

DRAFT

Pandemic Policy Priorities
Food, Hunger, Water, Agriculture Policy Working Group

Key:

Green = Move Forward

Yellow = Keep Developing (not yet ready for legislative action)

Orange = Action Item

PRIORITY #1 – Invest in Local Food Systems & Resilient Local Agriculture

- Maintain NMSU base funding for Cooperative Extension for \$13,635,000 and for Agricultural Experimentation Stations for \$15,147,000 to provide support, leading-edge information, and technical assistance to agricultural producers.
 - Comments included concerns regarding how much work/research they do with pesticides and water intensive crops that don't need to be grown in a region with such scarce water and high heat.
- Maintain and expand investments in agricultural literacy, and ag education including but not limited to 4-H, FFA, Ag in the Classroom, ag-based CTE pathways, and other local and regional Pre-K through 12+ agricultural education efforts. Develop a New Mexico agriculture education day in which all students in New Mexico public schools will spend one day a year focused on agricultural education.
 - Comments included wondering how much is funding education about crops that are considered "specialty," even though they are the crops that actually stay feed our families and are more likely to stay in the region
- Support work by tribal farm boards to get waivers and exceptions that will facilitate greater ease in demonstrating qualification requirements for farm bill funding, take a page from applications and re-verifications in public benefits and simplify processes.
- Invest in and develop greater connectivity across data systems as well as broadband infrastructure to strengthen communication and coordination related to production, value-added opportunities and facilities/processing, storage, transportation, and distribution that could exist in an open source data base similar to some of the functionality of SHARE NM.
 - Q: There are other initiatives to expand infrastructure. How does this relate? NEED FOR MORE CLARITY.
 - 1/3 of students in NM have no access to internet, Farmers in field have no access either to get satellite data. So, any broadband we can add to the state is hugely valuable.
 - Over 20% of new Mexicans, regardless of age, have no access to broadband. It's harder to get relief and recovery when that basic infrastructure isn't there.
 - Broadband access is universally critically needed... for this and all other. It is important to ensure the many Broadband access / infrastructure efforts are as coordinated and augment with one another. Even many of those that do have spotty connection.
- Capital funding for potential building projects targeted at creating or remodeling existing infrastructure to support food hubs – cold storage, loading docks, hubs – to bring networks into that region. It could be a two-way distribution – food going into rural areas, and when it is produced rurally, bringing it to urban areas. Viability for growers, getting their produce into town in food safe way
 - Huge barrier; specially, remote/rural growers

- Maintain and expand investment to \$500K in ALTSD to support the Purchase of NM Grown Fruits and Vegetables for Senior Meals Programs.
- Maintain \$400K commitment in PED budget for NM Grown Produce for School Meals.
 - This took more than two decades to make a reality... hugely important
- Maintain \$227K in NMDA for the Healthy Soil program and maintain \$200K in NMDA for Soil and Water Conservation Districts.
- Protect \$150K for program support to NMDA to develop New Mexico Local Food and Farming Systems including value chain coordination and food safety systems that Support the SNAP Double Up Food Bucks program and local producer sales to retail and institutional outlets.
 - Is there a way to add that access to electricity is important in addressing food and hunger?
- Invest \$100K in DOH for the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.
- Invest in the Department of Agriculture to strengthen capacity in NM related to Beef Inspection and Processing to get more protein into the local food supply.
 - Might be more appropriately housed at NM Livestock Board, Outreach housed and done through NMDA. Making sure the 2 agencies are supported, and that markets/channels/supply chain up and running and resilient. Long-term solution.
 - Add: – “invest in the department of agriculture or nm livestock board to strengthen”
 - Add – promotion of NM-raised beef.
 - State should support NM beef like it supports NM chile growers
 - Might be more appropriately housed at NM Livestock Board, Outreach housed and done through NMDA. Making sure the 2 agencies are supported, and that markets/channels/supply chain up and running and resilient. Long-term solution.
 - Tweak language to reflect the above – the two entities.
 - Reach out to Deena Chacon Reitzel NM Beef Council (Jonas has contact info)
- Invest in career pathways, sector strategies in the agricultural industry across the value-chain to recruit, develop, and employ a well-qualified and well compensated workforce.
 - Yes, as long as priority is given to limited-resource, and socially disadvantaged farmers (as defined by the USDA).
 - add in the following: water conservation corps; food security corps; renewable energy corps; sustainable housing corps
- Fund NMDA to gather community and stakeholder input in an emergency relief and recovery plan for a pandemic, drought, other state or national emergency that addresses labor shortages, supply chain disruptions,

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and market fluctuations to protect local food systems and increase the reliability and durability of local agriculture.

