

## Purdue Farm Policy Study Group Meeting Summary

July 11, 2023

The following members were present: Pete Clark, Ken Foster, Scott Harper, Stephanie Harper, David Howell, Levi Huffman, Rachel Hyde, Don Lamb, Marshall Martin, Tom McKinney, Doug Mills, Peyton Mohler, Doug Morehouse, John Nidlinger, Mark Townsend, Rick Ward, Steve Warner, Christy Welch and Mike Yoder

Excused: Sonny Beck, Brent Bible, Kendall Culp, Sarah Delbecq, Otto Doering, John Hardin, Bryan Kirkpatrick, Lisa Koester, Randy Kron, Mark Legan, Steve Pithoud, Danita Rodibaugh, Ken Rulon, Michael Shuter and Don Vilwock

Note: Please visit the [Farm Policy Study Group](#) Website to access presentation documents.

Meeting Agenda can be found here: [Agenda](#)

Program Summaries:

### 1. Amanda Deering – [Indiana's Home-Based Vendor Regulation and Implications](#)

Dr. Amanda Deering, an associate professor in the Purdue University Department of Food Science, delivered a presentation titled "NAVIGATING CHANGES TO THE HOME-BASED VENDOR LAW" to the Purdue Farm Policy Study Group. The presentation focused on the regulations and requirements for home-based vendors (HBVs) in Indiana and the changes that came into effect on July 1st, 2022, to boost economic growth in the state.

In the beginning, Dr. Deering defined a home-based vendor as an individual who prepares and sells food products at their primary residence, excluding potentially hazardous food products. These vendors must adhere to proper sanitary procedures and only sell directly to end-users, not to someone intending to resell the products.

The presentation highlighted various examples of products that HBVs are allowed to sell, such as baked items, candy, produce, tree nuts, honey, and certain types of jams and preserves. However, potentially hazardous foods, which require temperature control and can support the growth of harmful microorganisms, are prohibited from being sold by HBVs.

Dr. Deering emphasized the factors that make a food "potentially hazardous," including a pH greater than 4.6 and water activity greater than 0.85. To ensure compliance, the Food Science Department offers testing of HBV products for pH and water activity. Certain products fall under the jurisdiction of other agencies and regulations, like raw meat and poultry regulated by the Board of Animal Health (BOAH) and chicken eggs overseen by the Indiana Egg Board. HBVs should avoid selling these items to remain in compliance.

The major changes to the HBV law in 2022 were twofold. First, they addressed how and where HBVs can sell their products. They are permitted to sell at farmers' markets, roadside stands, in-person, by phone, or through the internet. However, shipping is allowed only within the state of Indiana and is prohibited across state lines.

Secondly, the law introduced new requirements for food handler training. All HBVs must obtain a food handler certificate from an ANSI-accredited certificate issuer, such as ServSafe Food Handler. Purdue Extension also offers an in-person training option for \$40 to meet this requirement.

To ensure proper enforcement, county health departments regulate home-based vendors. Any questions or concerns regarding enforcement should be directed to the respective county health department.

Dr. Deering concluded the presentation by providing a list of resources available to HBVs, including the Purdue Food Science HBV webpage, FEMI product testing, local health departments, and Purdue Extension.

## 2. Dr. Dharmendra Mishra and Allison Kingery – [Overview of the Purdue’s Food Entrepreneurship and Manufacturing Institute and associated Agricultural Innovation Grant](#)

Dr. Dharmendra Mishra, Associate Professor of Food Science at Purdue University and Director of the Food Entrepreneurship and Manufacturing Institute (FEMI), and Allison Kingery, Managing Director for FEMI delivered a presentation to the Purdue Farm Policy Study Group, providing an overview of FEMI and its activities.

The establishment of FEMI was motivated by various challenges in the food industry, such as the growing population, food shortages, natural disasters, pandemics, and disruptions in the global food supply chain. Additionally, there is a rising demand for local, organic, unique, boutique, and healthy food products, as well as alternative ingredients and plant-based products. FEMI was designed to address these challenges and diversify the dependence on large-scale global supply chains.

The mission of FEMI is to fuel economic growth in the region and beyond by empowering food and beverage companies to innovate, develop, and commercialize novel, improved, and sustainable products. FEMI also provides learning experiences in innovation and entrepreneurship for students in the College of Agriculture at Purdue University. Moreover, the institute contributes to the research and Extension missions of the land-grant university.

