



Nome

Town Hall Meeting Report



Friday, January 31, 2014

4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Mini Convention Center

Background

In 2014, the Alaska Food Policy Council (AFPC) is hosting seven (7) community food system meetings for the general public. The goals of the meetings include:

1. Increase awareness about Alaska food issues among the general population
2. Increase involvement in local food issues by community members
3. Gain a perspective of local food issues to inform the AFPC and policy makers
4. Recruit new members for the AFPC.

At the end of 2014, the AFPC will be nearing the conclusion of its first strategic plan. Information about the Alaska food system received through the 2014 Town Hall meetings will assist the AFPC to evaluate the impact of their current priorities, and will frame key issues for use in developing the next 5-year strategic planning cycle.

This report summarizes information gathered through Nome Town Hall meeting. All of the materials used for promotion and unedited comments are included in the appendices.

Overview

PLANNING

A Town Hall Meeting Committee, comprised of AFPC Governing Board members and local community members met twice via teleconference. The group provided input on all aspects of the meeting including logistics, promotion, implementation and the agenda including an appropriate public engagement framework. Additionally, the committee provided valuable and relevant contacts in Nome to ensure there was a broad representation of attendees at the meeting.

Two AFPC Governing Board members, Gary Fersuson and Lorinda Lhotka, represented the AFPC at the meeting.

A final teleconference was held about 10 days prior to the meeting to iron out final details. This teleconference included the meeting facilitators, AFPC Governing Board representatives attending the meeting, and most importantly, critical partners locally in Nome who agreed to assist the team with final logistics and promotion.

PROMOTION

A flyer was created for the event and was distributed and shared via social media outlets including the AFPC Facebook page. The flyer was also shared via the AFPC's action alert email list serve. The flyer was emailed to local partners in Nome who posted it on community bulletin boards and local businesses. Additionally, the local Nome residents hung flyers up at hot spots around Nome.

An ad was purchased for two consecutive Thursdays leading up to the event in the Nome Nugget.

The local radio advertised it via public announcement on KNOM.

Nome town-wide email listserve, Nome Announce.

Additionally, a press release went out generating press coverage at the event including KNOM and the Nome Nugget.

ATTENDANCE

Approximately 50 people were in the room; 37 signed in.

Meeting Logistics

LOCATION

The meeting was held at the Nome Mini Convention Center. The venue was very comfortable for the topic, the number of people in attendance, and it provided the basic services required (kitchen, power, screen for powerpoint presentation).

DATE AND TIME

Although the planning committee double-checked calendars to minimize community conflict, about a week out the advisory committee learned that local basketball games were happening at the same time as the Town Hall meeting. In turn, the time of the Town Hall meeting was changed from a 6:30p.m. start time to a 4:00p.m. start time to accommodate both events. There was significant feedback that this was a positive change. Additionally, the new time made it easier for agency representatives to attend directly from work. After the meeting, it was learned that one or two local residents may not have received notice of the change. Meeting facilitators did spend time speaking with them and recording comments.

FOOD

Food at the meeting presented a typical challenge faced by many Alaska communities. Facilitators had to choose between buying food made and sold by local Nome business or buying healthier food and packing from Anchorage. In the end we chose to support a local Nome business and purchased 10 pizzas and two salads. Some participants expressed disappointment in the unhealthy food option. Although the meeting was advertised as a potluck, only a few local food items were shared including smoked salmon and walrus muktuk.

Meeting Agenda

The Town Hall Meeting Committee provided input on the agenda and format. The committee suggested that the meeting should begin with an overview presentation on the AFPC, followed by gathering individual input from participants, and finally wrapping up the meeting with small group discussions focusing on solutions to issues identified from individuals. The recommended approach on gathering public input was to use open-ended questions as opposed to framing the issues and driving the discussion toward preset topics.

Participants sat at tables, each containing 6-8 people. Governing Board members and local and/or visiting food experts were spread out evenly throughout the room and recorded the discussion at each table. The meetings began with an introductory presentation by AFPC Governing Board members Gary Ferguson and Lorinda Lhotka.

During the first half of the meeting, facilitators collected the following information from all participants. Participants were given 5 minutes to answer each question. There were no limits on the amount of answers they could write. Information was gathered using post-it notes which were assembled in one place. The following broad questions were asked:

1. What do you LIKE about the food system in Nome? What are the positive things about food in Nome? What do you like? What is working? Are there new and innovative things happening that you want to share?
2. What do you NOT like so much about food in Nome? Do you face issues, challenges or barriers that you think need to be addressed?
3. If you had unlimited resources, what would be your vision for an ideal food system in Nome?

The second half of the meeting was a longer, more in-depth discussion about specific issues. Groups were to pick one or two issues that came up in the “short-answer” exercise, talk about the issue(s) in detail and brainstorm potential solutions or actions to improve the issue. The groups then reported back to the larger group about their issue and potential solution.

All comments from the three short exercises, the long exercise and the general table notes were collected and have been organized and documented in the appendix. The following provides a summary level recap of the input received through both exercises.

Summary of Nome Public Input

What do Nome residents LIKE about the food system?

PRODUCTION & HARVEST

Gardening: Although the gardening culture isn't as strong as in other places in Alaska, Nome residents generally felt very positively about a new focus and increased momentum on gardening and small-scale, local vegetable production for personal use.

Subsistence: Nome residents were proud of their access to high quality, healthy subsistence resources including wild fish, game and berries.

Commercial Fishing: Commercial salmon fishing has started again.

DISTRIBUTION

Community Spirit and Sharing: As a hub community in the region, Nome residents felt that the existing community food sharing and bartering system was a positive element of the food system both within Nome and between smaller villages and communities in the region.

