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For more information on Small Farms, visit our website at: http://smallfarms.ifas.ufl.edu or contact your local County Extension Agent.

For inquiries about this topic, please contact:
Danielle Treadwell, Educational Program Chair.
Phone: (352)-273-4775
E-mail: ddtreadw@ufl.edu

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UF/IFAS Extension
The Journey to Sustainability Begins with Education

UF/IFAS Sarasota County Extension
6700 Clark Road
Twin Lakes Park
Sarasota, Florida 34241
(941) 861-5000
“FOOd Policy Council of Sarasota County, Florida”

2011 Florida Small Farm & Alternative Enterprise Conference
July 15-17, 2011

Robert A. Kluson, PhD.
Agriculture/Natural Resources Extension Agent
UF/IFAS - Sarasota County Extension
Presentation Outline

– History and process of development phase

– Process and current implementation phase
“Food Policy Council”
What Is It?

• Stakeholders from diverse food-related sectors to examine how the food system is operating and to develop recommendations on how to improve it

• Action steps include educating officials and the public, shaping public policy, improving coordination between existing programs, and starting new programs

North American Food Policy Council http://www.foodsecurity.org/FPC/
Sarastoa Agriculture Policy Council

History

- Formed in the 2005 spring, using the Food Policy Council model, with the facilitation of the Sarasota County Extension.
- Purpose is to support the activities of the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) in the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) of the Comprehensive Plan by developing policy recommendations to sustain agriculture in Sarasota County.
- An inclusive group representing the agriculture community of Sarasota County (for example, small and large farmers, ranchers, horticulture, ag suppliers, consumers, organic farmers, grower associations, environmental groups, farmers markets, food industry and vendors, etc)
Who Are The Stakeholders?

- Farmers, farm organizations, farmer’s markets
- Consumers: CSAs, Co-ops, advocacy groups
- Civic groups & boards, nonprofits & charities, community groups, community gardens
- Community Institutions: schools, hospitals, senior citizen homes and prisons
- Churches, food banks, & soup kitchens
- Restaurants, grocery stores, & wholesalers
- Producers, processors, & distributors
- University & extension
- Local, state and federal government offices
- Regional planners
Ag Policy Development Process

- Education of Food and Foodshed-Related Issues and Sustainability
- Review of County Comprehensive Plan
- Consensus-Building of Policy Recommendations to County Commissioners
- Public Presentation
History: Community & Government Sustainability Initiatives

- Florida House Construction (1992)
- Env. Sensitive Lands Protection Program (1999)
- Office of Sustainability Resolution (2002)
- FL Green Building Coalition & Green Local Government Certifications
- Holistic Management Policies
  - Watershed
  - Integrated Pest Management
  - Community Health Improvement Partnerships
  - Economic Development Council
If everyone on Earth lived as we do in Sarasota County, we would need 5 planets to provide the natural resources to meet our demands for food, energy, goods & services = conclusion of the analysis!
Local Foodshed or Food System

Defined as the Who, What, Where, When, Why and How of Our Food - From Farm to Plate

Source: EarthFriends. 1995
Local Community Foodshed

Community-based Food System

Inner ring – food system components

Outer ring – community-based food system outcomes
All told, Sarasota County...

- Gains $10 million producing food
- Buys $7 million of outside inputs
- Buys $500 million of outside food

Potential wealth lost each year
Finding Food in Farm Country

Total loss is:

• $500 million each year

• Equals 15 times entire value of all crops & livestock raised in the region
Finding Food in Sarasota County

If region consumers bought only 5% of their food directly from farmers:

$40 million of new farm income earned each year

more than what is now sold!
Sarasota Agriculture Policy Council
Accomplishments

• Since formed in 2005, facilitated meetings with participants from the diversity of the community food system of Sarasota County

• Policy recommendations were adopted as new agriculture policies in 2 chapters of the Comprehensive Plan of Sarasota County based upon:
  – Sustainable agriculture
  – Local community foodshed development
  – Farmland protection

• Continuation and recommendations requested by County Commissioners for implementation phase
Future Land Use Chapter
Agriculture Policy Examples

• Policies 1.3.1 and 1.3.2
  – Protect small & large farms with a “compatibility” requirement for non-ag development in rural & semi-rural areas

• Policy 1.3.3
  – Implementation incentives include:
    • Use of county lands for community gardens & farms, and for farmers markets
    • Local Farm to Institution purchasing & marketing
    • Community food system assessments
    • Farmland trust initiatives
    • Urban agriculture, as well as traditional agriculture

http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu/AG/agpolicy.shtml
Environment Chapter
Agriculture Policy Examples

• **Policy 4.7.8**
  – support sustainable ag programs as public education in order to reduce ecological footprint and maintain healthy environment

• **Policy 4.7.9**
  – support sustainable ag practices & crops that promote water conservation
  – promote connectivity of farms & ranches with adjacent conservation lands
  – promote wildlife habitats on ag lands as habitat corridors & ecosystem functions

http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu/AG/agpolicy.shtml
Ag Policy Implementation Process

• Conduct community workshops to promote local foodshed development based on:
  • the “ReNewAbility” process
  • new agriculture policies of Sarasota County Comprehensive Plan
Food Policy Council
Current Activities

• Continue community workshops for person-to-person networking & partnerships in local community foodshed projects
• Expansion of ReNewAbility process to a GIS web-based database in real time
• Foodshed development promotion with neighboring counties on a bioregional basis