FEMI leverages key assets at Purdue University to facilitate its activities. These assets include the Food Science Pilot Plant, Skidmore Commercial Kitchen, Sensory Lab, and faculty/staff in the Food Science and Agricultural Economics Departments.

The institute offers a range of services to food and beverage companies, including value-added product development workshops, business plan development workshops, assistance with product testing and regulatory requirements, food safety and quality expertise in food processing, product and process development, validation of novel manufacturing technology, sensory evaluations, and support in marketing and product feasibility.

One of the significant initiatives of FEMI is the USDA Ag Innovation Center, which received a \$1.5 million grant to assist Indiana Farmers in adding value to the commodities they produce. FEMI collaborates with various partner organizations, such as Indiana Farm Bureau, Indiana Grown, Indiana State Department of Agriculture, AgriNovus, Indiana Dairy Producers, Indiana Vegetable Growers Association, Indiana Nut and Fruit Growers Association, Indiana Corn Marketing Council, and Indiana Soybean Alliance, to achieve its goals and drive agricultural innovation in the state.

Through its comprehensive range of services and collaborations with key partners, FEMI plays a crucial role in supporting food and beverage companies, fostering innovation, and contributing to economic growth and sustainability in the food industry.

## 3. Tour of the Purdue Food Science Pilot Plant and Skidmore Commercial Kitchen

Information about the Food Science Pilot Plant including a virtual tour can be found here: [Pilot Tour](#) .

## 4. Emily Usher – [Enhancing Rural Resilience Through Landscape Diversity in the Midwest](#)

Emily Usher, the Project Manager for the Diverse Corn Belt Project, presented on the need to enhance rural resilience in the Midwest through landscape diversity. She highlighted the challenges faced by Corn Belt farmers in 2022, including increasing farm bankruptcies, declining farm employment, diminishing rural communities, and environmental degradation. Additionally, global unrest, pandemic disruptions, and a changing climate added further threats to the current monoculture-based agricultural systems, exposing a lack of resilience and diminishing returns.

The Diverse Corn Belt Project aims to generate evidence-based visions and frameworks for a more diversified agricultural system capable of overcoming persistent market and policy barriers. The goal is to support a transition to resilient intensification, creating a more economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable system.

