November 9, 2017

Director Mark Killian
Arizona Department of Agriculture
1688 West Adams Street
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Director:

This letter is a follow up to the letter dated October 5, 2017 sent to you by Sharma Torrens. As you know, the Food & Agriculture Policy Advisory Committee (FAPAC) was tasked with making recommendations to you as the Director to tackle food access issues. Please note that the below recommendations are short-term goals, the FAPAC has other mid and long-term goals that it seeks to address. Additionally, a PowerPoint (PP) providing more details on these recommendations is attached and referenced throughout.

I wanted to expand on the FAPAC recommendations sent to you in the letter of October 5th referenced above.

Please see the below:

1) Expand the existing state food donation incentive statute (A.R.S. § 43-1025) to include all food donations, especially dairy, poultry, beef and fresh animal protein and also have the AZDA dedicate staff to promote these Arizona-Grown food access opportunities, Good Samaritan Laws, and connect food donors to food banks (page 3 of the PP);

2) Provide funding to food banks, non-profit organizations, agricultural food cooperatives and the Double up Food Bucks (DUFB) food programs and direct access to the DUFB program (pages 2 and 4 of the PP);

3) Empower sustained Arizona Agriculture Food Production (page 10 of the PP);

4) Streamline state and county health guidelines, reducing cumbersome and costly third party certifications (page 6 of the PP);

www.azagriculture.az.gov
5) Endorse cultivating a strong regional food system and partner with statewide coordination of existing Food Policy Councils;

6) Organize regular events to gather all in the production and distribution of food to gather and share information and concerns and report back to the FAPAC and educate the community (page 9 of the PP);

7) Consider subsidies, microloans and education for new and small farmers (page 5 of the PP);

8) Create a one-stop shop page on the AZDA website focused on increasing access to healthy food (page 8 of the PP).

Overall, the recommendation themes for the three subcommittees were the following: (a) Funding (DUFB, expanded state food donation tax incentive, Public Private Partnerships funding for food banks, etc., and subsidies, microloans and other financing options); (b) Removing barrier health regulations, including but not limited to for food production, transportation and expanded co-op definition (page 7 of the PP); (c) have an AZDA clearinghouse (dedicated staff member and website; promote AZ Grown food access & procurement, promote tax incentive and Good Samaritan laws, coordinate statewide food system coalitions) (page 8 of the PP); and (d) land and water use.

Again, please reference the attached PowerPoint for detail. The FAPAC would respectfully request the AZDA implement the above recommendations to the best of its ability.

Sincerely,

Sine Kerr
Chair, Food and Agriculture Policy Advisory Committee

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Food & Agriculture Policy Advisory Council Recommendations

ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 6, 2017
FOR CONSIDERATION BY DIRECTOR MARK KILLIAN
Ending Hunger
Support Double Up Food Bucks & Local Farmers

- State matching funds for the Double Up AZ program leverages federal funds with existing foundation and donor funding to increase SNAP benefits for fruit & vegetable purchases at Farmer's Markets and grocery stores.

- Double Up Food Bucks provides access to healthy Arizona grown food by those who need it by incentivizing the purchase of produce grown by Arizona producers.

- The program promotes economic development in rural Arizona by supporting small scale growers who typically are struggling to make their businesses profitable.

- The program creates new sales opportunities for local farmers.

- This increases demand for local produce and builds local economies.

Proposal: Fund direct access to Arizona-grown food through the Double Up Food Bucks program.
Ending Hunger
Expand the State Food Donation Tax Incentive

Problem: Emergency food providers that rely on food donations have difficulty sourcing product, especially dairy, poultry, and fresh animal protein.

Food banks source product from food drives, grocery stores, farmers and growers, produce houses, manufacturers, food service companies, and other industry partners.

Existing state law provides a tax incentive for any contribution of a crop or portion of a crop grown in Arizona by a taxpayer engaged in the trade or business of farming or processing agriculture crops to a charitable organization located in Arizona.

Unlike produce, animal protein can be frozen and resold at a later date with little depreciation, making it less likely to be donated to food banks.

The Department of Revenue does not have recent reports relating to the charitable crop contribution since the tax impact was historically low, but the most recent note showed $0 claimed in Tax Year 2001 and a high of $370,000 claimed in TY96.

Proposal:
Expand ARS 43-1025 to include all food donations, especially dairy, poultry, and fresh animal protein
Ending Hunger
Explore Public-Private Funding for Healthy Arizona-Grown Food

- Arizona has 4 members of the Feeding America network: Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona, St. Mary’s Food Bank Alliance, United Food Bank & Yuma Community Food Bank.

