

WWFSP OPEN STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT

LUNCH & LEARN

**Aba Kiser (she/they),
WWFSP Steering Committee Facilitator**

**Mardi Solomon,
WWFSP Administrative Support**

June 13, 2024



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Open Steering Committee Meeting Report

February 8th, 2024



Funding for WWFSP Steering Committee activities was made possible by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service through grant AM2001XXXXG103.

TODAY'S AGENDA

- **Welcome**
- **About the WWFSP Steering Committee**
- **About the February 8th Open Meeting & Report**
- **Feb. 8th Meeting Activities & Key Takeaways**
- **How to get involved**



**WESTERN WA FOOD SYSTEMS
PARTNERSHIP AND STEERING
COMMITTEE**

**Objective 1 of a USDA Regional Food
Systems Partnership Grant administered
by the Northwest Ag Business Center**

Sept 2021 - Sept 2024



WWFSP STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Aazan Ahmad, Farm to Food Bank Coordinator, Making A Difference Foundation
- Stephen Bramwell, Thurston County WSU Extension
- David Bulindah & Dickson Njeri, Wakulima USA
- Nora Carman-White, Thurston Conservation District
- Kate Delevan, Washington State Conservation Commission
- Dave Fenn, Southwest Washington Growers Cooperative
- Diane Fish, Kitsap Conservation District
- Bryant Her, WA Hmong Farmers Cooperative
- Micha Ide, WSDA
- Linda Lyshall, Snohomish Conservation District
- Caitlin Leck, San Juan Island Agricultural Guild
- Aslan Meade, Thurston County Economic Development Council
- Carol Miles, WSU Northwest Research & Extension Center
- Eric Popp, Carnation Farms
- Mike Poteet, Pierce County
- Allison Rinard, Whidbey Island Conservation District
- Andrew Stout, Full Circle Farm
- Cheryl Thornton, Madronami LLC
- Henry Wong, Business Impact NW / Food Business Resource Cntr.

Chair: Mike Peroni, [NABC](#)

Administrative Leadership:

Emily Manke,
Mardi Solomon,
Maxime Etile'

