Kerr-Tar Regional Food Council Meeting Minutes

Date

June 24, 2026

Attendance: Gabe Cumming-Working Landscapes, Madeline Eaton – Fairport Farms; Nyla Ward-Eva Clayton Rural Food Institute; Earline Middleton-Eva Clayton Rural Food Institute; Jennifer Woods-Food Bank of Central & Eastern NC; Thomas Blaine-Strong Arm Baking; Alan Winstead-Kerr-Tar AAA; Wykia Macon-Vance County Cooperative Extension; Judith Burnette-Arrington-SFLRP; Martha Mosley-Franklin County Cooperative Extension; Ardis Crews-GRRO; Desiree Brooks-Kerr-Tar Regional COG. Joined by zoom: Wendy Tatum-Granville Cooperative Extension; Allison Satterfield-Butcher's Daughter;

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 10:03 AM. Venue change acknowledged; attendees welcomed.

Welcome & Introductions

- A guest, **Ryan Gurney**, was introduced. Ryan is an engineer interested in becoming involved in the local food system.
- Appreciation was expressed to the meeting host and to Thomas for providing refreshments.
- Discussion was held regarding the role of **Secretary** and responsibility for taking meeting minutes.
- It was agreed that Zoom recordings could be used to assist with preparing meeting minutes.

Administrative Business

Corrected bylaws to be resent. Discussion of Secretary role and use of Zoom recording to assist with minutes.

Committee Updates

- Executive Committee reported on governance and planning. Program/Partnership updates included regional collaborations, farmer education, and outreach. Member engagement strategies discussed.

- Assessment Committee Updates:

  Gabe presented survey results (~80 usable responses) covering farmers, businesses, and institutions. Findings included direct-to-consumer marketing, barriers to local purchasing, buyer priorities, and use of results to guide council priorities. Gabe acknowledged Juniper and Susanna Odom for assistance.

  Gabe presented the results of the Regional Food System Survey conducted to better understand the needs and priorities of farmers, businesses, and institutions.

  Key highlights included:

  - Approximately **80 usable survey responses** were analyzed after incomplete submissions were removed.
  - Survey respondents represented **three sectors:** farmers, businesses, and institutions.
  - Results showed that many responding farmers currently market products through **direct-to-consumer channels**, including farmers markets, on-farm sales, roadside stands, and community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs.
  - The survey identified barriers to expanding local food sales and highlighted opportunities to strengthen connections between producers and institutional buyers.
  - Businesses identified **reliability and consistent supply** as key considerations when selecting local vendors.
  - The findings will help inform the council's future priorities, committee work, and strategies for strengthening the regional food system.
  - Gabe acknowledged **Juniper** and **Susanna Odom (Working Landscapes)** for assisting with compiling and analyzing the survey data.

  Wykia provided an update on planning for the Regional Economic Development Summit, scheduled for October 8 at McGregor Hall. The summit will focus on tourism and agritourism and will feature a **Rooted Regional Marketplace** highlighting products grown, raised, and made throughout the five-county region. Approximately 30 vendor spaces will be available for farmers and agricultural producers. Board members were encouraged to promote the opportunity through local agricultural networks and assist with recruiting vendors from across the region. Wykia noted that the marketplace will provide opportunities for producers to connect with regional leaders and the public while showcasing the role of agriculture in economic development. A weather contingency plan is in place to relocate the marketplace indoors if necessary.

- Ag Committee Updates: Agriculture Committee Report: Madeline reported that the Agriculture Committee met since the previous board meeting. She shared information provided by Alejandra regarding farm safety programming available through the NC Agromedicine Institute. The committee discussed opportunities to partner with the Institute to offer regional farm safety workshops focused on emergency response, first

aid, bleeding control, tourniquet use, and CPR training for agricultural producers. Members discussed the possibility of hosting regional trainings to serve multiple counties and expanding future programming to include farmer wellness, injury prevention, and health education initiatives. The board also discussed outreach efforts and opportunities to involve youth agricultural organizations such as 4-H and FFA in future programming.

Program Updates

USDA funding, AgVentures, Food and Health Summit, Finding the Funds for Farmers workshop, farm dinner, July 1 grant deadline discussed.

Action Items

Email corrected bylaws; promote grant deadlines/events; distribute flyers; continue outreach; confirm Secretary appointment.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at approximately 11:38 AM. Post-adjournment: Alejandra willing to serve as Secretary if Korita declines.