

Strengthening Our Food System Together in Times of Crisis

Co-Moderators Noelle Warford, Urban Tree Connection
Dori Cross, PA-WAgN and Penn State Extension



Who's in the Room?

- Share in the chatbox your:
 - Name
 - Location (city/state)
 - Role in the food sector

Housekeeping

- This session is being recorded and will be posted on PA-WAGN's website
- Tech challenges: use the chat box and direct your questions to Dori
- Keep yourself on mute through the duration of the call
- Hold your questions until the Q&A sections
- Get to Know each other! We invite you to chat with one another in the chat box, share resources and links
- We will share an updated Resource Guide list with folks after the call

PA-WAGN's Women Rural-Urban Network (WRUN)

- WRUN's MISSION: To form a collaborative network of diverse urban and rural women growers and food advocates to improve mutual sustainability, justice and access to healthy food across our communities.
- WRUN's VISION: Women leading in creating equitable, just and sustainable food systems across all communities.

PA-WAGN's Women Rural-Urban Network (WRUN)

“People are aware that they cannot continue in the same old way but are immobilized because they cannot imagine an alternative. We need a vision that recognizes that we are at one of the great turning points in human history when the survival of our planet and the restoration of our humanity require a great sea change in our ecological, economic, political, and spiritual values.”

-Grace Lee Boggs

Panelists and Agenda

- Nicole Sugerman, Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working (NESAWG): key policies impacting farmers and farmer's markets during COVID-19
- Lyn Garling & Patty Neiner, Over the Moon Farm: Emerging farmers needs, alternative farmer market structures
- Nykisha Madison-Keita & Noelle Warford, Urban Tree Connection: Organizational Contingency Planning
- Small Group Breakout Session

Policy Updates and Opportunities

Nicole Sugerman, Policy Manager, Northeast
Sustainable Agriculture Working Group

Senate Stimulus Package: Highlights

- On Wednesday, the Senate unanimously passed (96-0) The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (S.3548), a more than \$2.2 trillion aid bill as part of the ongoing response to the coronavirus pandemic
 - The bill contains \$9.5 billion in emergency funding to aid producers impacted by the ongoing crisis – reserved for Specialty crop producers, Livestock producers (including dairy), and producers that supply local food systems (including farmers markets, restaurants, and schools)
 - The bill lacks specifics- we will need to watch during implementation
 - \$100,000,000 for a rural broadband reConnect pilot
 - \$15.8 billion for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to cover an expected jump in applications as more workers are laid off. BUT no wins for advocates: no 15 percent boost to households' SNAP benefits, no increase of the minimum payment.
 - Boosts funding for targeted emergency food assistance for tribal communities through the Food Distribution on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)

Next Steps

- The Bill has to be passed by the House
- More opportunities in the 4th package
- We need to watch the bill during implementation to make sure the 9.5 billion is distributed equitably

Other opportunities for federal action:

- Paid sick days for all workers
- Expanding funding for existing programs to better serve farmers' needs during the crisis (LAMP, Crop Insurance)
- Personal Protective Equipment (for healthcare providers but also for farmworkers), eliminate student loan debt, worker protections and the right to unionize for farmworkers
- Set asides in farm funding for “socially disadvantaged” producers?

State Policy in PA

- Essential services in PA include:
 - farms,
 - greenhouses and vegetable plants,
 - orchards,
 - pest management services,
 - feed mills and ag supply businesses, agricultural equipment sales and service, animal feed and supply distribution network,
 - veterinary services and supplies,
 - retailers to include grocery stores and farmers markets
- Some areas of PA have enacted stay-at-home orders, while other counties have not
- Penn State Extension will conduct on-farm visits, remote consultations, and has online resources available

Potential Policy Ideas from other States:

- Administrative flexibility for state grant or contract obligations
- Grants and cash support for emergency relief
- Expanded unemployment benefits to include entrepreneurs, small business owners, and all workers regardless of immigration status.
- No evictions from farms or food facilities, and no foreclosures or delinquency penalties on personal and business loans.
- Grocery store employees and other food chain workers can be classified as essential employees to qualify for free childcare
- Technical assistance for transitioning farmers to online sales

How to act?

- Call or write to elected officials and local decision makers: Ag Commissioner, Governor, Senators and Congressional representative, etc.
- Follow social movement organizations for coordinated campaigns:
 - Food Chain Workers Alliance <http://foodchainworkers.org/>
 - National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition <https://sustainableagriculture.net/>
 - CATA: <https://cata-farmworkers.org/>
 - Climate Justice Alliance: <https://climatejusticealliance.org/>

* Put more suggestions/who you are following for leadership in the chat

Get in touch: nicole@nesawg.org

Q+A

(type questions in the chat box)

Emerging Challenges for Small, Direct Market Farmers & Their Ability to Meet Peoples' Needs

Lyn Garling & Patty Neiner, Over the Moon Farm

Current farming issues and changes due to COVID-19

- marketing to restaurants suffering
- CSAs booming
- Farmer's markets are uneven
 - Well-organized w/ good communication (vs not)
 - Ability to do pre-orders and online sales
 - Supply and ability to pay uncertain
 - Future of outdoor markets uncertain

Resources for direct market farmers

- PA Farmers Market listserve
 - Brian Moyer
 - bfm3@psu.edu
 - (610) 391-9840
 - <https://pafarm.com/resources/>
- Farmers Market Coalition
 - Ben Feldman
 - ben@farmersmarketcoalition.org
 - (888) 362-8177
 - <https://farmersmarketcoalition.org/>

Farmer Networks

Helping people in need with farm issues

- WAgN & WFAN - Virtual discussions; FB Pages, Virtual potlucks
 - [PA-WAgN Supporting Each Other Through COVID-19](#)
 - [Growing Community Resilience during COVID](#)
- PASA, PA Farmers Union, PA Farm Bureau, PA Farm Markets
 - join, listen, ask, act

Questions going forward – can we...

- * make alternative market structures to connect people and food?
- * collaborate with food insecurity infrastructure (formal/informal) ?

Any suggestions email us at pawagn@psu.edu

Q+A

(type questions in the chat box)

Organizational Contingency Planning + Community Building during/after COVID-19

Nykisha Madison-Keita & Noelle Warford, Urban
Tree Connection

Q+A

(type questions in the chat box)

Small groups breakouts (8-10 people) - 15 mins

1. Unmute your microphone when speaking (far left button in Zoom toolbar for those participating on computer, press *6 if you are on the phone)
2. Identify a facilitator
3. Brief Intros
4. What Needs to you see surfacing in your communities
5. What solutions / offerings do you see emerging
6. Possibilities for collaborations

Need tech support? Message Dorothy Cross in the chat box

Shareback

- We welcome you to share out any gems that came up during your discussion in the chat box
- We will compile resources shared in the chat and share with everyone who attended this webinar along with a recording of the webinar
- Thank you, be well, and stay safe!