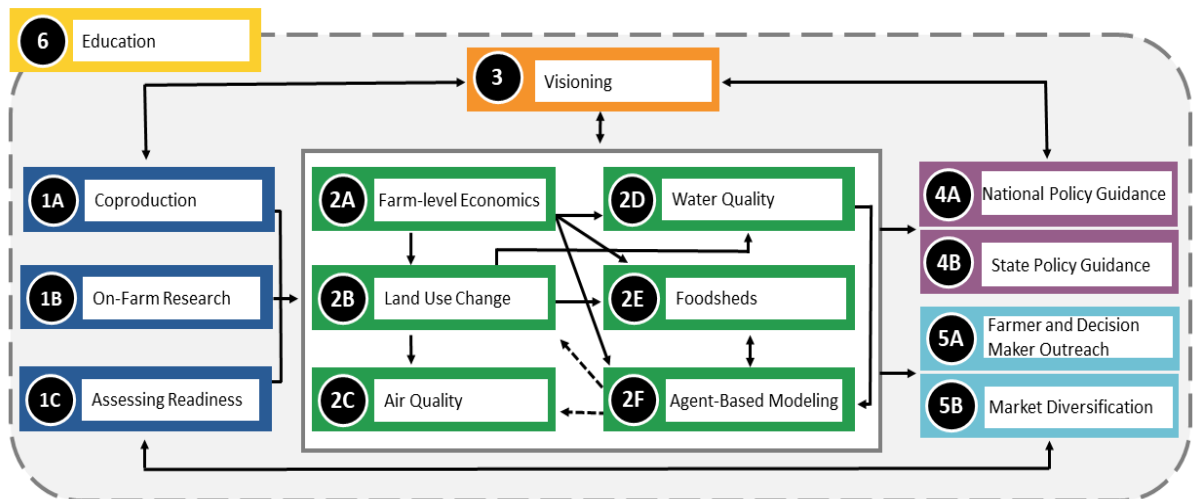
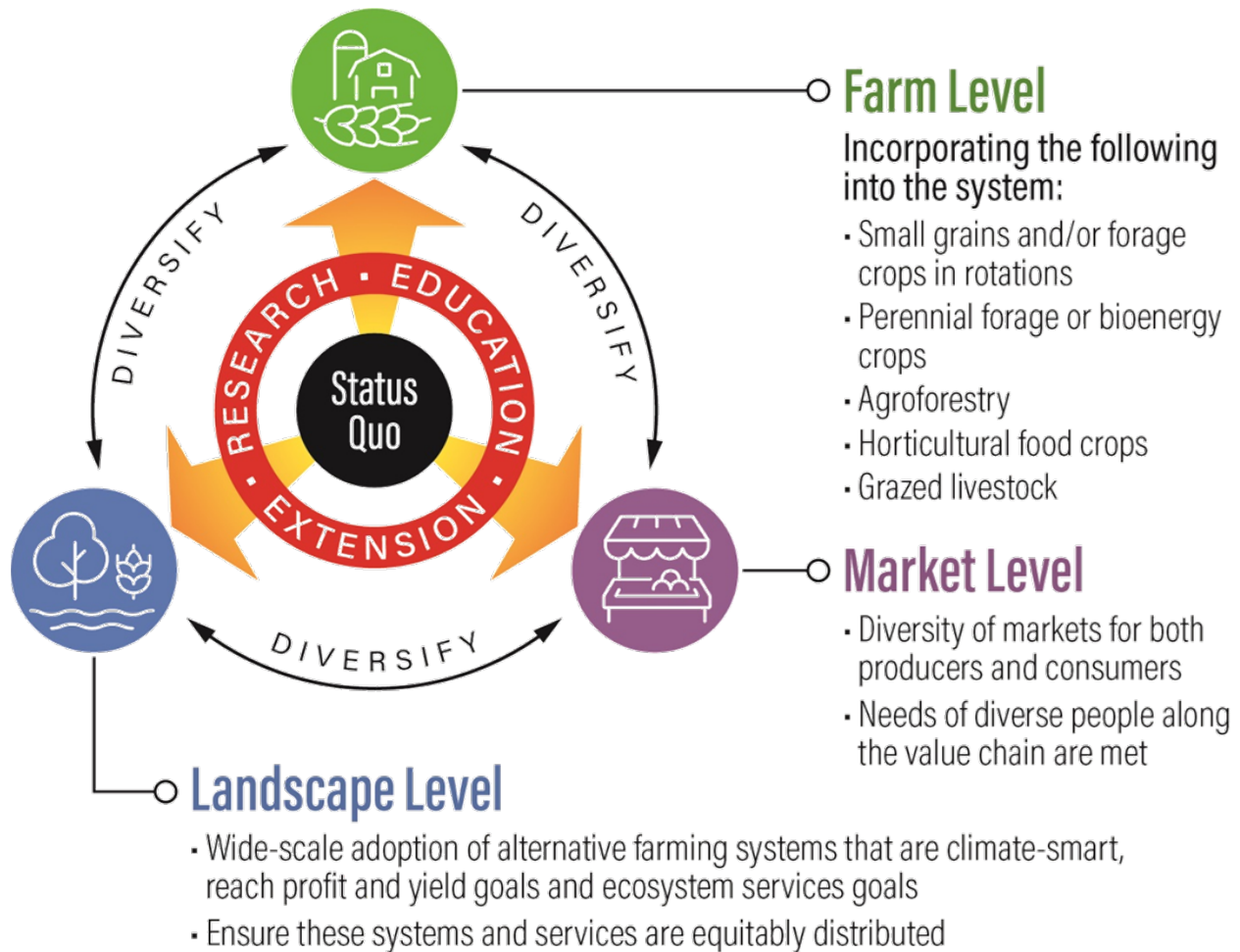
The project's objectives include co-production, modeling, visioning, policy guidance, stakeholder engagement, and education. Stakeholder engagement involves focus groups and Reimagining Agricultural Diversity (RAD) Teams to understand perspectives on the current systems and explore factors necessary for enabling diversification.

The co-production objective involves on-farm research to gather data on water quality, soils, and insect biodiversity from diverse and conventional systems. The project aims to characterize conditions and determine how diversification affects indicators of biophysical sustainability.

The project overview includes collaboration with 30+ farms and data collection from 90+ fields in Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa, encompassing both diversified and non-diversified farms.