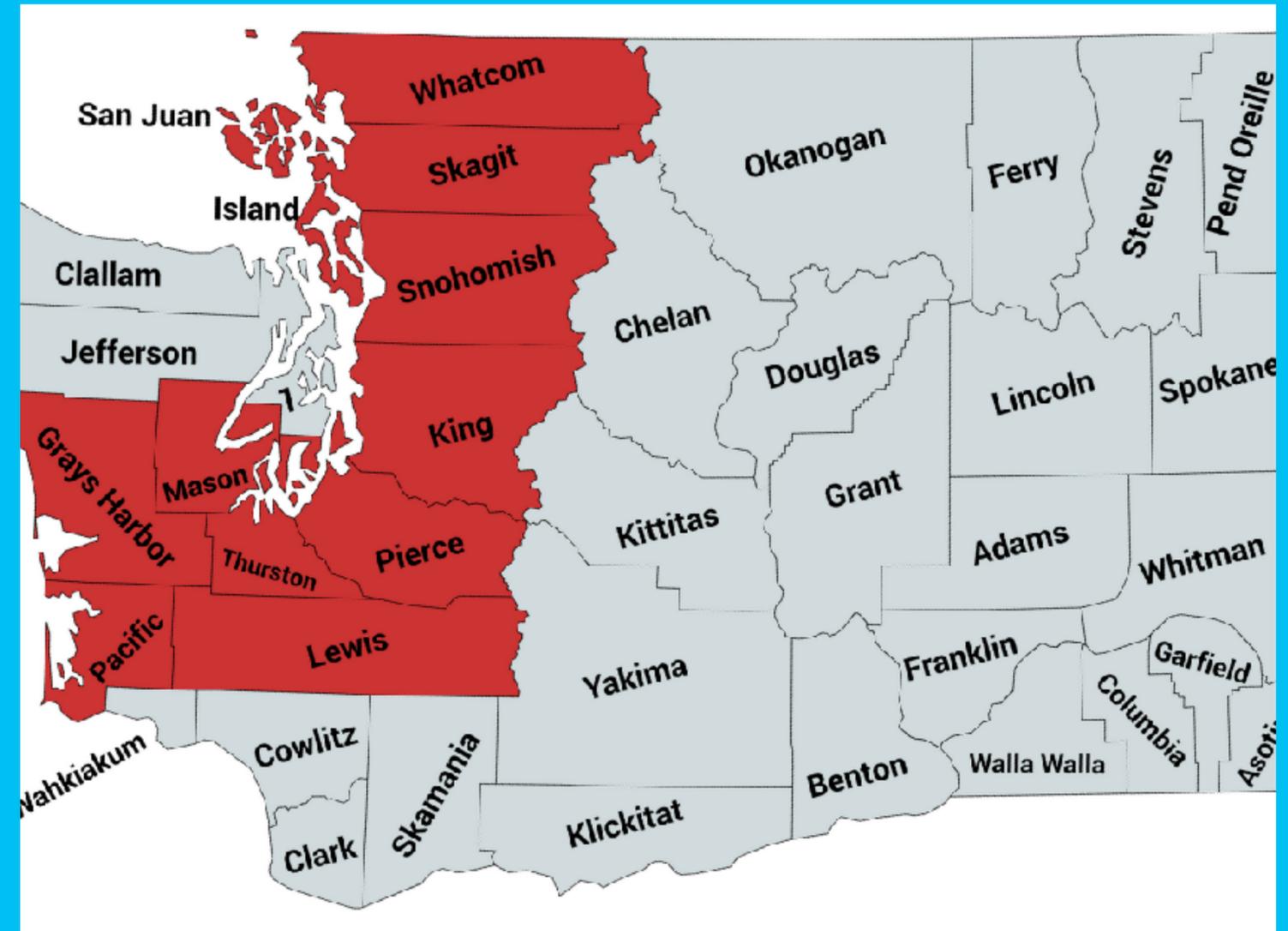
Facilitator: Aba Kiser



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MISSION (1)

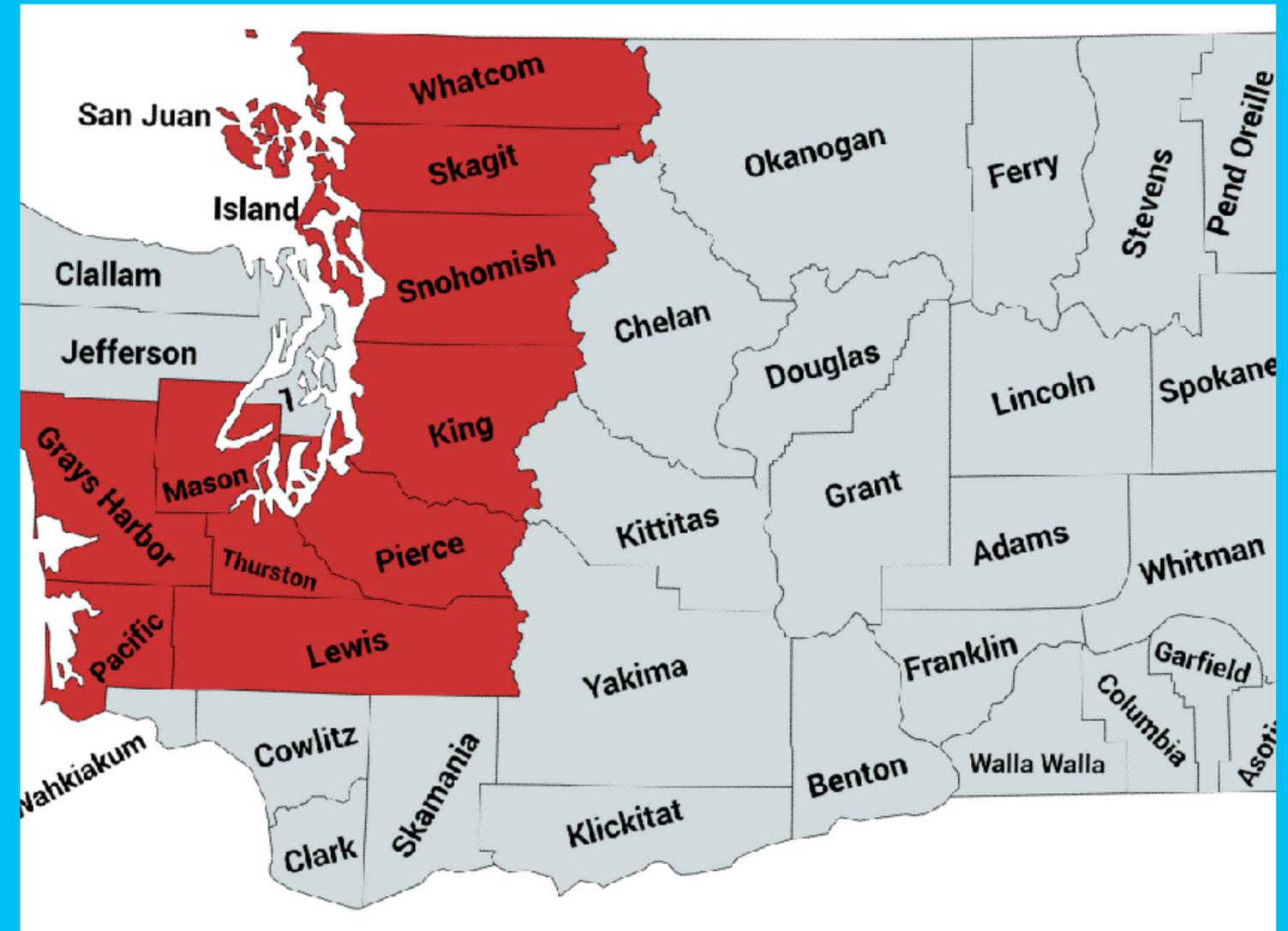
- Increase value-added food production.
- Regional collaboration - Advance a regional strategy aligned with a unified vision for agriculture development.
- Support of new infrastructure projects for value-added food processing and distribution - Enhance and improve efficiencies.



