

IRIS

The top right of the page features a large black circle containing the word "IRIS" in white. From this circle, numerous thin grey lines radiate outwards across the page. Three smaller circular images, each containing a different type of produce (possibly grapes, berries, and apples), are arranged in a descending diagonal line from the top left towards the bottom right. Each of these three circles is connected to the "IRIS" circle by a single thin grey line.

Building a Healthy Future for Washington Family Farms

Washington Family Farm Summit White Paper

Prepared by Kent Mullinix and Nancy Warner

Institute for Rural Innovation and Stewardship Publication #1

BUILDING A HEALTHY FUTURE FOR WASHINGTON FAMILY FARMS

Institute for Rural Innovation & Stewardship Publication #1

Prepared by
Kent Mullinix and Nancy Warner¹

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although family farms continue to dominate Washington's countryside, they have been failing at alarming rates - 10% between 1997 and 2000 – and contributing to an overall decline of agriculturally-dependent rural communities. More than 300 diverse stakeholders came together at the Washington State Family Farm Summit to examine the causes and consequences of this situation, to envision a preferred future, and to develop potential strategies for reversing this trend.

The loss of 1.25 million farms across the nation during the last few decades can be traced to several root causes. Today's farmers receive only 8 cents of every food dollar, compared to approximately 40 cents in 1950. Together, suppliers in an input-intensive agriculture (fuels, pesticides, fertilizers, and technology) and post-production entities (processors, marketers, distributors, retailers, etc.) maintain a food system that captures the bulk of food production value. As family farms disappear they are replaced by large-scale, consolidated, vertically and horizontally integrated agri-businesses that can lose money on production and make it up in other segments of the food system. Farmers simply cannot compete in this economic environment. To compensate for loss of the food dollar, diminishing margins, excessive input costs, and increased debt, farmers are encouraged to produce more. This, in turn, leads to overproduction, market saturation, and depressed crop values for family farmers. In addition, trade liberalization favors trans-national agribusiness concerns to the detriment of U.S. family farms and vibrant rural economies. Young men and women see these trends and are leaving rural Washington because they do not see a vital future in farming. The average age of Washington farmers today approaches 60 years.

Summit participants explored this situation and asked a number of questions: Who decides the future disposition and character of our rural communities and agriculture? Who decides whether or not the demise of family-based agriculture is acceptable? And what are the true social, environmental, and economic consequences of the emergence of a trans-national, globalized agricultural system? They also discussed how American consumers are asking these same questions, and urged their government, commerce, and community leaders to do the same. Participants noted that American and Washington consumers are increasingly convinced that family-based agriculture is most conducive to an abundant, diverse, safe, and secure food supply that is produced in environmentally sound ways. Many expressed the need to become self-determinant. They also indicated the need to reflect the value of place in our food system, to develop diverse and strong markets for family farmers, and to capitalize on the support for family farming that exists in Washington and across the nation.

Specific strategies for addressing the situation facing family farmers in Washington emerged from the Summit and together frame an agenda for action. Strategic action areas include: gathering and analyzing existing information, targeting research to address family farm needs, increasing public understanding of and support for family farms, converting barriers to prosperous family farms to opportunities and bridges, building needed infrastructure and capacity, and securing appropriate policy and funds to support change. In each area, specific recommendations for action are described along with organizations that could function as strategic partners. It is time we envision the elements of a healthy future for Washington agriculture and take action as individuals, organizations, and institutions to create and secure that future.

Citation:

Mullinix, K. and N. Warner. 2005. Building a healthy future for Washington family farms: Washington State Family Farm Summit White Paper.

Institute for Rural Innovation and Stewardship publication no. 1, Wenatchee Valley College, Wenatchee WA.

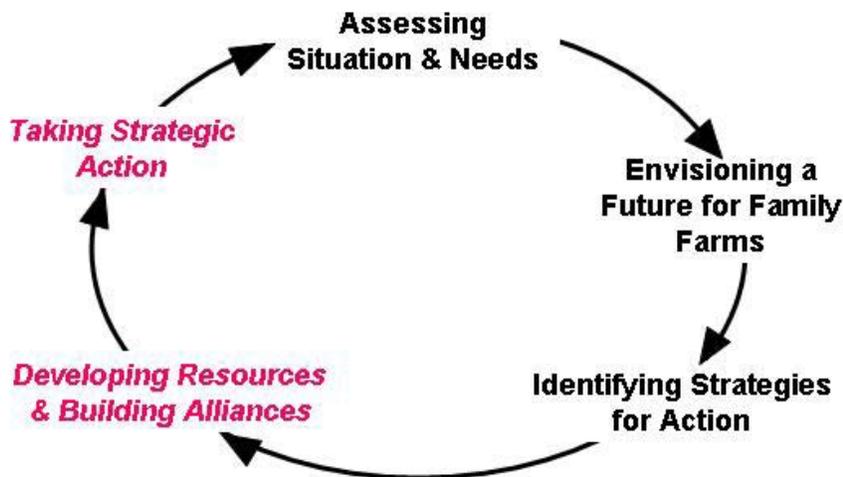
Key words: Family farms, Washington, food systems, consolidated agribusiness, rural communities.