Accessibility and Availability: Although there are still great improvements to be made, Nome residents currently feel positive about the recent progress toward improved accessibility and availability of food. There are now three grocery stores, one of which regularly carries healthy and organic food brands. The stores are willing to work with consumers to acquire specialty items. Additionally, Full Circle (CSA) is available in Nome and internet grocers like Amazon (Amazon Prime with free shipping) expanded affordable access to more food options.

EDUCATION

Although it could be more, Nome residents like that schools are beginning to have programs focused on gardening, subsistence and food. There is a class at a local college teaching about subsistence food and how to preserve food.

TRANSPORTATION

Recent road upgrades have improved access to subsistence resources.

What do Nome residents DISLIKE about the food system?

PRODUCTION & HARVEST

Gardening: Although there is a new momentum for gardening, Nome residents feel frustrated by the short growing season and lack of good soil for gardening.

Subsistence: Some elders lack transportation and access to subsistence foods.

DISTRIBUTION

Availability and Quality: Participants overwhelmingly commented on the difficulty of receiving a variety of fresh, quality fruits and vegetables in grocery stores, restaurants, schools and institutions. Often produce arrives in Nome rotten or wilted. Other products are expired potentially posing a food safety hazard. Additionally, because it is so challenging and expensive to get fresh food, there is an overabundance of unhealthy, processed, sugary foods.

Cost: The number one comment heard from this Town Hall meeting was about the high cost of all food in Nome. This fact is a barrier for residents, but the cost of fresh, healthy food is even higher.

FOOD SAFETY

Contamination: There was a lot of discussion and concern about contamination of water, air and soil and the potential contamination might have to negatively impact wild food sources.

TRANSPORTATION

Residents talked a lot about the challenge, both logistically and the high cost, of transporting food to Nome. They feel this is one of the primary barriers to an improved food system.

POLICIES & REGULATIONS

Subsistence: Residents feel there is a great opportunity to increase the amount of subsistence food consumed in institutions and sold to the general public, however there are regulations that don't allow this to occur.

Food Stamps: Policies are not realistic for northern, remote places.

EDUCATION

Nome residents in the room felt threatened by the loss of traditional knowledge about subsistence and harvesting and preserving wild foods.

Conclusion

The Nome Town Hall meeting was fun, informative and met the identified goals of successfully collecting new information from a northwestern Alaska hub community about food system issues. The format of future meetings should consider whether the unframed method continues to be the desired approach, or whether alternate frameworks should be used. The information gathered from the Nome Town Hall meeting will be further analyzed alongside the other Town Hall meetings as they occur. This information will be critical in setting the stage for the forthcoming AFPC strategic planning process.



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Fast Food on the Hoop

Field to Market
access to education for grant writing (mobile Slaughter unit)
writing policy & procedure @ USDA level / FCS, FDA

Predators
HLRM

ACCESS ^{• other food resources}

- Asking stores to buy healthy food
- Promote healthy foods in store
- Educate community on healthy food
- Recipe example / health benefits
- Education on storage of food
- Cost benefit
- Ability to reject food / improve quality
- Transportation / Free shipping

Affordability

- ↑ education = teachers / CES, health care providers, grocery stores.
- supply / demand = community, stores
- Bulk shipping / buying = community
- more local foods = stores, community
- Combo deals = restaurants, stores
- Seasonal foods = groceries, community
- Dinner parties = community
- Community pot lucks = NOME, K12 - Kowalek, etc., NOME community

Problem

Predominance of sugary, non healthy foods in local diets (* especially youth diet)

- re-orient people to healthier foods
- start at home
- 3 part in schools

Partners in helping

Parents
Teachers
School Districts

Lack of Locally Produced Food

- regulatory blocks
- lack of effort, jobs
- costs to produce, marketing, transportation
- lack of infrastructure
- isolated location
- lack of financial incentives

Examples

Food Processor Industry

high costs
inspections
USDA approval

→ regulations making it more expensive, difficult, less profitable

Players in Helping

DEG, Commissioner
Reindeer Herders (Kowalek)
DEG (border control) / USDA
Senator Olson
State Legislature
industry officials



Longhand Notes

Friday, January 31, 2014
4:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Mini Convention Center

Notes from meeting to be used for formal report

Participant Input: *What are the positive things about food in Nome? What do you like? What is working? Are there new and innovative things happening that you want to share?*

GARDENING

- Arctic Gardening class (UAF)
- Gardeners who support each other
- Pilgrim hot springs ability to have gardens year round
- Public garden vegetables in a green house
- Sprouts are cheap/easy to grow
- Expanded interest in growing gardens
- Community Garden

SCHOOL

- More school related garden and subsistence food programs
- School programs focusing on food
- Lots of preservation/subsistence class with college
- Families/Parents would like to see 'Tundra food' in the Headstart, Preschool and schools

COMMUNITY

- Community wants more Nome grown foods
- Share ideas about people with food
- Barter fish for cranberry sauce
- Community spirit
- Communities in the region have extensive food sharing networks
- People share food with each other
- Community email list is used as a forum for sharing, buying, selling food (NomeAnnounce)
- Nome is a Hub community
- Facebook comments/feedback
- Abundant productivity
- Donations of cultural foods
- Ability to promote traditional foods
- Ability to prepare, generosity when available

ACCESSIBILITY / AVAILABILITY / GROCERY STORES

- Promotion/sales
- Organic foods available at the stores now
- Organics in Hanson's
- Grocery stores willing to work with patrons for specialty items
- 2-3 grocery stores
- Food is generally available
- 3 grocery stores sales prices good variety
- 3 grocery stores=some competition
- Variety/choices of stores
- Hansons is owned by Safeway and there is 3 grocery stores and 2 convenience stores which engage in competitive prices
- Fullcircle available
- Fullcircle
- Amazon Prime
- Amazon.com
- Better produce than we used to
- 4 grocery stores
- Fullcircle farms

