



## Commission Meeting Notes

March 16, 2021

**COMMISSION:** Mark Straw, Nathan Shoaf, Craig Baker, Bob White, Marcus Agresta, Bill Kercher, Seth Grant, Michael Gillum

**ISDA STAFF:** Heather Tallman, Angela Grant, Janna Page, Bruce Kettler, Randy Spieth

### WELCOME AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

- Heather opened meeting with a welcome and stated that Dana Kosco is no longer with ISDA – Indiana Grown. Angela Grant returned from maternity leave and we welcomed new hire Janna Page.

### ATTENDEE UPDATES:

ISDA Director Bruce Kettler

- *We appreciate your help and what you have done to make this program successful. A lot of credit goes to commission who provides good guidance moving forward. Nice to have a full team back at ISDA, for Indiana Grown. Other members of our office/team were here to help us. You will hear from our legislative team later and a lot of things have been happening. Been very busy legislative season. Heather mentioned vaccination age moving down and this might be our last virtual meeting. We are looking into how this will affect workers in the agriculture field. Bruce & Dr. Marsh had convo with dept of health around essential workers last week. Looking at how they should vaccinate different groups of people. However, there was a pivot to go more age based, makes sense to get to the most vulnerable population when looking at data. Bruce thinks the age-based vaccinations have helped put Indiana at the top of the pack. ISDA is continually monitoring it and what it means to our Ag workers – migrant workers coming into the USA for work, seasonal workers in Spring and Fall, etc.*

Mark Straw

- *From a regulatory perspective, federal agents working from home unless there is some type of direct need. State level is working hard. Adapting to COVID-19 and moving on. Still working.*

Seth Grant

- *Hospital has been slammed and crazy this year. Full swing in their vaccination center. Distributed over 30,000 vaccines. Majority of staff is vaccinated and doing well. Moral is going up with families being able to see one another. Frontline has seen a huge dip of cases not being hospitalized. Think we continue to see guidance coming out via safety of farmers markets and how can we hold those safely. Not sure what Eskenazi's FM participation will look like as many of admin staff is working from home and it is a lot of work to have FM. Strengthened partnerships with second helpings and Cunningham's Restaurant Group Foods and Gleaners, taking care of 2000 families per week on average. Working to set a grocery store network in their system as well. Incorporating a community kitchen. Will be partnering with some Indiana Grown chefs as well as Indiana Grown products*



Mike Gillum

- *Getting busy with new spring business - seeds, bulbs, potatoes, onions, etc. Hopefully, everything gets opened soon.*

Craig Baker

- *Sitting at 16-tech, 25 vendors here and a full-service restaurant and tasting room in the works. He knows of 10 restaurant openings that are coming out. Optimistic outlook. A lot of people are adapting, and technology is helping. Issues with finding people to work since people moved away from food service and hospitality industry. Everyone is moving into real estate... Basketball tournament is helping bring business back. Then spring break is about to happen – hopefully, that does not spike the numbers. Craig is getting vaccinated soon and he has been busy. Potential for indoor farmers market in future at his 16-tech location. He is tapping into high school programs and with Ivy Tech. Wages will fluctuate due to trying to keep employees.*

Nathan Shoaf

- *Small Farms Conference was held virtually this year, had over 500 registrations. This is their largest number compared to years past. A lot of high school students and faculty registered. Different urban farmers speaking together, unique collab, held the event over Microsoft Teams. Working on a needs assessment from farmers and scheduling farm tours as well as different learning events/round tables this spring. <https://www.purdue.edu/dffs/urbanag/> Please share link with any farmers you know. The Gary Urban Farmers Program is wrapping up. Nathan appreciates the resources we have on our website and has been referring people to our program and website.*

Bill Kercher – Not available for comment but was a listening participant.

Marcus Agresta

- *NCAA is a big deal, seeing increase of business is very welcome. Like Craig mentioned - hotels, convention center, and restaurants hardly have any employees. It will be interesting how the void will be filled as business comes back downtown. Very sparse staff and limited menus. Menus are staying very simple as they do not have labor in kitchen. Piazza is spending a tremendous amount of time finding drivers and warehouse workers. Talk about increasing wages and being aggressive with holding employees. They are stepping up HR and recruiting efforts.*

Bob White

- *Climate is the big issue right now. Carbon trading. Depending on what type of program comes out of USDA, hoop houses are eligible, but greenhouses are not. Hosted meetings over climate and how its effecting agriculture. A lot of happening out east. Taxes. State taxes will all involve agriculture. Dealing with more questions than answers right now. FISMA is working to provide more educational activity. Finally hitting on water issues for small guys from regulatory standpoint. A lot of folks working together to get education material out to those that need it.*