WASHINGTON STATE FAMILY FARM SUMMIT

The Institute for Rural Innovation & Stewardship (IRIS) convened the Washington State Family Farm Summit in October, 2003, to examine why family farms are failing at record rates, to collectively envision a vital future for Washington family farms and rural agricultural-based communities, and to identify strategies to move us toward that vision. Organizers also hoped the Summit would help to build the relationships between farmers and other stakeholders in our food system needed to turn ideas, discussion, and a foundation of hope into positive change that will support the future of family farms at a regional, state, and national level.

Over 300 persons from the state and region attended the Summit. They heard from nationally recognized experts, scholars, and farmers about family-based agriculture and the current status of farming and our food system, and discussed specific areas affecting agriculture and family farming: production and processing, stewardship, and marketing. These sessions were organized to identify discrete issues, strategies, and actions for supporting family-based agriculture and healthy rural communities in Washington State. Highlights of these overlapping and integrated discussions, as well as an agenda for action, follow.

Building a Healthy Future for Family Farms



Family Farm Summit actions

Future actions

WHAT IS A FAMILY FARM?

Family farms have been defined as small-scale, widely dispersed farms, owned and operated by independent business people who are permitted to enjoy the fruits of their labors.ⁱⁱ You can't separate the family and the farm on a family farm. Size is not the issue, nor is type, crops, products, location, or revenue. Operational decisions are made by the family to support farm business and family goals simultaneously. Neighborliness, community, land stewardship, citizenship, and continuity are of the utmost importance. Profits support the family and, in turn, their community.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

Fewer Family Farms

Family farms, operating under unprecedented economic pressures and strain, are failing at record rates. At least 1.25 million family farms have been lost nationwide over the past 30-40 years.ⁱⁱⁱ In Washington State alone, family farms declined 10% from 1997-2002.^{iv} Yet agriculture remains, from an economic perspective, a large and important part of our state and national economies. Very small and very large farms are increasing in number, while mid-sized farms that support at least one family and operate in the space between the vertically integrated commodity markets and the direct markets are disappearing fast. In fact, if present trends continue, these farms, together with the social and environmental benefits they provide, will likely disappear in the next decade.^v

“And the reason we are calling attention to this development is that it will dramatically change the very landscape of rural America, jeopardize the future productive capacity of the land, and severely limit our food choices.” – Fred Kirschenmann, Director, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture

Decline of Rural Communities

The loss of family farms contributes to the general decline of rural communities and local economies. As farms fail, so do community-based businesses (agriculture supply stores, elevators, warehouses, implement dealers) and non-agriculture businesses (hardware stores, clothing stores, automobile dealerships). Main streets are being boarded up, schools are closing, churches are emptying, and residents are leaving.

Profit Shift From Traditional Family to Large Consolidated Agri-business Operations

Driving this destructive phenomenon is an ongoing, wholesale restructuring of agriculture to large-scale, industrialized farming and agribusiness corporations that support the industrialization of the rest of our economy. Profits have been shifted away from farmers to agricultural input suppliers, marketers, and retailers.^{vi}

Today's food system is designed to take the value of the raw farm product out of the hands of the person who produced it in order to add the value further up the food system.^{vii} In the mid-20th century, farmers earned approximately 40¢ of every food dollar while input suppliers, marketers, and retailers earned the balance. Today, farmers generally earn less than 8¢ of every food dollar while input suppliers, marketers, and retailers take the rest. For example, supermarkets now reap an estimated 36% profit margin. If this trend continues, the farmer's share of the food dollar will be zero by the year 2030. Simply increasing the price consumers pay for their food and farm

products will not solve this because it does not address the problem inherent in the food system, i.e., the food system is configured and operated to capture all of the value after the product leaves the farm through processing, distributing, and retailers.

“Most dollars generated in local communities change hands three or four times before they leave the communities. When non-local corporations come to town, most of the dollars leave the community by the close of the business day.” Bill Heffernan, Rural Sociologist, University of Missouri

Overproduction

Exacerbating the situation of fewer and less profitable family farms is the problem of overproduction. American farmers generally produce more than the market will bear. They have been motivated to do so. They have been led to believe that producing more is their moral obligation if we are to feed the world. But producing more is not the solution to solving world hunger. More than sufficient quantities of food are already produced. The solution to that problem lies elsewhere, in distribution and in physical and financial access to food.