- Running water
- CSA
- Small number of consumers

DEVELOPMENT

- Road improvements make easier to get out
- Roads to access subsistence food
- Air transportation
- Fast food (restaurant)
- Commercial salmon fishing in Nome is back

SUBSISTENCE

- Having to go harvest/hunt
- Outside cold storage
- Winter frozen storage available!
- High quality fish, wildlife and berries
- Wild foods and hunting traditions are strong
- Access to wild berries, fish and seafood, moose
- Variety
- Working to gather fresh meat/fish/greens/berries
- Access to various subsistence foods
- Could walk to fish, caught Tom Cod
- Subsistence foods are widely available if you go out to get them
- Local harvest (fish/birds/boo/berries)
- Our wild foods are healthy
- Picking berries
- Ability to gather food i.e. fish, moose
- Foraging berries and greens
- A+++++ reindeer herding, this is important for our future
- Reindeer (in our dreams)
- Seafood resources are close by
- Salmon and other fish
- Wild game
- Availability of wild food
- Subsistence foods
- Fresh tundra food meat/veg
- Wild greens

Participant Input: *What do you NOT like so much about food in Nome? Do you face issues, challenges or barriers that you think need to be addressed?*

AVAILABILITY / QUALITY / COST

- High price lack of freshness (poor quality)
- Old produce
- Limited selection
- Limited on no GMO/only some organic
- Not a lot of natural/healthy food options at restaurants or stores
- High price
- High cost of living/ minimum wages/earnings
- Wilted veggies
- Full circle foods aren't always in good shape
- More local production of food
- Prices of food
- High prices
- Processed foods are outrageously expensive
- High cost of fresh produce
- Prices of bought, healthy diet foods
- Fresh
- Variety
- Fresh food in villages
- Store foods are very expensive
- Price barrier
- Cost
- Want access to Fairbanks CSAs
- Affordable food
- Overall cost of food
- Apples that have good shelf life but when purchased brown inside
- Fresh fruit, veggies, salad quality not ideal
- Not a lot of options for people with special/restricted diets

- Access to healthy food for Elders (maintain subsistence diet)
- Variety: village choices, choices of food
- Hard to get fresh quality vegetables

CONTAMINANTS / HEALTH

- Food safety
- Practice in restaurants
- Storage
- Storage barrier
- Freezing/thawing
- Expiration dates
- Preparation/processing
- 'Country food' made from industry have a lot of additional chemicals
- Soda
- Kids eating too much unhealthy foods
- Prevalence of junk food
- Concerns about contamination of wild food sources
- Water is part of our food-system: don't like that the city is forcing fluoride on me!
- Fluoride in water
- Contamination
- State need to inform of local contamination air/ground/water pollution
- Global warming

TRANSPORTATION

- Limited transportation
- Majority of all food shipped in high cost
- Increased shipping
- Imports only come by air/berge
- Limited airline schedule = less stuff brought in
- Food not making it in due to airlines
- Transportation costs = expensive groceries
- Transportation barrier
- Transportation issues
- Elders don't have transportation to subsistence foods
- Shipping costs
- Resource development
- Road to graphite mine as problem for, bring in more people and road stress
- Lack of infrastructure to process and manufacture local foods
- Import soil

POLICY


- Government regulated foods on subsistence
- Misuse of foodstamp based on lower 48 standards
- Regulations around foodstamps are not realistic for Northern living
- Impact of increased shipping and mineral, oil, and gas exploration and development
- High energy costs impede greenhouses
- Regulations prohibiting sale of subsistence foods
- USDA/DEC regs holding reindeer back
- State and federal agencies make natural resources policies that are detrimental to subsistence practitioners
- Regulation does not prioritize subsistence hunting
- Regulatory barriers to cost effective safe food production
- State laws restricting sale of wild foods restrict us to unhealthy food options

EDUCATION

- Knowledge/education
- Education/knowledge barrier
- We are losing skills for fermenting wild foods
- Time/knowledge resources to harvest subsistence foods
- Social stigma around subsistence foods
- Use of subsistence resources has declined in some communities (variety of reasons)
- Nutritional understanding is limited
- More access to training on subsistence gathering, hunting, and fishing for adults and kids

LOCAL

- Growing season short. Needs a greenhouse.
- Long distance to markets and sources
- Access barrier
- Access to fresh produce during non ideal season
- Difficult to garden – need a greenhouse for plants to mature
- It is really hard to grow produce here
- Only easily accessible organic foods are wild foods
- Not a lot of healthy options at local restaurants
- Resource development
- Limited natural resources, real dirt for gardener
- Lack of topsoil locally for gardens
- People without a hunter/provider in their household go without the best quality wild foods sometimes
- Some climate changes are negatively impacting accessibility to subsistence resources
- Chinook decline
- Not enough tundra food for purchase
- Hunting pressure more people
- Predators
- Local produce production

 **Participant Input:** *Vision. Talk about the issues in detail and brainstorm potential solutions or actions to improve the issue. If describing a positive issue, explain why it is working.*

LOCAL CHANGES / IMPROVEMENT

- Local supply chains
- Produce all necessary foods/supplies and export
- Bakery in town
- Co-op food center/fresh variety
- Local co-op for bulk orders to make it less expensive (we have these for coffee, dog food already)
- Bulk foods!
- Recreate the Merchantile
- Recycling/more recycling
- Increase whole grains, fruits and vegetables in stores/villages
- Include more local people from regions
- Decrease stigma about organ(ic?) meats
- Offer more locally caught foods in schools, ZYX center (berries/reindeer/fish)
- Cannery fish, jams, jellies
- More canning (preserving food)

LOCAL FARMERS MARKET

- Farmers market
- Farmers market (berries, greens) filled with the native eatings
- Farmers market where produce comes from Nome

