

2021 Denver Metro Area Producers Summit

Community Report

A convening of mile
high farmers to
create a vision for the
coming year.

Held each January

About our annual strategy planning event:

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Each year we invite producers of food and fiber to gather **to connect and collaborate in shaping the future of urban farming in Denver.**

This interactive summit offers space for our grassroots collective to voice concerns, needs, and dreams for the future of farming in the Denver metro.

We know that success for independent producers and increased equity in our local agriculture scene relies on collaboration. That's why we organize in solidarity with local urban producers and food advocates to strategize ways to increase the vitality and resiliency of urban farming in our region.



Acknowledging this land

Led by Shannon Francis, Executive Director of [Spirit of the Sun](#), a nonprofit empowering native youth.



Equity 2.0: Reparations

Reflections led by Leanne Alaman of [Embodied Contribution Consulting](#), a DEIC consulting group.

Trends, Events & Forces Impacting Needs:



Action Committee Priorities

Justice & Equity Committee

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Mission: This action group will provide resources and education materials to build a shared understanding of equity and justice, to develop strategies and practices that build accountability in action groups and the wider Mile High Farmers community. We will practice engaged community relationship building to promote and expand the conversation within MHF and without.

Priorities:

1. We will continue to support the racial equity training. Support trainings such as Leanne Alaman associated with all aspects of justice and equity.
2. Affordable Housing-This is a potential area of policy focus in a Special Orders RMFU
3. Living wages for farmers and farm workers-this is another intersectional issue like housing that crosses urban rural divide.
4. Thinking of ways food policy councils can help to center racial equity in food systems conversations
5. Trainings: opportunity for collaborating
6. Outreach to farmers for whom English is not the language of their heart
7. Reparations: Concrete information and ideas for people
8. collaboration with policy such as special orders
9. intersections and where issues that address farmers intersect with other issues.
10. Caucus Space for white farmers/reading group.

Farmer Education & Wellness Committee

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Mission: Connecting local farmers to each other in order to share knowledge, resources, and support one another -- and maybe even having a little fun in the process.

Priorities:

1. Education Focus:
 - a. Conduct farm tours for community education (maybe partnering with GoFarm)
 - b. Seed saving, seed saving knowledge and bank
 - c. Regional seed companies
2. Wellness
 - a. Organize outings such as hikes and off farm activities
 - b. Mental health first aid training

Farmers Markets Committee

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Mission: Focusing on recommending best practices for farmers interacting with farmers markets (including farm-site market stands), especially in response to needs arising from COVID-19. This committee also helps educate farmers and farmer's markets on the SNAP program, offers support for various crossover programs, collects data related to farmers/market interactions, and aspires to become a trusted liaison between farmers and farmers markets over time.

Priorities:

1. Providing training to farmers with a Equity & Justice focus: Accepting EBT with a customer focus
 - a. GoFarm Training for farmers
 - b. Farmers Market COmmittee completing a training on this for market managers
 - c. This committee desires to to collab with Justice/equity group on this in order to teach folks how to create a welcoming, non-stigmatized environment accepting this form of payment.

Land Access Committee

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Mission: The land access committee works to locate land in the metro Denver area that is suitable for production agriculture. Suitable land is affordable for long term leases, has access to water, appropriate sun exposure, and is not a brownfield site.

Priorities:

1. Reassessing Park Hill and approach on this project
2. GIS project to identify possible farm land.
3. Strategy: take a regional approach to partnerships for land access
 - a. (Food in Communities, Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council, and Jeffco Food Policy Council are strong partners).

Outreach & Partnerships Committee

Mission: Seeking to increase the number of farmers and affiliate partners of Mile High Farmers and supporting outreach efforts to promote MHF.

By increasing the number of people who participate in MHF and engage in our committees and work, we amplify our collective efforts in addressing the issues and struggles of our local food and farming community.

Priorities:

1. Website & digital communications
2. How to better support and connect with various committees
3. Increase base of membership and quality of interactions between each other
4. Continually remind why we are doing this work together
5. Build relationships with ally orgs

Policy Committee

Mission: The MHF Policy Committee engages and guides local, state, and federal farm policy in support of its constituents. We evaluate and promote strategies in support of local urban farming, offering recommendations on best use policy relating to water access, soil health, innovative farming and sustainability techniques used in today's urban farm.

Priorities:

1. To engage in water education and the Colorado water plan planning
2. To push further in advancing BIPOC bills and action through advancing those issues and also pushing for it in the RMFU
3. To be organized and prepared in policy position for Rmfu convention 2021.
4. To advance our own members for Positions in RMFU
5. To work and support the voices of agriculture labor and to advocate for Bills that recognize this community
6. To continue work around zoning and hope house
7. To push towards a reputations based policy proposal based on research we do
8. To work with other commissions in denver who serve specific communities such as the African American and Indigenous commission.
9. To support other committees in policy concerns they may have or positions they may want us to advocate.

Food Hub & Distribution Committee

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Mission: working to demystify food systems and food hubs in order to actualize expressions of food sovereignty. We will do this work through a focus on values alignment and historical context so that we can avoid perpetuating inequities in our food systems.

Initial Priorities:

1. Data Mapping (found groups already doing this, [Nourish](#), [HFDK](#), [National Western Center](#).)
2. Institutional Procurement
3. Regional Infrastructure

Revised Priorities to be discussed:

1. Work to understand historical context of Colorado Food Systems.
2. Create values focused open-letter in order to identify partners.
3. Identify/Develop Institutional Procurement channels for smaller producers and food hubs.
4. Identify smaller Producer “asks” in order to plug-in to nodal food system (i.e. system serves small producers too.)
5. Identify Regional Infrastructure, both needed and in-progress, in order to develop more equitable food systems.
6. Leverage leg-work already done in order to cultivate a nodal food hub system. ([example](#), [example](#), ect.)
7. Work towards Mayoral Advisory around food hubs/ food access/ food sovereignty ([example](#), [example](#), ect.)

Contacts

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