Farmers also overproduce in an attempt to service debt and return a profit. But, increased production generally depresses prices, exacerbating the situation. Increased production generally equates with increased inputs, which pads the coffers of suppliers. Thus, farmers continue to be motivated to overproduce while margins diminish and debt accumulates. The strategy to produce more to make up for diminished margins fuels the “get bigger or get out” syndrome which has resulted in farm consolidation and increases in very large agricultural operations. Farmers literally wait for their neighbors to fail so they can gobble up their farms in an attempt to survive.

Regardless of the reasons for overproduction, in the final analysis, post-production agribusiness concerns profit from it in the form of low-priced raw products (generally lower than cost of production), such as wheat and beef. For corporate entities that control the post-production segment of the agri-food system, the lower the commodity prices for the family farmer, the greater the corporate economic reward.

Farmers Are Aging, Losing Their Voice

Production agriculture today is characterized by a shortage of youthful vitality, talent, and drive needed to address the challenges of 21st century agriculture. In Washington State the average age of farmers is nearly 60 years old. In the U.S, nearly two thirds of farmers are over the age of 65. Because of low profit margins, family farms can no longer support two families. Increasingly larger farms have hurt rural communities as farmers and their families leave in search of a livelihood. Fewer farms mean fewer farm families to support schools, churches, public institutions, and retail businesses. The portion of the population living in rural America and involved in production agriculture has decreased from approximately 75% in the early 20th century to about 1.5% today. Family farmers have lost their political clout. They need champions at all levels, certainly champions within state and federal governments.

“We have to act quickly. The age distribution statistics of our remaining farmers tell us that we don’t have a lot of time to lose.” - Fred Kirschenmann, Director, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture

ROOTS OF THE PROBLEM

Several prevailing trends exert tremendous influence on the agricultural sector and family farmers in particular. These trends and some of their consequences follow.

Vertical Integration

Agricultural business, from seed to processing, increasingly falls under the ownership (or control) of the same firm or joint venture. The U.S. agri-food sector, from the gene to the retail market and everything in between, is today under the control of two or three key companies. Family farmers generally compete only at the crop production level. The vertically-integrated companies willingly accept losses for their crops (in fact, it is often a calculated strategy) and make it up in processing, marketing, distribution, and sales. Independent farmers, caught between large commodity and small direct markets, do not have this capacity and thus lose out. They simply cannot compete.

Horizontal Integration

Horizontal integration results in fewer firms controlling a larger percent of the market share. For example, four companies control 80% of beef produced in the U.S.; eight supermarket chains account for 60% of retail apple sales in the U.S.; 10% of U.S. farms produce 61% of the nation’s crops (those same 10% of farms receive 70% of subsidies purported to support family farms); five seed companies control all of the seed sold in this country; and in the year 2000, the four largest retail grocery firms controlled 42% of the market.^{viii} With global food clusters controlling everything from “dirt to the dinnerplate,” we have to ask ourselves, is this monopolistic approach conducive to free enterprise? And does it support the kind of agriculture, food systems, and rural America we want? Does it provide for genuine rural prosperity?

As large economic entities become owners of large consolidated farms, their managers increasingly conduct business at scales that do not support local suppliers and businesses or local/regional economies and communities in rural America. Dick Levins, a University of Minnesota Agriculture Economist, has described the effect of this in the U.S. corn-belt as “a colony owned and operated by people who don’t live there and for the benefit of those who don’t live there.”

“Instead of the people on the front lines reaping the benefits and profits of their work, the thinking workers responding and adapting to local changes, most of the rewards now go to those who control the capital.” Bill Heffernan, Rural Sociologist, University of Missouri

Globalization and Trade Liberalization

Those who see through the lenses of multi- and transnational corporate interest, not those of family farmers, vibrant regional economies, and rural communities, champion this vision of economics and business. Some view family farms and farmers as a dying breed, just like local hardware and grocery stores. Indeed, it has been offered that America should simply get out of farming altogether and allow the more cost-effective, global food system to feed us.^{ix} And it

seems that, in many instances, that is exactly what our federal, state and regional economic strategies and policies support. We should, however, thoroughly examine this thinking and determine if this is in the best interest of our rural sector, state, and nation.

“Too few multinational companies exercise too much market power and influence over the democratic public policy process.” - Dave Frederickson, National Farmer’s Union

Increased Dependence on Fossil Fuels

Industrialized agriculture is an unsustainable system if for no reason other than it is wholly dependent upon a diminishing supply of fossil fuels. American industrialized agriculture is the least efficient on the face of the planet, consuming five times more energy (mostly in the form of fuel, pesticides, and fertilizer) than it yields in the form of crops and other products. And these inputs are expensive, eroding farm income and net profit. After the short-lived advantage of a new technology or input is realized, these inputs become another fixed cost that the farmer must incur to maintain production levels needed to stay afloat. There are viable alternatives to this input intensive agriculture, commonly referred to as the technology treadmill.

