

# GOVERNOR'S

2015

CONFERENCE ON AGRICULTURE



**NOVEMBER 10, 2015**

**Culinary Academy of Las Vegas**

**LAS VEGAS, NEVADA**

**CONFERENCE REPORT**

# Introduction



## CONTACT

405 South 21st Street  
Sparks, NV 89431  
775-353-3600  
agri.nv.gov

 /NevadaDepartmentofAgriculture  
 /NVAgiculture

It is my honor to present this report on the second Nevada Governor's Conference on Agriculture held November 10, 2015 at the Culinary Academy of Las Vegas. This conference hosted nearly 100 participants to discuss issues important to Nevada agriculture.

The Governor's Conference on Agriculture hosted two round table discussions: **Track A: Range to Table**, and **Track B: Plants to Plates**.

This report summarizes the vibrant and productive conversations that were held throughout the day. Through these sessions, and future discussions, we seek to connect the food and agriculture value chain elements and support conversations that will result in better understanding of the food demand and supply process.

We are so appreciative of your participation in this conference and in helping to develop a roadmap for connecting agriculture to the urban community. Our post-conference survey revealed the majority of participants were satisfied with the content and structure of the event. We have some improvements to make for the next conference, and value your feedback to allow us to make this a more valuable event for all involved.

We were pleased with the conference, forward-thinking discussion, volunteer facilitators, our many exhibitors, sponsors, and attendees.

Please contact me if you have any questions about this event or would like to discuss any of the topics and recommendations contained herein.

—JIM BARBEE  
Director, Nevada Department of Agriculture



*The Nevada Department of Agriculture promotes a business climate that is fair, economically viable and encourages environmental stewardship that serves to protect food, fiber, and human health and safety through effective service and education.*

*The Department was established in 1915 by Chapter 561 of the Nevada Revised Statutes. It includes the divisions of: Administration, Animal Industry, Consumer Equitability, Food and Nutrition and Plant Industry.*

# Conference Objectives

These objectives supported the day's conversations, and guided the discussion long-term:

- 1. Identify participants:** markets, producers, distributors, financial organizations and government agencies
- 2. Identify current trends:** what type of food is available locally
- 3. Identify challenges and barriers** for all participants in the food and agriculture value chain
- 4. Identify and develop ideas for improvements:** what could be done to resolve barriers

These objectives will continue to be used to develop framework and capacity for future surveys and analysis of food and agriculture demand and supply process in Nevada.

## Round-Table Summary

The Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) seeks to connect the food and agriculture value chain elements and support conversations that will result in a better understanding of the food demand and supply process.

The conference hosted two round table discussions: **Track A: Range to Table** and **Track B Plants to Plates**. As a part of the round table discussions, conference attendees were asked to participate in a short survey, based on their position in the value chain. Data collected from the round table sessions and survey will help the NDA to understand the strategies of agricultural producers, key issues and barriers that producers face as an integral part of the food value chain, how suppliers, financial organizations, and government institutions can best serve agricultural producers, as well as barriers that exist when sourcing locally produced food for final markets.

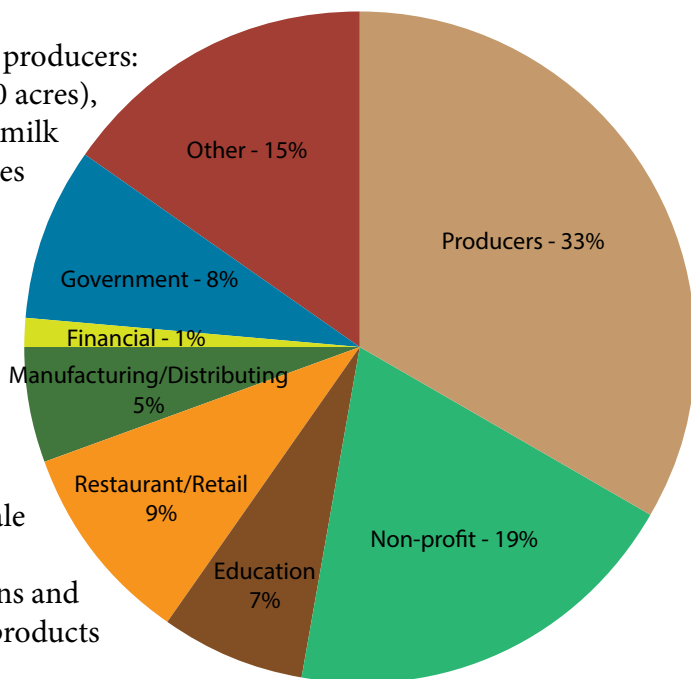
This report includes responses from completed surveys and information collected from round table sessions.