- Effectiveness of engagement and action based on feedback (2x)
- Yes, as long as this includes emergency relief, hazard pay, and worker protections for farmworkers, since they are the most valuable part of our food chain.

- Recognize the local food production and processing industry as a public good and create pathways for public private partnerships to expand and strengthen local food systems.

- What we use water for is very big decision and we need ways to prioritize that are informed by the public and support our long-term well-being. Research emergent technology and what types of efficiencies we can gain in food quality, such as water sufficiency's and technologies. Research is going on in collaboration with Israel (similar arid environment) using little water.

- A process for how we prioritize for how we use water, that also looks at research & emergent technology.
- Q: Does this include new water infrastructure, or political/legal angle?
- I have concerns about maintaining water rights for Indigenous communities in NM, and what position this workgroup has on reclaimed water from the fracking process.

- Enhance marketing and development to promote the viability of agriculture in NM and strengthen in state value-added through value-added grants at State level.

- Idea is that if we want viable NM ag, we need to market and promote ag better. We need resources invested in local food production, especially around value-added. Keeping it in state instead of exporting, let's do value-added.
- Yes, as long as priority is given to limited-resource, and socially disadvantaged farmers (as defined by the USDA).
- This should be split into two things.

- Recognize and incentivize traditional ecological practices around ag and livestock rearing.

- "traditional ecological practices" is vague.
- Maybe a principle that could be worked into many of the policies.
- Revisit as a principle to work in

- Testing water soil and water quality and increasing regulatory capacity of the state to ensure the testing happens will keep food production safe.

- Each county also has a role in water testing and maintaining

- Determine financing mechanism to augment cost of rainwater catchment and solar grids in extremely remote areas where people are food insecure to create infrastructure for home/local food production.

- Can we incorporate idea – it's also for food production **AND** storage - CIRCLE BACK WITH VALERIE R
- There are communities where harvesting rainwater is prohibited. This is a great idea, though existing regulations will likely first need to be assessed. Just as city-farming.

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- We need ways to build independent student/grant writing mentorship programs that matches students with expert grant writers to help farmers and producers write grants and deal with things such as GAP certification. Students would help grant writers with their grants and they team up with farmers/producers to secure grants.
 - This may not need policy change, it may be systems coordination
 - Benefits universities. Gives hands on, on the ground experiential learning opportunity for students.
 - NM is a philanthropic desert.
 - Yes, as long as priority is given to limited-resource, and socially disadvantaged farmers (as defined by the USDA).
 - This is a capacity issue... and much needed. Can leverage federal resources for farmer training
- Exceed weight bearing limits on trucks without compromising safety to get food to those in need quickly and effectively. Federal limits need to be examined.
 - I don't know enough about safety requirements to vote on this one, with amount of truck accidents in my area, this gives me pause.
- Invest in regenerative agriculture.
 - It needs to be much stronger. Needs to be commitment from state to transition to regenerative ag for many reasons: water preservation and climate change.
 - Commitment by the State to transition to 100% regenerative agriculture in New Mexico by 2030. Regenerative agriculture rebuilds the soil by increasing carbon matter and the microbiome, thereby increasing the nutritional value of food produced. It increases soil's ability to retain water. Regenerative agriculture decreases the use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, thereby protecting the environment. Regenerative agriculture significantly reduces agriculture's impact on the climate crisis.
 - Yes, as long as priority is given to limited-resource, and socially disadvantaged farmers (as defined by the USDA).
 - Commitment by the State to transition to 100% regenerative agriculture in New Mexico by 2030. Regenerative agriculture rebuilds the soil by increasing carbon matter and the microbiome, thereby increasing the nutritional value of food produced. It increases soil's ability to retain water. Regenerative agriculture decreases the use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, thereby protecting the environment. Regenerative agriculture significantly reduces agriculture's impact on the climate crisis.
 - Not ready yet for vote. Need to discuss more.
- Build on Farm to School and Farm to Senior Center efforts and incentivize State, County, City governments to buy-local agricultural products.
- Propose that PED adopt a statewide Ag Day promoting a focus on NM's continuing ag tradition and economy in all schools
 - Develop relationship with food and how food is raised at a younger age

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PRIORITY #2 Strengthen Food and Water Relief and Recovery

