Vermont increase and diversify its agricultural exports?
- Can the present system of transportation, distribution, and storage of food and inputs into the food system be strengthened to lower food costs?
- Are Federal and State agricultural agencies structured, staffed, and funded to meet contemporary and future needs?
- Should government-sponsored food programs be expanded, maintained or eliminated?
- Should existing laws and regulations be modified to assist small businesses such as the family farm, the small retail grocery store, and the food cooperative?
- Can food chains become important outlets for Vermont agricultural products?
- Can food pricing, labeling, and advertising be modified to enable the consumer to make informed choices?
- Should food marketing outlets be encouraged to locate in sparsely populated areas?
- Should gardening and farming methods utilize more local organic and recycled materials and depend less on high energy imported materials?
- What is the agricultural productive capacity of Vermont and what are the changing economic and social factors which will permit fuller utilization of this productive capacity?
- What would be the economic, social, and environmental effects of the various alternatives raised by these questions?

Committee Task Forces

Committee 1. Food Production and Supply

Task Force

1. Animal Production and Supply
2. Agronomic Production and Supply
3. Horticultural Production and Supply
4. Home Production and Supply
5. Specialty Food Products

Committee 2. Transportation, Distribution, Storage and Logistics

Task Force

1. Inventory of Food Transportation and Distribution in Vermont
2. Effects of Tariffs on Price and Availability of Food in Vermont
3. Transportation Impediments to Expanding Local Agriculture
4. Effects of Storage Facilities on Price and Availability of Food
5. Opportunity for Regional Solutions to State Problems

Committee 3. Marketing

Task Force

1. Farmers' Markets and Co-ops
2. Farmers' Dairy and Produce Marketing
3. Indepth Exploration of Marketing in Addison County
4. Rules, Regulations, Formal Structures and Innovations in Marketing
5. Retail Grocery Stores

Committee 4. Government Institutions and Structures

Task Force

1. Government Food Programs
2. Educational/Training Programs
3. The State Department of Agriculture
4. Programs and Policies of the Federal Government Especially USDA, Soil Conservation, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation

Committee 5. Food Prices and Consumer Policy

Task Force - General Meeting: Tuesday, July 15 at 7:30 PM, John Dewey Lounge, 2nd Floor, Old Mill, University of Vermont

1. FDA Policies
2. Nutrition Education
3. Food Co-ops
4. Federal Feeding Programs
5. Food Advertising
6. Food Prices



STATE OF VERMONT
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
MONTPELIER, VERMONT

Governor's Commission on Food

Dear Interested Vermonter:

The Governor's Commission on Food will hold a general meeting on

The Commission is examining the Vermont food system from production, distribution, and marketing to consumption in order that it may recommend legislative and executive actions.

The Commission wants to hear from all interested individuals and groups in the State. Your name has been suggested and, therefore, we invite you to attend and to make a presentation to the Commission at our evening meeting, if you so desire.

If you plan to make a presentation, please notify Brendan Whittaker, Vice Chairperson, in Montpelier at 828-3357, so that we can be sure that time will be set aside for you. If you do not notify us ahead of time, we will still make every effort to see that time is made available to you on that evening. We would appreciate having the highlights of your presentation in writing.

At the end of the general meeting, the Commission will divide into its five Committees: 1) Food Production and Supply, 2) Transportation, Distribution, Storage and Logistics, 3) Marketing, 4) Government Institutions and Structures, and 5) Food Prices and Consumer Policy, and we will invite people present to meet with the Committee of their choice.

There will be a sign-up sheet for people who would like to serve on Commission Task Forces.

I hope you will join us.

Sincerely,

Rosalyn Oakes

Rosalyn Oakes, Chairperson
Governor's Commission on Food

RO:ab

THOMAS P. SALMON
GOVERNOR



STATE OF VERMONT
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
MONTPELIER, VERMONT

Governor's Commission on Food

MEMORANDUM

TO: Food Commission Members

FROM: Rosalyn Oakes, Chairperson 20

SUBJECT: Trout Farming

DATE: July 15, 1975

On Saturday, July 12th, I unofficially visited the Eldred Trout Preserve in Monticello, New York. I would like to share the following information with you to see if the project merits further investigation by Committee 1.