- Collectively, they serve more than 1,400 other agencies statewide such as food pantries, community and senior centers, domestic and homeless shelters, schools, and churches.

- Building agency capacity through direct funding to food banks helps serve areas of unmet need throughout Arizona.

Proposal: Provide funding to food banks, nonprofit agencies, agriculture food co-ops
Proposal: Consider subsidies, microloans, and other financing options.
Ending Hunger
Unify State & County Health Guidelines

Problem: County-by-county health regulations are inhibiting Arizona-grown products to be more easily accessed throughout Arizona

Feeding back small-scale rural producers and from the Arizona Food Summit showed producers in Yavapai and Coconino Counties have found it cumbersome and costly to meet different county health regulations if the county where their product is produced is different than the county where their product is sold, including to schools, restaurants, and farmers markets.

Yavapai County Community Health Services has issued new guidance that enables local purchases of locally-grown products without requiring costly and time-consuming third-party certification.

Collaborations between local agriculture coalitions, economic development initiatives, food safety councils, and Cooperative Extension ensure food safety while increasing food access.

Focus on the Produce Safety Rule in the context of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)

Proposal:
Unify state and county health guidelines, reducing cumbersome and costly third party certifications.
Proposal:

Identify & remove barriers and requirements to food production, transportation, and access
Ending Hunger
One-Stop Shop w/ Department of Ag to Increase Healthy Food Access

Problem: ongoing efforts and resources available to support agriculture are unknown to those working to grow healthy local food which could be used to end hunger

Next Steps

Dedicate an AZDA staff and website to share information, connect entities like rural small-scale growers, incorporate relevant information, help identify funding, and facilitate outreach, especially highlighting increasing access to healthy food and opportunities to make farms more successful in rural Arizona

Promote “Arizona Grown” and an “Arizona First” program that support small and large scale producers, & favor the purchase of Arizona-grown products in procurement

Promote food donation state tax incentives & Good Samaritan laws

Facilitate food donations to food banks

Assist statewide food system coalitions coordination
Ending Hunger
Continue to Host an Arizona Food Summit & Similar Gatherings

- The Arizona Department of Agriculture and Health Services hosted an Arizona Food Desert Summit in Summer, 2016

- An Arizona Food Summit was hosted in Spring, 2017 working towards:
  - Bolstering Arizona’s emergency food network
  - Strengthening an equitable food system in Arizona
  - Developing long-term food security solutions through economic development

Proposal: Organize regular events to gather all in the production and distribution of food to gather and share information and concerns, and report back to the Food Council and educate the community.
Ending Hunger
Empower Sustained Arizona Agriculture Food Production

Problem: Arizona food producers do not have adequate resources to sustain Arizona agriculture.

- 30% of Arizona farm operators are over 65 years old, with the average age of an Arizona farmer being 61.
- 60% of Arizona farms have just between 1 -9 acres.
- 46% of Arizona farm operators report having no days of work off the farm

Next Steps
- Examine long-term land and water use
- Promote scholarships, training, and education for new & existing food producers
Food & Agriculture Advisory Council
Supported Efforts

APPROVED SEPTEMBER 6, 2017
Proposal:

Support current efforts for DES to seek waiver that allows DES staff to “reach in” and secure pre-enrollment for SNAP/TANF benefits for qualifying inmates prior to release and train correctional officers on enrollment procedures.
Ending Hunger
Delay the Box

- Everyone deserves the opportunity to earn a living to avoid poverty & food insecurity

- 34% of the unemployed prime working age men have a criminal record

- A conviction reduces the likelihood of a job callback or offer by 50%

- As an employer, adopt a “delay the box” policy, and model the behavior we want the private sector to follow

- Positive outcomes for both the workforce and recidivism projects

Proposal:
Support current efforts for the State of Arizona to adopt a “Delay the Box” policy as an employer
Ending Hunger
SNAP Employment & Training

- Education is a top priority in Arizona that boosts prosperity for individuals, builds our economy, and reduced risks of poverty and food insecurity

- Achieve60AZ is a statewide goal to ensure 60% of Arizonans 25+ have a certificate or college degree by 2030

- SNAP E&T is intended to prevent long-term reliance on SNAP while providing opportunity for SNAP participants to find adequate employment

- Currently, SMFBA, UMOM, WHEAT, CFBSA, Father's Matters, & Goodwill are E&T partners

- Stakeholders meeting w/ DES to brainstorm ideas with positive outcomes for workforce, recidivism, and foster care projects

Proposal: Support current efforts to strengthen and expand E&T