### PARTICIPANTS

More than 30 percent of the round table participants were producers: home gardeners, small to medium farmers (fewer than 500 acres), aspiring farmers, and large livestock operations, as well as milk and dairy production operations. Manufacturing companies participating at the conference were mostly greenhouse and/or indoor producers and equipment manufacturing companies.

More than 19 percent of participants were nonprofit organizations and approximately seven percent of total participants were higher education representatives.

Restaurants, casino resorts and national retail and wholesale chains accounted for approximately nine percent of total participants at the conference, contributing to conversations and topics about distribution and marketing of locally grown products during the round table sessions.





# Trends

## IN LOCAL FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PRODUCTION OPERATIONS

At the end of the round table sessions, farmers and ranchers were asked to identify their practices, produce and the methods used to market their products.

Produce identified were tomatoes, lettuce, peppers, onions, garlic, berries and apples. Participants also listed additional products like pomegranate, melons, pumpkins, asparagus, eggplant, carrots, basil, peaches, eggs, and microgreens.

A small number of participating producers reported selling their products to customers in the Las Vegas metropolitan area. Most producers sell on site, to restaurants or at farmers markets. Some local producers sell to retail stores, and a small percentage of them sell to institutional buyers like senior living facilities.

A majority of producers connect with their buyers through personal relationships and over the phone, however farmers markets and community events are another important connection with buyers.

When asked about transportation of their products to market, most of the producers stated that they, family members or their employees are delivering products to buyers. The minority of producers in attendance have buyers make transportation arrangements or use third party transportation services.



# Barriers

## IN FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PRODUCTION OPERATIONS

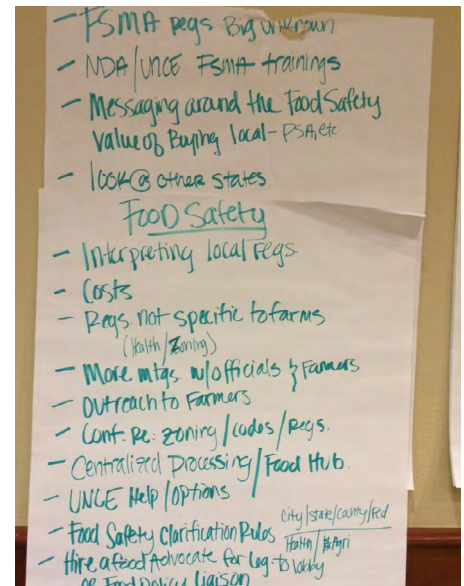
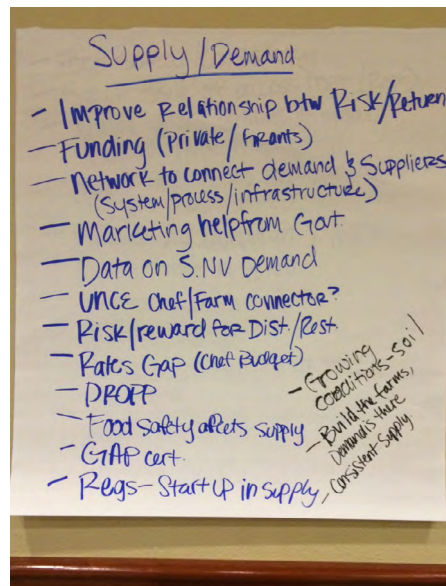
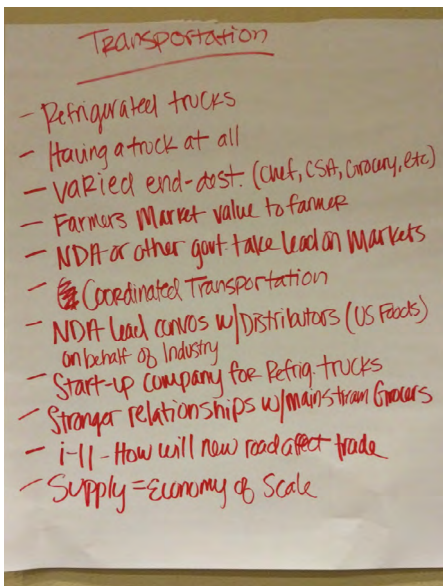
Producers were asked to list some main operational services and different technology improvements that would potentially help them improve and/or expand their operations. When it comes to operational services, a majority of producers need assistance with marketing and transportation. Greenhouses, hoops houses, irrigation systems and solar technology were listed as technological improvements needed to help expand and/or improve their production.

