

Commission Meeting Minutes

June 4, 2020



Please attach: Farmers Market guidelines, U-Pick Guidelines, Updated Terms + service, & State Fair news

Attendees

Heather Tallman, Dana Kosco, Angela Grant, Andrew Carty, Katie Nelson, John Roeder, Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch, Curtis Hansen, Thom England, Tamara Benjamin, Craig Baker, Seth Grant, Bill Kercher, Marcus Agresta, Mark Straw

Welcome & Introductions

Heather started the meeting off with a nice welcome and introductions of new faces.

- Andrew Carty, ISDA Economic Development Division Director
- Seth Grant, Eskenazi Health
- Garrett Heavin, Indiana Grown Summer Intern

LG Comments

After introductions, we heard comments from Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch. "Thanks for sharing time on your schedule with me. I want to give a shout out to Indiana Grown and Heather, they have helped many members and the members of the ag community change their business models and pivot during COVID-19. We are here to help and support you. Indiana Grown and all of us need to help tell Hoosiers stories. We are there for each other. We need to continue moving forward with Indiana Grown and helping its members succeed."

What have we been hearing?

Heather and the IG team have been fielding many calls and questions with COVID-19. We have a large network, know a lot of people, and are happy to connect you to resources. Many questions regarding Farmers Markets, PPE/PPP, helping members and farmers shift their business models to sell their product differently, helping people pivot business to online platform, funding & grants. We have openly communicating with our non-technology, Amish, and elderly members and helping them make more connections to sell their products. Many of these members sell at farmers markets which were closed or delayed opening due to COVID-19. We are working on our partnerships with other organizations such as ISDH, BOAH, Purdue, etc. to get important information out our members and others. Sharing guidance and resources on our platforms – Social Media, Website, Newsletter, Emails, etc. Reminder for Farmers Markets is that the local county health department determines specific rules/guidelines for each county & FMs. We have been directing a lot of people to reach out to their county health depts.

Commission Members Update

Seth asked a question about the Eskenazi Farmers Markets and how a vendor cannot sell his soap/lotions as he is home based vendor. He asked for a list/guidance for Farmers Markets guidelines selling direct to public. Heather referred Seth to reach out to county health dept about the vendor in question and mentioned our team will share the Indiana Farmers Market guidelines with the commission.

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Bill mentioned U-Pick and how they are making decisions late in the season regarding their business. Cautioned group about crop damage and sharing that information with the public. Don't want to scare any business away or be misleading. Late spring frost damage depended a lot on fruit varieties/location within state.

Tamara mentioned how states are jealous of Purdue's extension educators that are in each Indiana county. She mentioned U-Pick has started in southern IN/Central and Northern is a week/2 behind. Asked us to continue sharing the U-PICK guidelines with members and public. People have cabin fever and are chomping at the bit to get out of the house. While that is great for business and farms as they are selling out quickly. We need to make sure it is safe, and farms are protected. All it takes is one person with a cell phone and social media to post a photo of over 100 cars in line and people congregating closely at the farms. Then it will get out to the health dept. and farmers are afraid they will get shut down. She also mentioned terrible frost damage with up to 90% loses in some parts of the state. Blueberries, apples, and peaches were hit hard.

CBD and Hemp Update

Katie Nelson, ISDA Director of Legislative Affairs spoke over this topic. Indiana Grown has a lot of members, doing a lot of things. Members are using logo to promote their products & business. We are in inclusive organization. We allow members who grow/sell hemp & CBD to be members of Indiana Grown if they follow our rules as well as all state/local laws and regulations. However, we had an incident with a member who sold smokable hemp flower joints with the Indiana Grown logo on the product. This caused us to update our terms of services and set up more strict guidelines and procedures for logo requests. There is a bill that will go into effect on July 1, making the smokable hemp flower injunction illegal in Indiana. We are working proactively to update our terms and service again to best protect Indiana Grown. Please note all logo requests are reviewed weekly by Heather Tallman. We ask members to provide us with details about what they sell, the products, & how they will use the logo/branded marketing materials.

Continue Commission Member Business Updates

Marcus with Piazza → Majority of their customer have been affected by COVID-19. Business is off by 45%. They have had to lay off and furlough employees. Had to shift business model to sell products as many of their customers closed their doors due to restrictions and protest damage. Now directly selling to the public and marketing heavily on social media. It will take our city and state time to recover from everything.

Curtis Hansen with Indiana Packers → Their business was the center of attention for a few weeks and a public story as they are in the middle of the meat industry. They voluntarily shut down for 2 weeks to keep their employees and staff safe. Overcame and have fared well with all this happening. They protected their people and tried their best to help the farmers and producers they work with. Retail side vs. Food Service are complete opposites. Retail side of business is thriving, and Food Service is hurting. Many farmers around the state are facing many challenges.

Tamara with Purdue Extension → So much education and outreach. It was hard to conduct business when unable to meet in person. Worked collectively with several organizations to help farmers and get them on the same page. Indiana Grown was right there as well helping. Everyone has been working together as one to help. It was hard for her to understand why government cannot make swift decisions as quickly as private businesses. Mentioned how farmers markets and farmers cannot wait as they are prepping in Jan/Feb. Working to rebuild the markets has been challenging. There have been many challenges for farmers with Farmers market disorganization being one of them. She asked Indiana Grown to help spear head Farmers Markets and helping. Heather mentioned this is a good opportunity to unite the front.

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Seth Grant with Eskenazi → Healthcare has been fighting this fight for a while along with the COVID-19 fight. The pandemic has shined a light on the many needs of our community and the challenges such as food deserts and food access. There have been more resources and more partnerships all to help feed hungry Hoosiers and people in need. As a community we are now more aware of the hardships. Eskenazi is looking for additional ways to support Indiana Grown and its members. The community is stronger now, than we've ever been.

Craig Baker → There is a lot of enthusiasm and optimism to get back to work. Many discussions of expansion. Exciting new things will be happening in the future after COVID-19. New normal will be interesting.

Mailer Results

We are still marketing our program best we can at this time and listen to feedback & members. One of our strength is that we are nimble. Please see attached 1 pager for results and specifics over the mailer, we sent out to members in December of 2019.

Upcoming Items

- Indiana State Fair
 - We will send out an update as soon as we hear what decision has been made.
- E-Commerce Research
 - We are continuing to research the viability for an E-Commerce platform for our members.
- Airport Project
 - Currently the Airport project is paused. The store originally was supposed to open on June 1. The decision to move forward is solely up to SSP and the Airport. SSP had to layoff/furlough 95% of their staff due to COVID-19.
- Map with IU Sustainable Food Systems Science
 - We are working with our partners to build a map of members and farmers who sell products online, so that we can share the website to direct public to purchase from them directly.
- Exploring no-cost ways to proceed and partner
 - Month-long virtual market event
 - Member Webinar re: Online Sales

Funding Update and FY21 Budget

We are sharpening our pencil and working on our FY21 budget. We are continuing to utilize resources to best serve our program and members.

Maps, Trails and Guides Update

We have created new guides, maps & trails for our members. This is a free resource we are creating in house to showcase our unique members and share information with the public. To date the Indiana Grown team has created the Wine Trail, Brewery Trail, Distillery Trail, Christmas Tree Map, Winter Farmers Market Map, Protein Guide, Natural Sugars Guide, Horticulture Guide, and an extensive list of U-PICK members.