Increasing Skepticism

An increasing number of Americans are losing confidence in our food system and questioning the shift to industrialized agriculture.^x It has become clear that the change from smaller and mid-size family farms closely linked to the land and community to large consolidated farms managed from afar has exacted an unacceptable price in terms of environmental degradation and the decline of rural social well being. They question the further industrialization of agriculture. Americans also question the stewardship incentives of corporate, transnational agribusinesses and whether agribusiness shares their concerns over food safety and food security or whether they are concerned only with profiteering and stockholder dividends. Market incentives are a poor substitute for a stewardship ethic. Research showing that U.S. food systems are not economically, socially, or environmentally sustainable justifies this concern.

Conversely, Americans have great confidence that family farmers will produce wholesome food crops in environmentally sound ways and be good stewards of precious natural resources. The Hartman Group study found that close to half of consumers said they would pay a premium for food produced in an environmentally sound way.^{xi} Consumers express similar sentiment in support of family farmers. Wimberly found over 70% of people surveyed want to buy their food from local or regional sources.^{xiii}

“We now have a global food system that is almost impervious to true consumer interests.” Fred Kirschenmann, Director, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture

WHO DECIDES THE FUTURE OF FAMILY FARMING?

Many suggest that Washington agriculture will survive even if our independent family farms do not. What will become of our rural communities and the stewards of our state’s precious agricultural resource if we follow that path? With global food clusters increasingly controlling everything from “seeds to the shelf,” we have to ask ourselves if this monopolistic approach is conducive to free enterprise? And does it support the kind of agriculture, food systems, and rural American communities that we want and need?

Despite powerful tendencies, there is nothing inevitable about consolidation, globalization, or the loss of family farms. The current system is designed to get exactly the results we see. If we want to continue to support the demise of family farming and the advancement of a consolidated, industrialized, globalized food system, we need do nothing at all; the system is working well as is. Conversely, if we want to support vigorous, competitive family farming and ranching, then we must change the system. We believe family farms have been, and should continue to support, a significant portion of our national, regional, and local food systems for the following reasons:

- *Economy:* Mid-size to smaller farms are the most efficient and best positioned entities to provide the variety of crops and unique products the food industry and consumers demands.^{xiii} Additionally, locally-owned and managed farms generate and distribute wealth throughout the rural sector, providing greater economic vitality and opportunities for rural residents and their communities as well as increasing national and regional food security.
- *Environment:* Local ecological knowledge gained from longtime (often multi-generational) management of land enables farmers to adapt and incorporate new practices that advance increasingly sustainable systems, e.g., reducing fuel, fertilizer, and chemical inputs, using animal behavior, genetically diverse cultivars, and innovative biologically intensive cropping systems to effect positive changes in the land. Family farmers can work with and restore natural systems, including soil communities and flood and fire regimes, in order to increase the health and biodiversity of the land.
- *Society and Community:* Family farms provide an opportunity for people to earn a decent living, build assets, put down roots, become committed citizens of their communities, and gain a stake in the future. As Chuck Hassebrook points out, people who have a stake in their community give back to that community through local spending, volunteerism, and a general connectedness of community relationships, i.e., “social capital.” Goldschmidt found when comparing two rural communities in the San Joaquin Valley of California that the family farm-dominated community had an overall higher standard of living, lower crime and poverty rates, 61% more retail trade, 100% more business establishments and more parks, schools, churches, and involvement in community and democratic processes than the community dominated by consolidated agribusiness.^{xiv}

“There is a profound social interest in creating genuine opportunity in our rural communities and a future for family farming and ranching.” - Chuck Hassebrook, Director, Center for RuralAffairs

ENVISIONING A PREFERRED FUTURE

“We must confront the challenges with fundamental change . . . changing our idea of what farming is about, how the world works, and where we fit in as farmers.” - John Ikerd, Agricultural Economist, University of Missouri

Hope for a revitalized and strong family-based agriculture in Washington State lies in envisioning a preferred future, identifying what needs to be done, garnering support, building critical alliances, and working together to achieve it.

New Breed of Farmer

A growing number of family farmers are challenging the directive to “get bigger, give in to control, or get out” and finding new ways to succeed. They are redefining the occupation of farming and finding ways to make a better living for their family on the farm. They are creating a form of agriculture more dependent upon knowledge of how to work with nature than on technology, inputs, and capital. The transition to a new, knowledge-based agriculture is taking place under the conceptual umbrella of sustainable agriculture, an agriculture that is capable of meeting the needs of the present while leaving equal or better opportunities for future generations. These new farmers have a tough row to hoe: they need the support of their political representatives, community and economic leaders, and consumers.