The value chain readiness aspect aims to identify barriers that limit diversification in the value chain and explore policy supports that may facilitate change. Additionally, the project investigates the barriers and motivations for farmers to diversify and for farm advisors to recommend diversification as a viable strategy.

Emily Usher's presentation emphasizes the importance of shifting agricultural systems towards greater diversity on farms, landscapes, and in agricultural markets to build resilience and address the challenges faced by the agricultural sector in the Midwest. Through systematic analysis and stakeholder engagement, the Diverse Corn Belt Project seeks to pave the way for a more sustainable and resilient agricultural future in the region.



5. Hans Schmitz – [National Extension Climate Initiative](#) (NECI)

In his presentation to the Purdue Farm Policy Study Group, Hans Schmitz, Lead Conservation Crossing Systems Agronomist with Purdue University Extension, introduced the National Extension Climate Initiative (NECI), which was established in 2019. The primary objectives of NECI are to elevate the importance of climate issues within Extension and to enhance its capacity to educate on various aspects of climate change. Since its inception with five members, NECI has grown substantially and now includes 650 members. Their vision is to create a future where Cooperative Extension recognizes the urgency of

the climate crisis and actively contributes to building communities that prioritize environmental and human health, social equity and justice, and economic vitality for all generations.

NECI plays a crucial role in assisting Extension services across the country by coordinating and managing climate outreach activities, sharing climate resources, providing networking opportunities, and promoting professional development.

Within the United States, there are 11 Climate Hubs, and Indiana falls under the Midwest Hub. The three main objectives of the Midwest Hub are to deliver relevant information through assessments and syntheses, enable climate-informed decisions through outreach and education, and facilitate engagement, discovery, and exchange through technical support.

The current priorities of the National Hub include building climate awareness by synthesizing, interpreting, and effectively communicating climate information. Additionally, they focus on enhancing resilience and productivity by developing relevant tools and informing stakeholders about timely climate concerns and events. Lastly, they aim to increase program effectiveness by engaging stakeholders and scaling up existing efforts.

Key partners of NECI encompass a wide range of organizations and agencies, including APHIS, MRCC, NOAA, NIDIS, NDMC, NIFA, ARS, ERS, RMA, NASS, FSA, Extension, and State Climatologists.

Stakeholder categories that NECI engages with are diverse and include crop consultants, commodity organizations, soil and water conservation districts, other USDA agencies, Cooperative Extension, land-grant universities, farmers, ranchers, forest landowners, specialty crop growers, and other concerned and/or impacted members of society.

For future efforts, NECI is exploring various climate-smart agriculture practices, adaptation strategies, greenhouse gas emissions, cropping systems, climate-agriculture interactions, evapotranspiration climatologies, Midwest soil temperature evaluations, visualizations, freeze-thaw cycles, degree-day and chilling hour measurement tools, and climate/drought impact assessments.

In summary, the National Extension Climate Initiative is a collaborative and dynamic effort that empowers Cooperative Extension to address climate change challenges effectively. By engaging a broad range of stakeholders and providing essential resources and support, NECI aims to foster climate resilience, promote sustainable agriculture practices, and enable informed decision-making in the face of a changing climate.

#### Future Meeting Dates:

The meeting of the Farm Policy Study Group will occur on **December 5<sup>th</sup>**. We will plan to meet at the Beck Ag Center per usual unless other plans transpire. The tentative date for our first 2024 meeting is **July 16<sup>th</sup>**. I will do my best to coordinate with those planning the Farm Management Tour and Indiana Master Farmer programs to avoid conflicts, but those dates are typically not set until late May.

#### Suggested Future Topics:

1. Purdue Extension Needs, Vision and Future – perhaps Bernie Engel
2. Indiana Water Challenges – perhaps Jane Frankenburger
3. Public Policy Intersections with Local Government Including Land/Zoning Use Concerns
4. Mental Health Among Farm Families
5. Viable Scale for a Local Ag Economy/Policy for Addressing Increasingly Fragmented Landscapes

6. Carbon Neutrality and Farmland Preservation – Carbon Markets, Use of TIFF Districts, and other market and policy instruments.

7. Ag Tech – Policies for Deploying, ROI, Impact on Land and Commodity Markets

Adjournment at 3 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ken Foster".

Ken Foster

Professor – Agricultural Economics

Executive Secretary – Purdue Farm Policy Study Group