AGRICULTURE

- Veggie production and jobs
- Find foods that will grow outside
- Large scale vegetable gardening (like in Bethel) utilizing high tunnels
- Model after Arctic Gardening like Bethel, AK
- Grow food at Pilgrim to be sold in Nome – hire local, sell local, ship out
- Pilgrim Hot Springs vegetable farm
- Pilgrim Hot Springs community garden!! Or even a for profit/CSA etc.
- Agricultural potential of Pilgrim (all over) hot springs
- Hydro plants Pilgrim hot springs agricultural capabilities
- More locally (AK) grown produce available in Nome/villages
- Make available all materials for individual sustainable garden systems
- Nome community farm/dairy year round

COMMUNITY GARDEN

- Housed yearround warehouse of gardens
- Garden spots
- Community gardens
- Active community garden throughout the entire year (indoor/outdoor)

WILD GAME SALES

- Butcher shop: reindeer moose, muskox, whale, seal, walrus, birds
- Slaughter unit for reindeer meat processing
- Local processing of game allowed
- Processing facilities
- Buy game meat at stores
- Locally raised reindeer, chicken, bunnies, etc.
- Well supported reindeer herding and reindeer products industry
- Reindeer husbandry and all products associated
- Free range reindeer
- Grow reindeer
- Marketing of reindeer widespread
- Salmon hatchery
- Wild foods would be marketable and available in stores and restaurants like in Scandinavia and Greenland
- Restaurant to serve traditional food

GREENHOUSES

- Large community greenhouse
- Agriculture/greenhouse potential significant
- Many greenhouses grow much
- Massive greenhouse heated by a nuclear reactor
- Utilize waste heat from utility plant for growing veggies and/or chickens (local eggs)
- Use waste heat off Nome utility to heat greenhouses,
- done in Providenia to raise vegetables in many greenhouses
- Heat recovery greenhouses
- Geothermal greenhouse production of produce
- Gardens greenhouses more food
- Grow lights
- Greenery plants, flowers

COMPOSTING / SOIL

- Compost household waste
- Composting program for all
- Find out how to do dog poop composting safely for agriculture
- Indoor composters
- Composting to grow soils
- Have a community sources people can get local soil for growing

COMMUNITY / EDUCATION / SUBSISTENCE

- Revival of community sharing and hunting and gathering subsistence foods
- Host community events re: how to harvest/catch/hunt, etc.
- Offer greenhouse gardening classes as school curriculum
- Education, more emphasis and guidance on harvest of wild greens
- Learning center to teach how to prepare foods (reindeer)
- Education of our young people to prepare and store fresh food
- Educate population about opportunities that are available
- Training in greenhouse and growing, etc.
- Traditional lifestyles
- Encourage traditional lifestyles
- Take holistic view of food/health
- Refine taste through youth
- Food gathering for community
- More hunting for youth facility kids
- Hunter for elders and youth
- Professional hunters
- Paid time off to go hunt, gather, and commune with natives
- Rewards for buying healthy foods
- Locally funded resources to eat healthy

COMMUNITY FREEZER

- Make root cellar for local use at no cost for long term storage of foods
- Giant community freezer lockers
- Butcher/freezer for country food
- Community freezer space
- Communal freeze space
- Ideal: have a community food storage of wild caught foods, greens, fish, that has been collected by all community members and processed collectively
- Food preparation and proper storage

TRANSPORTATION

- Increase delivery of fresh food to Nome/surrounding area
- More flights=more cargo loads of commodities needed
- Railroad construction to Nome AK
- Ferry to travel out of Nome
- Local regulation of subsistence harvesting
- Local supervisions and regulations of subsistence instead of from Juneau

STATE CHANGES

- State to enhance salmon fisheries
- Decrease amounts of commercial fisherman harvests
- More value-added fish products
- More money for wildlife mgmt. to increase and improve game
- Eliminate by-catch of fisheries or use it!
- Grants for education on traditional foods-native foods processing
- Subsistence priority in AK state constitution
- Strong protections for subsistence rights first, then commercial fisheries
- State AF and G committed to game protection from predators
- Soda tax
- Increase advocacy
- State subsidized shipping costs for people pursuing self-reliance in gardening and growing foods/chickens/eggs
- Eliminate shipping costs of gardening supplies or feed supplies
- Policy and regulation local meat industry

PRESENTATION / MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

- We need a tier between direct retail butcher shops and USDA approved. USDA process based on regulations create price barriers to producing local products for regional retailers. Outcome based processes would be better. Transportation issues for producers in remote areas make direct retail cost prohibitive for the small volumes that can be directly retailed.

Preservation and Preparation of subsistence foods

- Introduction on butchering/filleting
- Proper storage of foods
- Who: Elders, active hunters, schools

Nutritional Education

- Food as medicine
- Diet for prevention
- Who: CAMP, schools, family matriarch (cook)

Predominance of sugary, not healthy foods in local diets (and especially youth diet)

- Reorient people to healthier foods
- Start at home

- Start in schools
- Who: parents, teachers, school districts

Lack of locally produced food; Example: reindeer meat industry

- Regulatory blocks
- Lack of effort, jobs
- Costs to produce
 - Energy and facility costs
 - Transportation
 - Inspection
 - USDA approval
 - Regulations making it more expensive, difficult, unprofitable
- Lack of infrastructure

- Isolated location
- Lack of financial incentives.
- No reindeer and greenhouses in area.
- Not being able to sell reindeer in local stores.
- Prominence of unhealthy foods in our diets, youth dive into sugary drinks.
- Who: DEC Commissioner, Reindeer Herders Association (Kawerak), Senator Olson, State legislators, DFandG (predator control regs), USDA inspectors and officials

Mercury/nuclear radiation poisoning:

- No monitoring systems available
- Metal contamination
- Affects sea mammals and fish
- Potential solutions/actions: do eat as much (not a good answer), education and data, FDA and USDA research, awareness

Contamination

- Not enough data on nuclear radiation, PCBs, mercury
- Arctic not a pristine place
- Regular program to collect data
- Education to general public
- Who: DEC, USDA, FDA, EPA, citizen scientist, Russian data

Contamination of traditional foods

- Sea mammals, birds, fish, vegetation, mammals
- Solution: train local supportive, honest, interested persons to become proactive, to become experts in collecting information on contaminants

Access

- Supply and demand to get people to want food, get stores to buy healthy foods, get people to ask for healthy foods
- Other food resources
- Asking stores to buy healthy food
- Promote healthy foods in store
- Educate community on healthy foods
- Recipe example/health benefits
- Education on storage of food, reduce buying of processed foods
- Cost benefit
- Ability to reject food/improve quality
- Transportation/free shipping

Affordability(: who)

- Increase education: teachers/CES, health care providers, grocery stores

- Supply/demand: community
- Bulk shipping/buying: stores, community
- More local foods: stores, community
- Combo deals: restaurants, stores
- Seasonal foods: groceries, community
- Dinner parties: community
- Community potlucks: XYZ, NSHC, Kawerak, Nome Community Center, etc

Fast Food on the Hoof

- Field to market
- Access to education/training for grantwriting (mobile slaughter unit - \$250,000, bring state vet in for certifications and witness and approve slaughter)
- Money to expand Greg Finsteds program High Latitude Range Mgmt program
- Internal conflict within Reindeer Herders Association
- Writing policy and procedure @ USDA level, FSIS, FDA
- Reindeer need recognition as domestic livestock
- Predators- bears, wolves
- Cooperative extension- reindeer agent
- HLRM

Greenhouse

- Weather
- Hot springs (1)
- Waste utility (3)
- Positioning to take advantage of a heat source (3)
- Availability of good soil
- Instruction on growing "Arctic Gardening" (2)
- Repurpose abandoned greenhouses
- Who: (1) Hot Springs Consortium, (2) UAF, (3) city and utility company

Local gardening

- Small business to create local jobs
- Funding- CDC or state grant
- Give classes
- Home economics group
- Working with farmer in Bethel
- Increasing quality and freshness and availability
- Teach composting- worms!
- Make it a business, not just grand funded
- Quyanna Care – quality of care award
- Outcomes: lower cost, increase freshness, increase availability

High cost of living

- Self-sufficient on traditional lifestyles, producing our own food



PLEASE NOTE TIME CHANGE!*

The Alaska Food Policy Council
Invites you to attend a

TOWN HALL MEETING

WHEN: January 31, 2014 – 4:00 to 6:00 pm (CHANGED!)*

WHERE: Mini Convention Center (102 River St), Nome, Alaska

FOOD: Light refreshments and beverages will be provided. Community members are encouraged to bring a dish to share.

Why is food important to you?

The Alaska Food Policy Council (AFPC) invites you to attend a community town hall meeting to gather your ideas and opinions about local food. The AFPC is interested in hearing input from local community members on local food system issues.

The purpose of these meetings is to increase awareness of Alaska food issues, promote involvement in local food issues by community members, and gain a perspective of local food issues to inform AFPC and policy makers.



photo credits: nomemade-nomealaska.blogspot.com, visitnomealaska.com

What is the AFPC?

The Alaska Food Policy Council works to strengthen Alaska's food systems to spur local economic development, increase food security, and improve nutrition and health. The Council serves as a resource for information on local and state food systems, and works to identify and propose policy and environmental changes that can improve the production, processing, distribution, health, security and safety of our food.

***Due to community input the time of the Town Hall has changed so that it doesn't conflict with the basketball game. We look forward to seeing you at the Town Hall meeting AND the basketball game!**

For more information please visit alaskafoodpolicycouncil.wordpress.com or call 907.575.8583



PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release
January 30, 2014

Media Contact: Chelsea Ward-Waller, 907.575.8583

**The Alaska Food Policy Council to Host Seven Statewide Town Hall Meetings:
Information gathered from Alaskans will guide statewide food policy.**

Anchorage, January 30, 2014 - In 2014, the Alaska Food Policy Council (AFPC) will be hosting seven statewide town hall meetings to gather information and ideas from Alaskans about food in their communities.

The purpose of the meetings is to increase statewide awareness about Alaska food issues, promote involvement in the local food system by community members and gain a perspective of local food issues. The information gathered will be used by the AFPC to inform institutions, organizations and policy makers to improve and strengthen the Alaska Food System.

The first town hall meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 31 at 4:00 PM in Nome at the Mini Convention Center (102 River Street).

The second town hall meeting is scheduled shortly thereafter on Monday, February 3 at 6:30 PM in Juneau at the Juneau Douglas High School Commons (1639 Glacier Avenue).

Planning is underway for meetings in Bethel and Fairbanks in April and Palmer, Homer and Anchorage in the early fall, 2014.

The Alaska Food Policy Council is an independent, statewide organization with a vision for a food secure, healthy Alaska. The AFPC works to strengthen Alaska's food systems to spur local economic development, increase food security and improve nutrition and health. The AFPC serves as a resource for information on local and state-side food systems and works to identify and propose policy and other changes that can improve the production, processing, distribution, health, security and safety of food in Alaska.

For more information about the Alaska Food Policy Council, please visit <http://akfoodpolicycouncil.wordpress.com/> or LIKE the Alaska Food Policy Council on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/akfoodpolicy>.

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Alaska Food Policy Council



The Alaska Food Policy Council
invites you to attend a

TOWN HALL MEETING

When: January 31, 6 to 8 p.m.

Where: Mini Convention Center

102 River St., Nome, Alaska

Food: Light refreshments and beverages will be provided. Community members are encouraged to bring a dish and share.