“This new breed of farmer is creating opportunities for anyone with a willingness to work hard, a commitment to continual learning, and a love for the land and their community.”^{xv} - John Ikerd, Agricultural Economist, University of Missouri

Speakers and participants attending the Washington Family Farm Summit described elements of what they would consider a preferred future for agriculture in this state. Elements of this vision, distilled from ideas and discussions in all conference sessions, follow below.

Family Farms and Products Reflect the Values of Place

- Farming operations are diversified and managed holistically, with economic, ecological, and social goals that reflect the diversity of the place and community.
- Farmers, young and old, cultivate new and meaningful relationships with the people who help them raise their crops and buy their food. Farmers try to help farmers and their workers succeed and they pay attention to their customers.
- Farmers get off the technology treadmill and apply new knowledge and new production systems to reduce dependence on inputs and increase their share of the food system profit.
- Stewardship efforts work with nature restoring biodiversity and incorporating local knowledge of place. This requires more intensive management and creativity per acre of land or dollar of investment.
- Farmers are compensated for the environmental services or conservation commodities they provide, e.g. habitat restoration and ecological services. These services are recognized as products that further diversify the income that family farmers and ranchers are able to generate.

“America is stronger when its people live in strong communities, when we respect the bonds that people form over time with the people and land of a given place.” - Chuck Hassebrook, Director, Center for Rural Affairs

Markets for Family Farms are Diverse and Strong

- The use of the global marketplace is balanced with the use of local and regional marketing systems. Farmers are price setters, not price takers.
- New markets and marketing systems allow farmers and ranchers to capture a fair portion of the food dollar. Farmers are able to focus on producing crops and products that are targeted for local and regional markets instead of only producing commodities for processing and mass markets.
- Information is available to help consumers make food purchase decisions based on their knowledge of how and where their food was produced and who produced it.
- State and regional institutions grow and/or serve foods grown locally or in country.

Broad Public Support Exists for Family Farms

- The nature and future of family-based agriculture is an important part of the public agenda; public policy must maintain a base of family farms and help to improve the income of family-sized operations.
- Collaborative problem-solving among diverse stakeholders on issues of stewardship and marketing builds increasing support, confidence, and commitment to family farming.
- Agriculture is understood and appreciated. People recognize the connections between local community, regional and national food security issues, and support strong food systems across these scales.

“We changed what we grow and how we eat and who we buy our food from one farmer at a time and we can change who we support and what we grow and how it is grown one farmer at a time.” - John Ikerd, Agricultural Economist, University of Missouri

WASHINGTON STATE FAMILY FARM SUMMIT – AGENDA FOR ACTION

It is time to decide what kind of agriculture and rural Washington we want. And, if it is a family-based agriculture and a vibrant rural sector that we desire, then it is time to act. The list of needs and strategies identified by conference participants are listed below, along with the strategic partners that might be well positioned to lead the action.

Gathering and Analyzing Existing Information

Strategy	Potential Strategic Partner(s)
Capture more place-based management practices from successful sustainable farms and ranches to serve as models for others seeking change.	Institute for Rural Innovation & Stewardship (IRIS), Sustainable Food and Farming Network, Farming & the Environment (F&E), Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD), Tilth Producers of WA, WA Association of Organic Producers
Develop comprehensive market information to help farmers make informed crop and marketing decisions.	Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA), State Office of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED)

Help farmers address market choices by working with state to inventory, map, and compile directories of food systems, biofuels, and carbon-based waste products to better understand relationships between crop production, food consumption, energy, and nutrient production.	Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Washington State University (WSU), WSD, CTED
Perform economic sector analyses to better understand consumer needs and potential markets, e.g., cultural and ecotourism.	WSDA, CTED, WSU, IRIS
Form new cooperatives with the assistance of local, state, and federal government.	NRCS, Farm Services Agency (FSA), WSDA, IRIS, USDA, farmer coalitions
Publish and make available to the public directories of agricultural producers.	WSDA

“I’ve come to recognize that basically we have only two challenges that we have to face and one of them is our imagination and the other our motivation.” - Peter Goldmark, Okanogan County Rancher and Farmer