- Provide emergency funding to the Tribal Infrastructure Fund in IAD and the Water Trust Fund to leverage federal funding for Tribal, Rural, and Frontier Water Needs in New Mexico.
 - Reframe slightly – provide increased funding for water needs in Tribal communities – increase percentage of dollars set aside for the TIF – for water AND OTHER infrastructure needs – infrastructure set-aside or increase the funding. This would be an amendment. Advocating for increased federal funding
 - Many requests to remove “emergency”
- Invest \$12.5M in HSD for Emergency Relief and Recovery Efforts with Food Banks for purchased food, health and safety supplies, transportation, and to enhance capacity to respond to additional community needs.
 - The actual number may need to be changed. Dollars made available through state budget for emergency food needs.
 - Q: is this retroactive? No. this is an emergency measure going forward.
 - Q: does “health & safety” include hygiene items?
 - Currently \$1.2 million going to 5 food banks to acquire produce. Close attention paid to nutritional quality of distributed food. There was an opportunity to add \$500,000 for shelf-stable food. Important because other nonprofits receiving food from food banks don’t always have capacity to handle fresh foods. Donated food is decreasing. Having to increase purchase of food to meet growing demand especially during pandemic.
 - Several people called for a single letter to federal delegation about food and water needs that would also include Tribal infrastructure and water funding.
- Protect \$1.2M already allocated to Food Banks to acquire, source, and distribute Fresh Produce from possible cuts. Protect \$500K and allocated in February 2020 for Shelf Stable Food for food banks.
 - Is this for the same purpose as above bullet? The state has been generous to support produce food program for food banks. Mainly only having to pay freight costs. At most, .09 cents/lb. for produce when purchasing from sister food banks. This is helpful for the shelf-stable purchases.
 - Consider consolidating like bullets? Protect existing funding and expand it for x and y purposes. We can outline the differences between the two issues - i.e. explain what the investment would do on top of existing funds
- Reduce higher-education student hunger by providing state funding for partnerships between higher education and one of the 5 regional food banks to procure and distribute food on a weekly basis to food insecure students who are disproportionately people of color, LBGTQIA+, and veterans.
 - This would be another one that could be grouped together
 - How do you know when students are food-insecure? A: Some universities and colleges are gathering this data
- Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) to provide universal feeding programs and extend School Breakfast and Lunches to year-round using the Summer Meals Program and the Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to expand supper and snacks to public and private early learning settings **[REVISED]**
 - This is multifaceted, covered by different programs. The only way to do it universally would be through the CEP program.

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- All school district sponsors eligible to do free meals should be doing it at 100%.
- Protect funding for Summer Meal programs for people of low-income statewide across the lifespan.
 - Goes along with previous on, includes “year-round”.
 - Federal funding.
- Protect and expand Senior Meal and Nutrition Programs through ALTSD.
 - Comments included attending to the challenge in rural areas to get to the sites, and capacity issues to deliver meals to seniors’ homes
- Protect and expand the SNAP Double Up Food Bucks program.
 - More food with the same amount of federal dollars. Some coordination happens through NM Farmers Marketing Association. Protect and expand category.
- Reform rules and regulations that prohibit coordination and sharing of infrastructure such as dry and cold storage, kitchens, distribution facilities, and transportation across community programs that prioritize different parts of our community.
 - Removing policy barriers.
- Create a NM version of the farm to food box program that delivers safe, high quality, local food to people of low-income who are food insecure by building on the health, safety, and quality tiers developed by PED and ALTS in their farm to school and farm to senior center programs.
 - Invest in local food production for emergency relief, building on NM safety standards rather than USDA federal rules that are challenging in NM; expand to ensure participation and collaboration with Tribal communities regarding reforming rules and regulations
- Need to look at barriers in the anti-donation clause that could be changed to strengthen food systems initiatives and infrastructure and deployment of resources to NGOs that are already in position to respond to basic needs.
 - Maybe group together – revisit, refine so state, county, city governments work with NGOs to target resources most effectively
 - Anti-donation clause is OLD and may have been developed to respond to railroad transportation issues in the past century
 - Ask Sen. Ortiz y Pino to point us at anti-donation clause
- Create a plan and allocate resources to respond to food deserts across New Mexico with expansion of mobile food pantries, education about growing your own food, and soil health to strengthen food sovereignty.
 - USDA keeps accurate tabs, as well as others in state
 - Comments included noting that Extension research facilities and data help understand this issue; water quality and quantity analysis is needed
- Institutionalize lessons learned about adjusting to inter-generational feeding programs; allowing schools to continue to modify how they get food to students; adequately paying for those costs; creating direct-to-family options including P-EBT.
 - Community schools would help fulfill full-family, so they could get food, even dinners to the families and adequately paying for those costs, so we could leverage federal funding.