When asked to determine major production barriers they are facing, most of the producers listed lack of financing and financial support, transportation costs, and marketing costs.

On the regulatory side, major barriers they face are processing regulations, certification processes, city or county zoning regulations, farmers market and retail/wholesale regulation, and lack of knowledge regarding food safety regulations in general.

Producers cited two major barriers to accessing local foods in the Las Vegas market:

- 1) lack of knowledge about who potential buyers are, and
- 2) not enough production volume to satisfy buyer's needs.





# Trends

## IN LOCAL LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION OPERATIONS

The livestock producers in attendance were mostly beef and swine producers who raise animals to finishing weight. After finishing, the animals are sold live to other producers or sent to slaughter and returned to the original producer for retail sale. Those producers that do not raise animals to finishing weight sell them to feedlots out of state to be finished.

All livestock producers in attendance said they make decisions about where and how to sell their livestock based on their location. They are looking for the nearest available market and the best selling price.

Most of the livestock producers participating in the round table discussion were largescale, and have the means and passion to work around barriers. These producers are currently selling their product to customers in the Las Vegas metropolitan area. Major markets for producers to sell their products are on site, to farmers markets and to retail stores or restaurants.

When selling to a local market, most producers deliver themselves or with the help of family members. A few producers indicated use of third party transportation companies or have the buyer arrange for delivery and transportation.

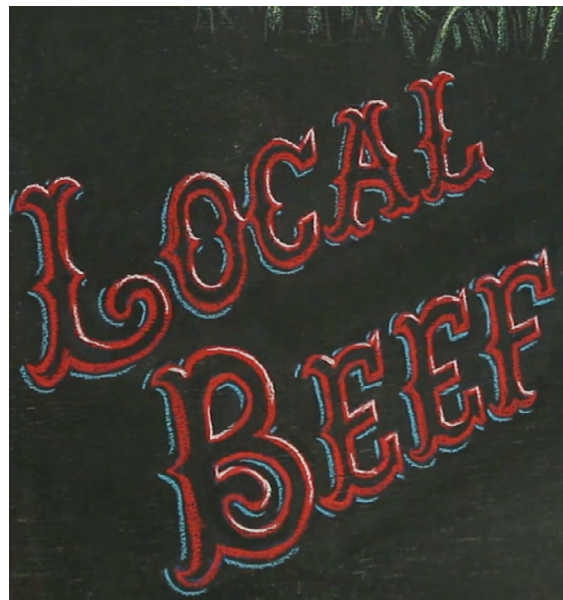


# Barriers

## IN LOCAL LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION OPERATIONS

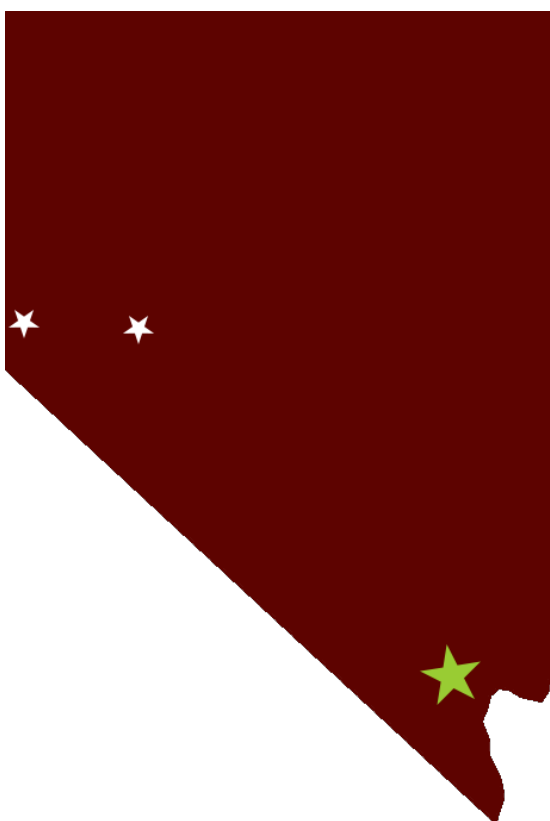
The majority of conference participants cite that there is a need for more USDA inspected slaughterhouses in Nevada. The majority of livestock producers cited that if there were more USDA slaughterhouses, they would either maintain existing, or potentially increase herd size.