Targeting Research to Family Farm Needs

Strategy	Potential Strategic Partners
Develop farming systems that reduce costly inputs and enable farmers and ranchers to capture more of the value inherent in their crops and products.	WSU, Washington Cattlemen’s Association, Behavioral Education for Human, Animal, Vegetation & Ecosystem Management (BEHAVE), IRIS
Focus research and development efforts on biologically-based pest management and sustainable farming systems that farmers can use to reduce the need for costly inputs.	WSU, Washington State Noxious Weed Board, IRIS, Tilth Producers of WA, The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
Develop better understanding of how various agriculture organizations support, or do not support, family-based agriculture, farms in transition, and start-up family agriculture ventures.	IRIS
Develop new markets to capture premiums for food or other products produced in an environmentally sound way that support community and economic goals, e.g., native seeds.	IRIS, WSDA

Place farms at the center of knowledge about agriculture instead of corporate board rooms. Gather and share best practices from the past to use in the future.	WSU, IRIS
--	-----------

Developing Educational Programs and Materials to Support Family Farmers

Strategy	Potential Strategic Partners
Develop training programs for identified needs including:	
Post-production processing systems and methods	Community colleges, Tilth Producers of WA, IRIS
Effective use of domestic marketing tools and approaches, e.g., farmer’s markets	WSDA, CTED, WSU, community colleges, IRIS, Food Alliance, Puget Sound Fresh, WSU
Facilitating collaborative processes	WSDA, IRIS, WACD, Coordinated Resource Planning Council (CRM), Washington Rangelands Committee (WRC)
Direct marketing	WSDA, WSU, IRIS
Forming and strengthening cooperatives, e.g., production, processing, stewardship, marketing, sales, and distribution	WSDA, IRIS, WACD, CRM, WRC
Effective government use of land-use planning tools for dealing with issues of farmland loss and urban/suburban encroachment	CTED, land trusts, Washington Association of Land Use Planners, Washington Wildlife & Recreation Program (WWRP)
Starting and managing a small business; agricultural entrepreneurship	Community College Small Business Development Centers, Economic Development Districts, Port Districts, WSU

Increasing Public Understanding and Support for Family Farms

Strategy	Potential Strategic Partners
Develop and implement outreach to convey the value of family farms to water quality, wildlife habitat and recreation, and the willingness of family farmers to enhance and steward natural resources.	WSU, IRIS, Tilth Producers of WA, WRC, F&E
Reintroduce element of food “craftsmanship.”	WSDA

<p>Seek support to enable regions and communities to capitalize on the growing interest in and desire for agriculture and environmental tourism among urban and suburban residents.</p> <p>Build bold, new, powerful partnerships between farmers and the environmental community and urban/suburban sector that build on taste, face, and place.</p> <p>Form collaboratives to address environmental stewardship issues where risk and respect are shared among all participants and process is outcome-based, inclusive, and flexible.</p>	<p>State Tourism Council, CTED, state Department of Transportation, federal Department of Transportation.</p> <p>IRIS, F&E, TNC, American Farmland Trust (AFT), Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW)</p> <p>WACD, IRIS</p>
--	---

Converting Barriers to Bridges

Strategy	Potential Strategic Partners
<p>Develop closer, more trusting and synergistic relationships among producers, retailers, consumers, and regulators.</p>	<p>IRIS, American Association of Family Farms (AFF), WA Association of Family Farms (WAFF)</p>
<p>Reorganize regulatory agencies to operate as an interconnected, integrated system instead of lone entities operating in isolation.</p>	<p>Governor-appointed task force similar to Biodiversity Initiative</p>
<p>Develop programs to link students with farms and retiring farmers with new farmers.</p>	<p>State Department of Labor, Tilth Producers of WA</p>
<p>Develop standard health codes that are achievable, affordable, and applicable across multiple counties.</p>	<p>State and local health departments</p>
<p>Revise zoning laws to accommodate the diversification of farm businesses to include farm processing and product sales.</p>	<p>CTED, county governments</p>
<p>Eliminate business and operation taxes on family-farms.</p>	<p>State legislature</p>

Building Needed Infrastructure & Capacity

Strategy	Potential Strategic Partners
Increase federal and state investment in rural infrastructure: schools, health care, conservation, transportation and communications, workforce, technical and continuing education, etc.	State and federal government
Develop local and regional agricultural processing and other post-production functions, including storage, transportation, and highway signage.	NRCS, FSA, WSDA, Washington Department of Transportation
Network co-ops to create national marketing system that includes representation from entire food chain.	Association of Family Farms, USDA, IRIS

“We are in a global economy and if we are going to be forced to sell our product globally, let’s look at what concentration is doing from a global perspective.” - Dave Fredrickson, National Farmer’s Union

