

## **Kerr Tar Regional Food Council Meeting**

Dec 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (10-11:30 am)

Kerr Tar Regional Council of Governments

The Food Council Meetings are funded by the Triangle North Healthcare Foundation

### **Attendees:**

Gabriel Cumming (Working Landscapes Warrenton), Ardis Crews (GRRO), Alejandra Martinez (Franklin County Cooperative Extension), Terry Jones (Granville Vance Public Health), Alan Winstead (Kerr Tar Area Agency on Aging), Wykia Macon (Vance County Extension Director), Bryashia Buggs (Congressman Davis's office), Thomas Blaine [Virtual] (Strong Arms Baking Oxford), Judith Burnett-Arrington [Virtual] (Outreach specialist Warren, Vance and Granville counties), Dorothy Barker [Virtual] (Operation Spring Plant), Allison Satterfield [Virtual] (Butchers daughter market & deli), Madeline Eaton [Virtual], Jennifer Brown [Virtual], Jennfier Woods [Virtual] (Food Bank), Stacy Burns [Virtual] (Warren County Extension Director), Keith Weiss [Virtual], Laila Abed (Kerr Tar Regional Council of Governments).

### **Key Discussion Points**

#### **- Committee Updates**

##### **1. Assessment Committee**

Wykia provided a comprehensive update on the food survey, highlighting the current status and numbers. A key part of the discussion revolved around the survey messaging and the importance of building trust with farmers. The committee identified several strategies to foster this trust, including engaging in in-person conversations with farmers, clearly explaining the benefits of participating in the survey, maintaining consistency in messaging, and showcasing examples of how the council utilizes the collected data.

To ensure the success of the survey, an outreach plan for December and January was discussed. Council members are tasked with adding at least two new farmers, businesses, and institutions to the contact list, following up with their existing contacts, and keeping the shared spreadsheet updated. The deadline for survey collection has been extended to January 31st.

Terry suggested integrating the findings of existing health assessments to enrich the food survey data. The committee's goal is to produce an internal report by mid-year and present the findings at the Regional Economic Development Summit in October.

##### **2. Food Security and Access Committee**

Judith reported that the committee has revisited its three key objectives and updated the list of food resources and pantries in the Kerr-Tar region. The committee's next steps include mapping these resources and developing strategies to share this information with the public through various channels such as events, newsletters, and social media. They also plan to explore opportunities for community gardens and improve their outreach through flyers with recipes and other methods.

##### **3. Agriculture/Farmers Committee**

Madeline addressed the communication and event coordination challenges among county organizations. To improve coordination, the committee discussed the creation of a shared listserv or a central repository, such as a Google document, and a newsletter for farmer-

related events. Additionally, the committee suggested forming a multi-agency planning group to enhance collaboration.

### **- Revisiting the 2020 Regional Food Policy Milestones**

The council reviewed the milestones laid out in the 2020 Regional Food Policy:

- Adoption of the Regional Food Policy: This has been successfully adopted by the Kerr-Tar Regional COG Board.
- Establishment of the Food Council: The council has been established and is actively guiding the implementation of the policy's recommendations.
- Regional Food System Assessment: This is an ongoing effort that includes regional focus groups, surveys, food system modeling workshops, and the compilation of secondary data to identify resources, gaps, and opportunities.
- Identification of Socially Responsible Business Opportunities: This will be informed by the findings of the food system assessment.
- Adoption of County or Municipal Plans: The goal is to have local plans that reference the regional strategy for food system development.

### **- Members' Motivations for Participating in the Food Council**

Council members shared their motivations for being part of the food council, which include:

- Advancing food access for all community members.
- Supporting connectivity within the food system and keeping resources within the region.
- Educating the community about the importance of local food.
- Functioning as a think tank to identify and address broad and specific community needs.
- Fostering a transparent and authentic environment to discuss food-related challenges.
- Promoting community engagement, health, and wellness.
- Serving farmers, citizens, institutions, and restaurants by improving access to food.
- Networking, sharing information, and supporting a safe and sustainable food supply.

### **- Goals for 2026**

The council outlined several ambitious goals for 2026:

- Collaborate with one or two farmer-serving organizations on their annual events to promote the council.
- Support the food security plan being developed by Vance County.
- Explore opportunities to introduce more fruits and vegetables into the correctional system.
- Facilitate connections between farmers and schools, hospitals, and restaurants.
- Organize "Meet Your Farmer" events to connect consumers with local producers.
- Offer small business workshops for farmers on topics such as marketing, grants, and branding.

- Create a public calendar for community events and conferences.
- Complete and maintain the food resource inventory.
- Enhance the Food Council's public presence and social media engagement.
- Gain buy-in from counties and cities through presentations to county commissioners.
- Organize farm visits, potentially targeting elected leaders.
- Secure a paid full-time staff member to support the council's work.

#### **- Next Steps**

The meeting concluded with a clear plan for the upcoming months. The ideas from the brainstorming session will be circulated among the council members for further discussion. The committees will review these ideas in their January meetings and propose which ones to prioritize. The next food council meeting will feature a modeling workshop led by Vancie Peacock on February 25th.