## OLD BUSINESS

- January 12<sup>th</sup> Legislative Day Baskets
  - Churning out a lot of work, created baskets with donations from members – included popcorn, apples, gummy bears, fresh and value-added foods. Leah Harmon created a special map to showcase member locations around the state. This was the most impactful thing we have done with legislators to date. Took a lot longer to get baskets filled and setting items just right. Big thank you to Shelby Huff, Leah Harmon and Cathy Weeks for helping with this large project. Every basket went to legislators / their assistants. They felt honored that we took time to do this. All Indiana Grown purchased was the bushel baskets and tissue paper. In previous years catered lunch alone was over \$1700. The 2021 cost was \$700. Pros - Cost saving and a lot of positive touch points.
- Shop Indiana Grown
  - At our last commission meeting in December, we were just launching Shop Indiana Grown. December 14, 2020 was when Shop Indiana Grown went live. We received a lot of orders and it flooded our system. We currently have 35 active vendors. A lot of them are still in training. We are asking members to take time signing up and becoming vendor. Make sure you complete all the steps in order to have a better experience. Working with Indiana Small Business Development Center. Angela will go through each individual account to make sure we have a core group of vendors to best use this free space. We will be able to use some of our funds to promote this website.
- Farmers Market Forum
  - We are involved in the farmers market forum, held in February. It is an all-day training event for farmers and vendors, etc. Sharing touchpoints on how to grow farmers markets. Close to 500 attendees.
- Food Council Development Grant ([See more information here](#) AND [here](#))
  - First time we have done something like this. Connecting food councils to Indiana Grown. About 15 food council locations in Indiana. 7 food councils applied for the grant and 5 will receive the award funds.
- ISBDC Cooperative Update
  - Indiana Small Business Development Center located on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of our office building. They are working with Indiana Grown on the Shop Indiana Grown website project. This is a cooperative partnership. They are another free resource. They can help with business plans, funding, insurance, and lots of other related business inquiries.

## NEW BUSINESS

- Specialty crop block grant (SCBG) amendment in partnership with Purdue University to support 20 farms to become GAP trained and GAP certified (learn more about Good Agricultural Practices and Safe Produce Indiana [here](#)) April-August 2021
  - Expires in September. Some will be used for 2 sponsorship that got canceled last year. Indians game highlighting Indiana Grown with the date to be determined. It will be a



Friday night before the Indiana State Fair. Other partnership to use grant funds is the celebration of wine industry with Indiana Uplands Wine trail event. Indiana Grown has participated each year but we were supposed to be a sponsor last year, for their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This year it will be hosted in the Uplands region.

- We also have amended this grant to help farmers get GAP trained & certified. This will help people get training over safe produce and food safety. We will open this opportunity up to members soon, but it is first come first serve. We are just a funding agent. All trainings will be conducted by Purdue.
- New Indiana Grown consumer guide made in partnership with Herons- in Hand May 2021
  - Grant to use for marketing and promotion of members. Buyers guide/consumer guide will be an updated version of the Indiana Grown membership list. (Think of as a growing directory.) Hiron will create a template so that we can add new members as they join Indiana Grown. Should be in hand by early May.
- Monumental Marketplace
  - Friday, June 18<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm (volunteers needed)
  - We need ISDA staff and commission members to help volunteer. Footprint will remain the same, using the entire circle. However, there will be parking on half of the circle for vendors and we will use the other half for the event with members and food trucks. We are working with a partner for this event, Downtown Indy Inc. They have been great to work with, providing many resources. It will be different due to COVID-19 precautions and other items. We hope to see you all there.
- Indiana State Fair
  - The store floor plan is growing to meet space restrictions. Also we will not be able to sample, so we are removing sampling as well as the cooking demos in the kitchen with samples. We will be able to purchase some large display ads. QR codes with our maps, trails, guides. We will have interactive information about the items/members. Circle people through store, educational about Ag, no sampling this year.
- Marketing and promotional content buy with Asher Agency to begin late March 15, 2021
  - This will help promote the E-Commerce store

#### **OPEN DISCUSSION**

- Indiana Grown Terms of Service- update
  - We have updated our terms of service for members. We need to protect our members and continually update it to better serve our members via new technology. We will update on all platforms

**Our next meeting will be Wednesday June 9, 1-3 pm at our 1 N Capitol conference room on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor.**