Securing Policy and Funding Changes

Strategy	Potential Strategic Partners
Provide support for local area development of ag-tourism.	Washington State Tourism Council, WSDA
Identify and/or create funding sources that can be used to support market-based stewardship incentive programs, e.g., energy production.	NRCS, FSA, U.S. Congress, CTED, WWRP, Food Alliance
Provide affordable capital for developing smaller scale, localized processing facilities to prepare crops and products for local and regional markets, for farms transitioning to more diverse crops and products and integrating new production systems, and for start-up ventures.	NRCS, FSA, WSDA
Convince Congress to limit payments to corporations on Farm Bill programs and stop subsidizing the largest farming interests at the expense of family farms.	Federal legislators, National Farmers Union, commodity groups

<p>Build support from commodity groups for reforming farm program payment plans to favor family farms over large corporate farming interests.</p>	<p>Commodity groups, National Farmers Union, federal legislators</p>
<p>Build support from government for domestic marketing programs such as country- or farm-of-origin labeling of food products.</p>	<p>Federal and state legislators, commodity groups, WSDA, National Farmers Union, Farm Bureau</p>
<p>Balance supply and demand; pursue trade agreements that allow farmers and ranchers to receive a decent return on their investment and a profit from the market place.</p>	<p>Federal legislators, National Farmers Union</p>
<p>Seek greater international cooperation in addressing food security and safety issues.</p>	<p>Federal legislators, international trade and banking commissions</p>
<p>Manage farm output; use more comprehensive list of factors to govern agricultural trade and policy.</p>	<p>WSDA, commodity groups/farmer organizations</p>
<p>Form broad and diverse coalitions of farmers and food chain co-producers to advocate for policy changes.</p>	<p>Local, state, regional, and national communities and coalitions, e.g., Farm Bureau, Audubon Society, AARP, youth groups</p>

“ . . . this is a startling bit of information to a lot of people; they don’t realize that farmers are eating up their capital by growing food.” Janie Burns, Farmer, Meadowlark Farm

NEXT STEPS

We recognize that the agricultural problems we are experiencing today have developed over a long period of time and that it will take time to resolve them. We also see that food can be used as a common denominator in resolving many of these conflicts and challenges. Farmers need to partner with others in the food system value chain, including processors, distributors, retailers, and consumers, to develop initiatives and projects that lead to change. In a sense, everyone in the food system value chain can be viewed as a co-producer who shares responsibility for creating solutions to the challenges we face. We believe that by working together through strategic alliances we can advance family-based agriculture that contributes to a healthy landscape, healthy community and healthy economy, and leads us toward a more sustainable and secure future.

“A society fed by a few megafarms is far more vulnerable to many kinds of disruption than one with many smaller and widely dispersed farms no society that relies on distant sources of

food, energy, and materials or heroic feats of technology can be secured indefinitely.” – David Orr, Professor of Environmental Studies, Oberlin College

About the Institute for Rural Innovation and Stewardship

The Institute for Rural Innovation and Stewardship (IRIS) provides a vehicle for addressing the social, environmental, and economic challenges facing family-based agriculture and natural resource-based industries in rural Washington State. IRIS answers the call for leadership in the struggle to revitalize family-based agriculture and the rural sector, and to advance sustainable rural communities. It is envisioned that the work of IRIS will be based on broad and effective partnerships and complement other regional and national efforts. As such, IRIS seeks *to advance the development of sustainable rural communities and natural resource-based economies by facilitating research, education, and development to effect positive change within the environment, community, and economy.*

For more information about IRIS, or to obtain copies of Washington Family Farm Summit transcripts and videos, contact: Kent Mullinix, Director, Institute for Rural Innovation & Stewardship, Wenatchee Valley College, Wenatchee, WA 98801, 509-662-2660, or visit the IRIS web page at: www.iris.wvc.edu.

Summit Speakers

Kent Mullinix, Director, Institute for Rural Innovation & Stewardship/Washington State University

Joel Huesby, Thundering Hooves Family Farm

Bill Heffernan, Rural Sociologist, University of Missouri

Chuck Hassebrook, Executive Director, Center for Rural Affairs

Bill Aal, Tools for Change

John Ikerd, Agricultural Economist, University of Missouri

Jim Zuiches, Community & Rural Sociologist, Washington State University

Anne Schwartz, Farmer, Skagit Valley

Peter Goldmark, Rancher and Farmer, Okanogan County

Porfirio Covarrubias, Farmer, Douglas County

Read Smith, Farmer, Whitman County

Karl Kupers, Farmer, Spokane County

Jean Youngquist, Farmer, Skagit Valley

Fred Kirschenmann, Director, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture

Leslie Zenz, Manager, WSDA Small Farm and Direct Marketing Program

Dave Green, Senior Risk Management Specialist, USDA Risk Management Agency

Larry Yee, National Program Leader, USDA-CREES and UC Davis Extension

Janie Burns, Farmer, Meadowlark Farm

Don Stuart, American Farmland Trust

Chris Parsons, Washington Office of Community, Trade & Economic Development

Jeff Parsons, Director, Leavenworth Audubon Center

Dave Hedlin, Farmer, Skagit Valley

David Granatstein, Center for Sustainable Agriculture & Natural Resources

Vance Corum, WSU Small Farms Program

Kelli Sanger, WSDA Small Farm and Direct Marketing Program

Zachary Lyons, Director, Washington State Farmers Market Association
Wade Bennett, Farmer, Rockridge Orchards
Guy Evans and Jamie Howell, Film Producers, *Broken Limbs*
Dave Frederickson, President, National Farmers Union

Summit Planning Committee

These people gave generously of their time and knowledge to plan the Summit.