Topics: Promote involvement in local food issues.
Spur local economic development.
Increase food security.
Improve nutrition and health.



Nome Town Hall Meeting

Friday January 31, 2014

4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Mini Convention Center

102 River Street

Agenda

4:00 – 4:15 PM: The Alaska Food Policy Council welcomes you! Come on in, find a seat, grab some food, we're so happy to have you!

4:15 – 4:30 PM: Who is the Alaska Food Policy Council? What are we here to accomplish tonight?

Presentation by Alaska Food Policy Council Governing Board Members:
Gary Ferguson, Community Health Services Director, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

Lorinda Lhotka, Section Manager, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Food Safety and Sanitation

4:30 – 4:45 PM: Group Exercise #1

- 1: What are the positive things about food in Nome? What do you like? What is working? Are there new and innovative things happening that you want to share?
- 2: What do you NOT like so much about food in Nome? Do you face issues, challenges or barriers that you think need to be addressed?
- 3: If you had limited resources, what would be your vision of the ideal food system in Nome?

4:45 – 5:15 PM: Group Exercise #2

In depth discussion about the issues identified in Exercise #1. Talk about the issues in detail and brainstorm potential solutions or actions to improve the issue. If describing a positive issue, explain why it is working.



Nome Town Hall Meeting

Friday January 31, 2014

4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Mini Convention Center

102 River Street

5:15 – 5:45 PM: Groups Report Back

5:45 – 6:00 PM: Closing: What happens next? Did we miss anything important that you want to tell us?

TOWN HALL MEETING



Alaska Food Policy Council
Nome, Alaska
January, 31 2014



Did you know?

Alaskans spend \$2.5 billion dollars
on food each year at grocery stores
and restaurants.



Alaska Food Policy Council

Did you know?

It's estimated that 95% of Alaska's food is imported.
That makes Alaska vulnerable in times of disasters.



Alaska Food Policy Council

Did you know?

Alaska's food system creates a lot of jobs.
About 115,000 jobs are food-related.
That's 1 in 7 jobs in Alaska.



Alaska Food Policy Council

Did you know?

For each dollar invested in local Alaska food, \$3-6 circulates in local economies of our own food supply.



Alaska Food Policy Council

Did you know?

Rates of chronic disease related to lifestyle choices are escalating in Alaska.

That means high healthcare costs borne by the state.



Alaska Food Policy Council

Did you know?

\$459 million annual medical care costs are attributable to obesity in Alaska.

The State of Alaska pays one quarter of those costs.



Alaska Food Policy Council

Did you know?

Chronic diseases—such as cancer, heart disease, and diabetes— are related to unhealthy eating and physical inactivity.

These are among the most prevalent, costly, and preventable of all health problems.



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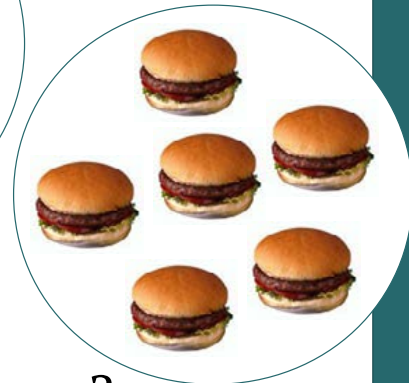
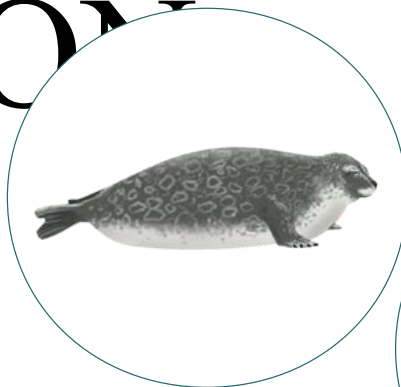
Did you know?

Increasing everyone's access to fresh, healthy food through programs like Farmers Markets or Community Supported Agriculture can reduce rates of chronic disease.



Alaska Food Policy Council

IRON



IRON....