Besides the lack of slaughtering and processing capacities, other major barriers to production, listed by participants include cost of transportation, lack of knowledge about markets and retail opportunities, and lack of markets where reasonable prices could be obtained. The main regulatory barriers are transportation regulations, certification and water use requirements. Operational services are needed to expand production are harvesting and processing services, as well as packaging and repackaging services of meat products.



## USDA SLAUGHTER FACILITIES IN NEVADA

- » Mori Whole Sale Meats, Fallon
- » York Meats, Fallon
- » UNR Wolfpack Meats, Reno



Many producers identified the **lack of a USDA processing facility nearby as a barrier to selling to the local market.**

The three processing facilities in Nevada are in the northern part of the state, though the **majority of Nevada's \$2 billion food industry spending (GOED) is in the Las Vegas metropolitan area.**



# Trends

## IN MARKETS FOR LOCALLY PRODUCED FOOD AND AGRICULTURE PRODUCTS

Participants in this category were buyers of locally grown products; whether they used them in their restaurants, or sell them as part of their retail/wholesale operations. These markets are sourcing onions, garlic, potatoes, tomatoes, lettuce, melons, peppers, herbs and microgreens, as well as local beef, pork, lamb and chicken. They also purchase local dairy and milk products.

The typical way buyers connect with local producers is through word of mouth referrals, trade shows and creating personal relationships with producers. Buyers also find that their customers want to see locally sourced food as a part of their menu, or as part of their food offerings.

# Barriers

## IN MARKETS FOR LOCALLY PRODUCED FOOD AND AGRICULTURE PRODUCTS

Major barriers when it comes to sourcing food from local producers, based on the collected data, are locating local producers, consistent availability and quantity of locally grown products, timing and reliability of delivery, and required processing and/or packaging of products. Buyers listed price as another main reason for not sourcing locally produced food.

According to buyers, local producers should focus on: labeling for traceability, variety and quantity of products, and timing of delivery, to help them sell their products.



Ground Lamb





# Proposed Solutions

## FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PRODUCTION

## LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

### SUPPLY & DEMAND

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Create network (system / process / infrastructure) to connect demand and supply (<b>FOOD HUB</b>)</li> <li>» Develop data on existing demand</li> <li>» Develop connections between markets and growers (chef / farm connection)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Create collaboration (cooperatives) to provide consistent supply</li> <li>» Differentiate between market and consumer (high-end casino restaurants vs. farmers market)</li> <li>» Identify consumer demands</li> <li>» Create regulations for “local” or “Nevada” meat</li> <li>» Establish finishing, harvesting and processing location close to supply to reduce transportation cost</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

### TRANSPORTATION

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Form coordinated transportation - logistics based on different end-destinations (restaurants, farmers markets, retail, etc.)</li> <li>» Distributors develop stronger relationships with growers</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Determine methods to collaborate and create north-south connection</li> <li>» Develop supply-chain distribution that would make cost of transportation feasible</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

### FOOD SAFETY

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Promote food safety training and education through the NDA</li> <li>» Create messaging on food safety - local food is safe / healthy</li> <li>» Work with officials on interpreting local regulations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Promote benefits of tight regulations - traceability, food handling</li> <li>» Consider water usage and access</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

### OTHER

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Funding - identify sources of financing and grants</li> <li>» Regulations - work on alleviating county restrictions on urban agriculture</li> <li>» Research - additional efforts to grow the agriculture sector</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Funding - source of financing and grants</li> <li>» Workforce - access to skilled workforce for processing</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

## Next Steps

As mentioned before, this data gives a brief overview of discussions during the round table sessions. Much of the data has been summarized in the form of simple observations, and based on the information collected during the conference through participants’ experiences or opinions expressed. More complex data analyses will be needed to ensure that the appropriate samples of participants are being included. A thorough understanding of the structure of the food and agriculture system is needed, but this report will serve as guidance to this more complex process and analysis.

### STAY CONNECTED

- Southern Nevada Food Council** ..... <http://gethealthyclarkcounty.org/eat-better/southern-nevada-food-council.php>  
**Food Hub Clark County** ..... <http://facebook.com/FoodHubClarkCountyNevada>  
**NDA** ..... <http://agri.nv.gov>

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