Rev. Paul Benz, Lutheran Public Policy Office of Washington
Matthew Buck, Sustainable Northwest
Britt Dudek, Chelan-Douglas Farm Bureau
Mary Embleton, Cascade Harvest Coalition
David Granatstein, WSU Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources
Bonnie Rice, Washington Sustainable Food and Farming Network
Bob Rose, Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland
Marci Ostrom, Washington State University Small Farms Program
Karin Whitehall, U.S. Forest Service
Jeanne Wallin, Farming and the Environment
Ann Schwartz, Tilth Producers of Washington
Derek Sandison, Washington State Department of Ecology
Randy Smith, Northwest Sustainable Energy for Economic Development
Leslie Zenz, Washington State Department of Agriculture
Bill Aal, Tools for Change
Curtis Beus, Washington State University Extension
Kent Mullinix, Institute for Rural Innovation and Stewardship
Janet Heath, Institute for Rural Innovation and Stewardship

Summit Sponsors

We are enormously grateful to the Summit sponsors; without their generous support this conference simply would not have happened.

Agricultural Supply Company
Cenex/Land-O-Lakes
Chelan-Douglas Farm Bureau
Farming and the Environment
Heifer International
Key Bank
Lutheran Public Policy Office
McDougall & Sons
North Central Washington Fieldmen's Association
Northwest Sustainable Energy for Economic Development
Oneonta Trading Corporation
Peshastin Hi-Up Growers
Port of Chelan County
Port of Douglas County
State of Washington Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development

USDA Risk Management Agency
Valley Tractor and Equipment
Washington Agriculture & Forestry Education Foundation
Washington Farmers Union
Washington State Department of Agriculture

ⁱ Kent Mullinix, Director, Institute for Rural Innovation & Stewardship, Wenatchee Valley College/Associate Professor, Washington State University Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, and Nancy Warner, North Central Washington Program Manager, The Nature Conservancy of Washington, 6 Yakima, Suite 1A, Wenatchee, on staff loan to IRIS. The authors also gratefully acknowledge the following reviewers: David Granatstein, Jim Davis, Ray Sandidge, John Thoren, Len Barson, Joan Alway, Chuck Warner, Anne Miller

ⁱⁱ Marty Strange, 1988. *Family Farming: A New Economic Vision*, Institute for Food and Development Policy, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, p. 3.

ⁱⁱⁱ Larry Yee, 2003. *The Association of Family Farms: A Whole Systems Approach to Food Marketing. Concept & Prospectus*. Presented at the Washington State Family Farm Summit, Wenatchee, WA.

^{iv} U.S. Census Bureau, 2002.

^v Kirschenmann, F., S. Stevenson, F. Buttel, T. Lyson, and M. Duffy. 2004. *Why Worry About the Agriculture of the Middle? A White Paper for the Agriculture of the Middle Project*. www.agofthemiddle.org

^{vi} For more information see Marty Strange, *Family Farming: A New Economic Vision*, p. 102.

^{vii} John Ikerd, "The Twenty-First Century American Family Farm." Presented at the Washington State Family Farm Summit, Wenatchee, WA

^{viii} Bill Heffernan, Washington State Family Farm Summit speaker.

^{ix} See *The End of Agriculture in the American Portfolio*, by Steven Blank, Quorum Books, Westport, Connecticut.

^x Larry Yee, *Ibid*

^{xi} H. Hartman. 1996. *The Hartman Report: Food and the Environment: A Consumer's Perspective. Phase 1*. The Hartman Group, Bellevue, WA, 60 pp.; H. Hartman. 1997. *The Hartman Report: Food and the Environment: A Consumer's Perspective. Phase 2*. The Hartman Group, Bellevue, WA, 64 pp.

^{xii} Larry Yee, *Ibid*

^{xiii} Kirschenmann, et al. 2004.

^{xiv} Walter Goldschmidt, *As you Sow: Three Studies in the Social Consequences of Agribusiness*. Montclair, N.J. Allanheld, Osmun & Co.

^{xv} John Ikerd, *Ibid*