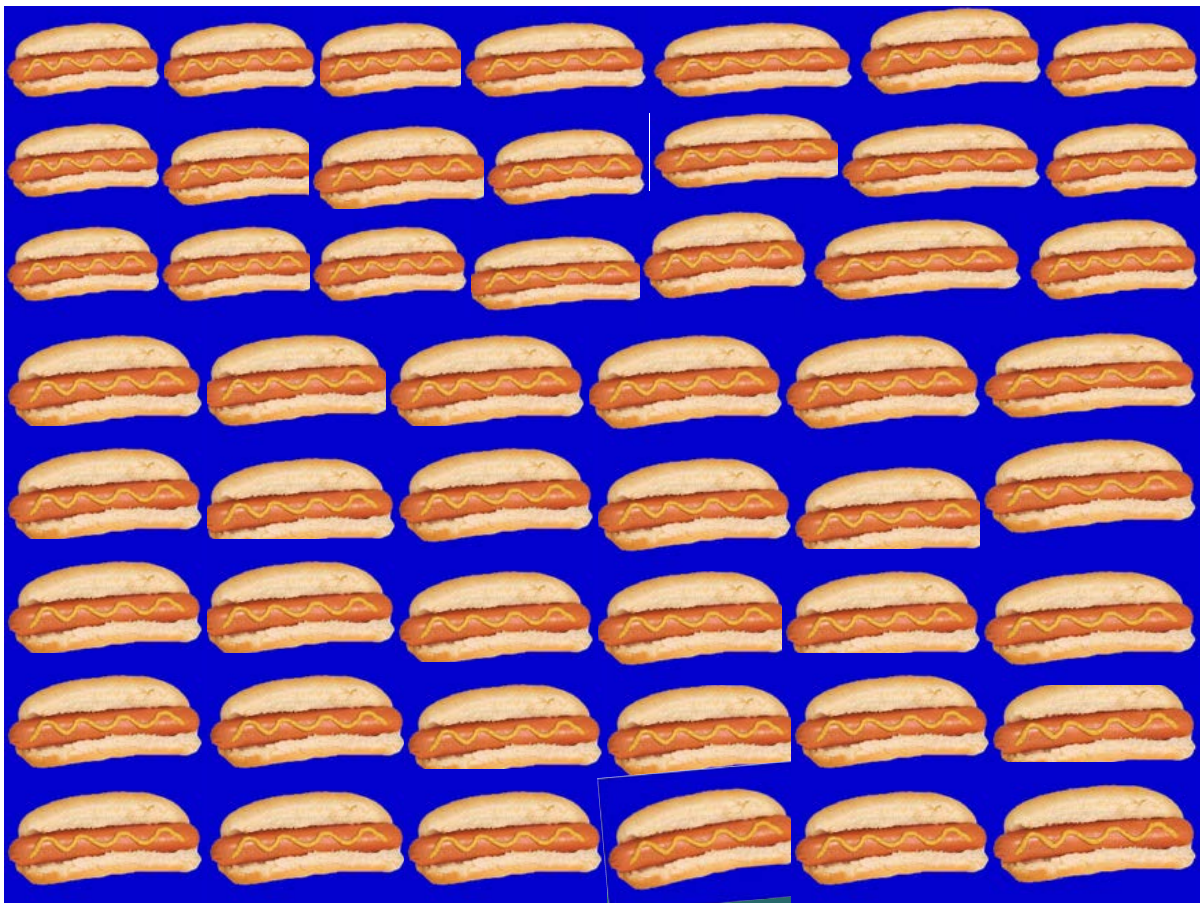


how many hotdogs?

Country food is good for you and your family



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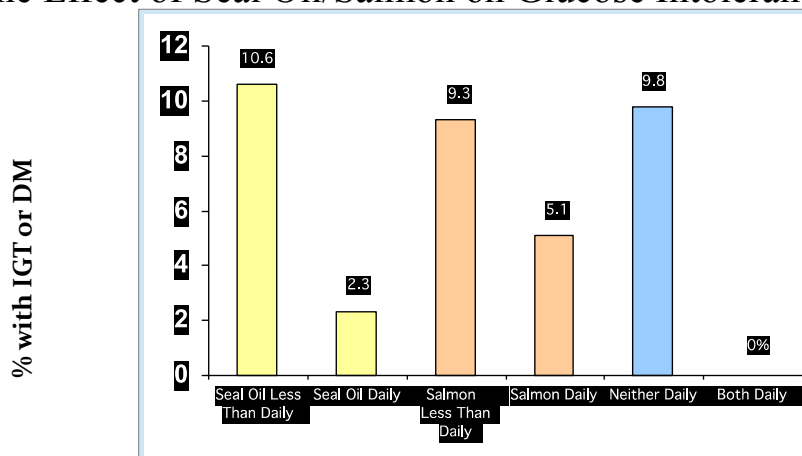


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The Effect of Seal Oil/Salmon on Glucose Intolerance



Glucose intolerance is less common among those who eat seal oil and/or salmon daily

Daily Consumption of Seal Oil or Salmon Associated with Lower Risk of Non-Insulin Dependent Diabetes Mellitus and Impaired Glucose Tolerance in Yup'ik Eskimos and Athabaskan Indians in Alaska. Circumpolar Health 1993:270-273.

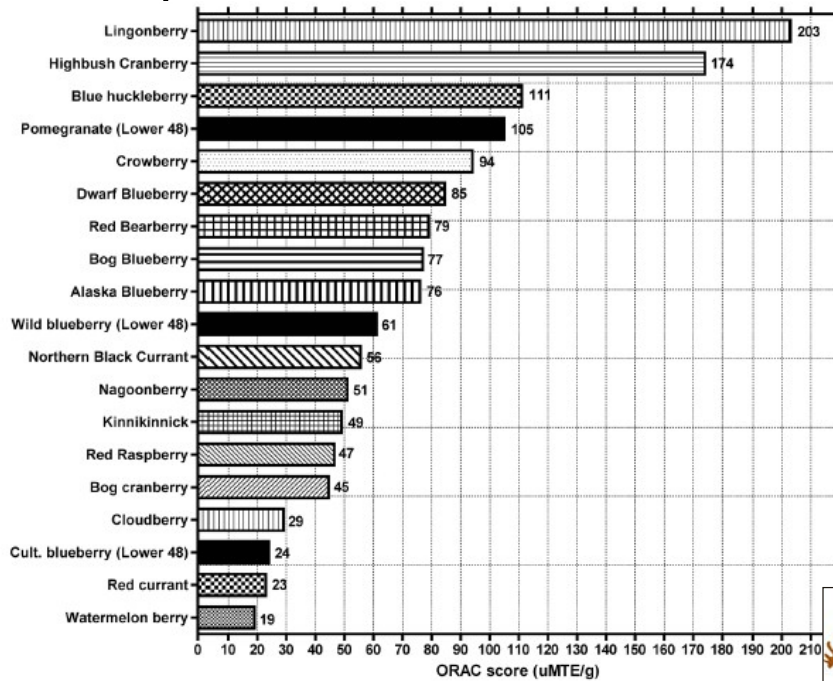


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Comparison of berries



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Our Food System



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What is food policy?

Food policy is any activity that addresses, shapes or regulates the food system.

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Who is the Alaska Food Policy Council?

Over 200 individuals and agencies across the state – driven by the need to strengthen our food system.



Alaska Food Policy Council

Alaska Food Policy Council Vision:

A healthy, secure food system that feeds all Alaskans.