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- Implement gleaning similar to other states and adopt the Gleaning Taskforce's recommendations that address producer needs around respect of private property, liability, and economic needs as well as the emergency food sectors needs to source quality food at a low-cost by providing grants or tax credits the producers who partner with local non-profit food banks, pantries, food closets, etc. to allow gleaning for use in the emergency food supply.
 - Reduce wasting food, at restaurants and in the fields.
 - Task force is still working – recommendations not yet solidified. Support partnerships between emergency food sector and producers that are genuine win-win for both. Maybe when that work is more mature this is something we can support.
- Implement a successful law from other states to allow schools to re-package and freeze (when appropriate) food that is unused during school meals for student use at home.
 - Rep. Ferrary is seeking information – will give it to Sherry
- Healthy food financing – La Semilla and Poverty Center
 - Been working on for 2 years. Large support throughout rural Doña Ana Co. Statewide program to attract federal funds – maybe \$2-3 million/year minimum. 2 different pots of food – thru treasure and USDA. “also cdfi’s are eligible for larger pots of money through the treasury.” So businesses have info that they need to expand their business. There is equitable language in the bill. Historically not included would sit on steering committee. Black, indigenous, people of color, women, LGTBQ, farmers
 - Some wanting to learn more about La Semilla’s efforts

NEW ITEMS

- Improve healthfulness of restaurant meals - CSPI

IDEA - Identify emergency food sector providers that focus on immigrants and refugees

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PRIORITY #3 – Address Root Causes of Food Insecurity

- Create a constitutional amendment to the NM Constitution making safe and sufficient food and water security a human right.
 - Many said yes in concept and not right mechanism
- Reject re-institution of a Food Tax in New Mexico.
 - More than one-year no food tax
 - Yes to the concept
- Reject taxation of non-profit organizations who provide essential nimble capacity in responding to basic needs in New Mexico's COVID-19 relief and recovery efforts.
 - Majority in favor, idea that it needs to be broader
 - Comments included considering a competitive grant program to support nonprofits providing emergency relief for food and water; that due to anti-donation clause such an activity would need to be funded with state dollars; concern about competition between nonprofits and suggestion that mechanism include tiers or pools; definition of eligible entities could help in this regard
- Require New Mexico to accept any waivers allowed in federal programs that are aimed at supporting people of low-income and reducing barriers to participation.
 - Add broader concept – no additional barriers –
 - Agencies taking hard look at administering rules – language directing agencies to aggressively pursue waivers, flexibilities in rules
- NM Legislature asks Congress for continued flexibility and implementation of programs that impact social and structural determinants of health such as food, housing, health, childcare, and workforce development as relief and recovery efforts continue across NM and the country.
 - No opposition. Some possible clarifications including specifying state dollars
- Implement a Working Families Tax Credit to keep more money in family budgets and invest more in local economies.
 - Expand it as it already exists. Nuances including increasing staffing for state departments responsible for administering public benefits; institutionalize lessons learned from COVID-19 operations re. reducing barriers to re-verification
- Increase staffing for State Departments responsible for administering Public Benefits to lower caseloads, prevent churn, and assure the timely processing and administration of social safety net benefits and continuity of access to income supports to stabilize and strengthen recovery and relief efforts. Institutionalize lessons learned from COVID-19 operations about reducing barriers to re-verification.
 - Comments called for strategies enabling other orgs to help with this issue
- Help families avoid the cliff effect (AKA the poverty trap) by creating longer transition periods or gradual stair steps to self-sufficiency rather than immediate termination of benefits when income thresholds are reached for up to 6 months to allow families to gain income stability.
 - Clarification requested regarding whether the extension of services would require community service or drug testing

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- Increase training, professional development, reflective supervision, and quality monitoring for public benefits case workers and supervisors in: public benefits eligibility, parameters, and requirements across front-line staff in social safety net programs; Motivational Interviewing 40 hour training; implicit bias training and coaching; causes and responses to secondary and vicarious trauma; trauma-informed approaches; and conflict resolution.
- Increase staffing for DWS to investigate and respond to wage theft claims and to enforce the minimum wage laws.
 - Comments included increasing DWS investigators in the private sector (currently, they increased the investigators for state complaints); Include historical and policy context of NM
- Study and develop recommendations about the relationship between food insecurity and housing insecurity and consider rent control in gentrifying communities across New Mexico.
 - Comments included determining if other people were working on this and considering asking them to consider this policy idea; reframe as addressing food insecurity at the nexus of housing insecurity.
 - No opposition but not broad support
- Invest in data and information sharing systems, technology, broadband, and connectivity to avoid programming or networking glitches that undermine clear and actionable communications with New Mexicans about income supports.
 - Comments include paying careful attention to IT development (who does work, who gets contracts)
- From a federal perspective, SNAP is extremely important. **Protect and increase the SNAP allotment**, not just during the emergency. Keep maximum SNAP benefits; this is absolutely huge, from an on-the-ground perspective. All the federal nutrition programs are critical for NM esp. with the budgetary challenges we're facing. We need to maximize all the federal resources we have.
 - Question: State has added to SNAP benefits for seniors. What is happening? Does it need to be reinstated? Should it be added to this point?
 - Comments included SNAP benefits for seniors should be increased, and public education was needed so public understands why SNAP is better for families and our economy

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