Product

The product is a small trout 5 1/2 months old, head removed, eviscerated and frozen to be eaten in its entirety as an appetizer or main dish.

Production cost @ \$1.90 per pound (56 fish to a pound).

Wholesale price @ \$3.80 per pound.

Profit before tax @ \$1.90 per pound.

Restaurant price @ \$15.75 per pound (8 fish per \$2.25 serving).

Investment Required

Land	@ 1 acre for entire operation, including processing.
Water	Good supply from wells and springs @ 58°.
Buildings	Old barn or shed for simple conversion to growth and processing facilities.
\$25,000	To convert existing buildings into indoor and outdoor covered raceways or tiered tanks. All equipment needed to grow fish to proper size.

\$50,000

Processing and frozen storage facilities. Ideally the processing facility would be a common facility used by many fish growers. No need for each farmer to process his own fish. Fish would be collected in tank trucks the same way milk is at present.

Size of Production

4.5 million fish in various stages of growth.

This facility is programmed to produce 1,000,000 small trout a month.

This product has been test marketed in New York State and immediate consumer acceptance with prediction of unlimited markets.

How this Fish Farm Works

Fish eggs arrive by air freight (owner plans his own egg production eventually).

Eggs placed in large glass jars in indoor hatchery.

Hatch in 30 days.

Transferred to indoor raceways for 30 days.

Transferred to outdoor raceways for 75 days.

Constantly graded by machine.

Transferred to onsite processing facility.

Electrocuted.

Heads removed and eviscerated by machine at rate of 120 fish per minute.

Quick frozen, packaged in 3 lb. bags and stored.

By-products

Fertilizer - Fish manure, high nitrogen

Fish Meal - Pulverized dead fish, heads, and innards

Points to Consider

Small amount of land needed.

Small capital investment for production.

Shared processing cost.

4 or 5 persons total labor force.

High return on investment.

Excellent source of protein.

Minimal preparation in home or restaurant because whole fish is eaten. Cooking time - 3 minutes.

Excellent flavor - As fully flavored as mature trout.

Vermont Specialty Product

RO:ab

A. Notes on meeting with Professor Ray Goldberg on Wednesday, May 28th at the Harvard Business School.

- Vermont, unlike Massachusetts, remains an important agricultural State and therefore is in a favorable position to increase its agricultural output, both intra-state and regionally. The best that Massachusetts can do is try to save its already greatly diminished farming business.
- Vermont can and should take a leading role in developing a regional agricultural program.
- The Food Commission should explore with major food processing companies the feasibility of starting up or adding to existing facilities for processing current raw agricultural products which are in good supply - i.e., milk and apples. He mentioned the many varieties of cheese which are consumed in the region but produced elsewhere. He noted the many apple products such as applesauce; cider; apple butter; bottled, canned, and frozen apple juice; and dried apples which perhaps could be profitably processed in state.
- Dr. Goldberg encouraged a thoughtful and constructive examination of retail food operations. He noted that although their profits nationally had increased in 1974, they still operate on a narrow profit margin and have many problems associated with their business operations. He suggested that supermarkets be encouraged to locate in sparsely settled areas to lower food prices in rural areas.
- Dr. Goldberg emphasized the need for land use planning and tax reforms which would encourage agriculture. He suggested that we look at North Dakota's Homestead Act for possible guidelines. He recommended a preeminent role for a special Task Force on Land Use Planning.
- He noted that there is, at present, a bill in the Massachusetts legislature which would create grain and food storage facilities as recommended by the Massachusetts Food Commission.
- He recommended we look closely at ways to improve the distribution of food to low income people such as through the Food Stamp Program.
- He strongly approved of our Commission plans for involving the Legislature directly in the work and final recommendation of the Commission.

- He recommended highly the film "Flood Tide of Milk" which was made in Vermont.

- B. Wink Pearson has agreed to organize our first public meeting to be held in Burlington on June 18th. He will present plans for the meeting at our June 6th meeting.

Rosalyn Oakes, Chairperson