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AFPC's Core Values



Alaska Food Policy Council

AFPC Goals

Goal 1 All Alaskans have access to affordable, healthy (preferably local) foods

Goal 2 Alaska's food-related industries have a strong workforce and operate in a supportive business environment

Goal 3 Food is safe, protected and supplies are secure throughout Alaska

Goal 4 Alaska's food system is more sustainable

Goal 5 Alaskans are engaged in our food system



Alaska Food Policy Council

Tonight we want to hear from YOU.

- We want to hear about the Food System in your community.
- What is working? What isn't working? What challenges do you face every day?
- Share your food system priorities the Alaska Food Policy Council so we can communicate with legislators, local and tribal government representatives.



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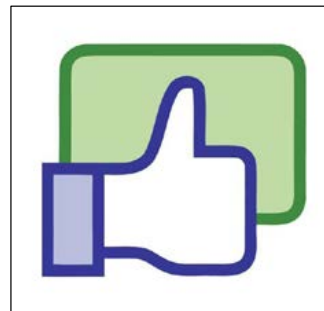
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Alaska Food Policy Council

Contact the Food Policy Council

foodpolicycouncil@gmail.com



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Photo by Diana Haecker

OPEN WATER—The Nome River at Fort Davis shows open water on top of ice due to weeks of warmer than normal temperatures in January. See story below.

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VOLUME CXIV NO. 6 February 06, 2014

Food Policy Council meets in Nome

By Diana Haecker

Several representatives of the Alaska Food Policy Council traveled to Nome last week to kick off a series of statewide meetings. The goal was to hear from rural residents what works and what doesn't in the Alaskan food system.

The Alaska Food Policy Council is a coalition of agencies and individuals representing federal and state agencies, tribal entities, schools, university programs, farmers, fisheries, and businesses. The role of the council is to find solutions to food systems problems and as such, their intent was to hear from Nomeites on what works, what doesn't and how the Nome food system can be improved.

Gary Ferguson, AFPC board member and the director of Wellness and Prevention at the Alaska Native Health Consortium, addressed the crowd of about 50 who showed up at the Mini Convention Center to talk food for two hours on Friday afternoon.

Food, he said, is something very personal.

Depending on what one eats, it can nourish the body or cause disease.

Alaskans spend \$2.5 billion on food per year, 95 percent of food consumed in Alaska is imported – as opposed to 50 percent in the 1950s – and the food industry accounts for 115,000 jobs in Alaska.

Ferguson preached to the converted when he said that subsistence foods such as fish, seal or wild berries are more healthy and nutrient-dense than processed and imported foods. He said that unhealthy food choices and the lack of exercise could be attributed to the rise in obesity and chronic disease in Alaska, costing the health system \$459 million per year.

Lorinda Lhotka, program manager of the Food and Safety program at the Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation further explained that

continued on page 5



Photo by Diana Haecker

IDEAS—During last Friday’s townhall meeting at the Mini Convention Center, Holly Spoth-Torres led through a brain storm session that asked Nomeites to identify what works and what doesn’t in the Nome food system.

• Food Council

continued from page 1

transportation is a big issue in food security and safety. This region knows this only too well.

The dependence on imported food becomes painfully clear when weather conditions or other reasons don’t allow cargo planes to land in Nome. Also, when the food finally arrives in rural communities beyond Nome, village stores sometimes receive food items not in their intended state: melted ice cream and frozen salad.

In break out sessions Nomeites were asked to identify the strengths, challenges of Nome’s food system and then were invited to dream up the perfect solution.

What are the positive things about Nome? On the very top were the possibilities to gather wild foods, pick berries, hunt wild food sources and gather nutritious greens. Many mentioned backyard gardens, modern marvels such as getting foods via Prime shipping on Amazon.com and receiving Full Circle organic foods here at the edge of the Bering Sea. Several people brought up the possibility to help local reindeer herders to grow their herds. For years, reindeer herders have struggled with regulations that limit slaughtering and packaging reindeer for commercial sale.

On top of the list identifying the worries are contaminants that threaten to spoil the environment and hence the wild foods. Contamination from formerly used Air Force sites at St. Lawrence Island, gold mines and increased human activity in the Arctic, as well as bioaccumulation of the world’s toxins in the Arctic, the sea and its animals.

People identified the western fast food and soda culture as not working

for this area. Also many voiced that a whole generation is losing the knowledge how to catch and process wild foods. In addition, food transportation is expensive, healthy store-bought foods are hard to access – although it was pointed out that the grocery stores in town carry more and more organic foods. And last but not least: the cost of food is much more expensive due to the added transportation cost.

The meeting organizers asked for ideas and pie-in-the-sky solutions that would overcome many of the challenges we today face in terms of food. One idea was to have a Russian-Alaska exchange of information to better monitor and understand environmental factors. Other ideas revolved around mundane things on how to compost. “It was great to hear that discussion,” said Ferguson. “One person said, ‘Hey, I have worms to share.’”

Also, reindeer herding and growing became a center of discussion and with that, Ferguson said, the AFPC can help in terms of looking at policies and regulations to allow reindeer herders to slaughter and sell their locally grown reindeer.

Over the next several months there will be seven town hall meetings to be held in Juneau, Fairbanks, Bethel and other regions yet to be determined.

The AFPC aims to collect the meeting ideas in reports and identify food policy matters to improve the food system. The reports, Ferguson said, will go back to the communities and could serve as a basis for organizations to apply for grants.

On Monday, the AFPC met in Juneau, where several legislators were supposed to attend.

The AFPC’s intent is to make rec-

ommendations regarding comprehensive policies that improve Alaska’s food systems. The council’s goal is to assure that Alaskans have access to affordable and healthy, preferably local, food. There are 18 board members on the council, but it also has over 200 members with an interest in improving the Alaska food system.

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Nome Town Hall Meeting Report