WWFSP STEERING COMMITTEE

MISSION (2)

- Provide direct technical assistance - Increase the effectiveness of agricultural development initiatives.
- Support business expansion and access to capital - Maximize public and private funds and finance opportunities by coordinating regionally.



WWFSP STEERING COMMITTEE GOALS



Map existing and proposed ag infrastructure.



Identify gaps and create solutions to fill those gaps.



Avoid or otherwise minimize competition among parties without hampering the ability to implement individual projects.



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OPEN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING FEB. 8TH, 2024

★ **MEAT**

★ **GRAINS**

★ **FOOD HUBS**



TO READ THE REPORT:

WWFSP.ORG

Read the report from the WWFSP Open Steering Committee Meeting Report from February 8, 2024 Below

[Read the Report](#)



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Open Steering Committee Meeting Report

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WHY READ THE REPORT?

- To save time/energy.
- To avoid recreating the wheel.
- To see a snapshot of ongoing/planned projects in the regional food system.
- To clarify where the infrastructure gaps are.
- To understand what is needed to move projects forward.
- To identify potential partners.
- To inform a policy/advocacy agenda.





ACTIVITIES & KEY THEMES:

Participants mapped food systems infrastructure related to grains, meats, food hubs and other projects, identifying various stages of development and resources needed to move these projects forward.



- Communication, coordination, and collaboration among food system entities
- Impact of existing public-private partnerships
- Funding challenges and opportunities
- Workforce development needs
- Equipment scalability
- Waste disposal challenges
- Role of policy and advocacy

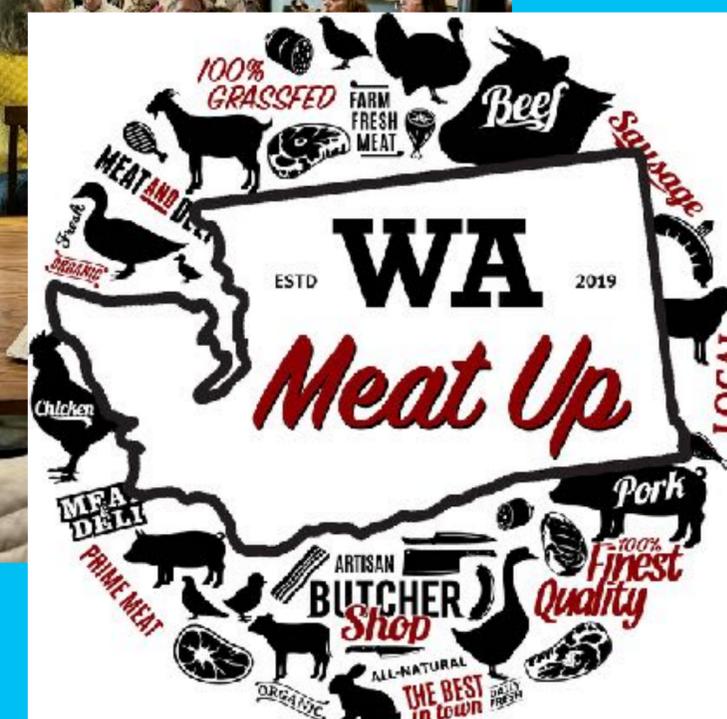
KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Public-private partnerships are critical.
- USDA & WSDA funding has been vital, policy & advocacy work is needed to maintain this source.
- Technical assistance from NABC, WSDA, Business Impact NW, and others are effective.
- Market analysis and feasibility studies are needed.
- Workforce challenges are persistent. (Recruitment, training, raising wages, etc.)
- Equipment for food production and processing must be scale appropriate.
- Models for sharing equipment can help small-scale producers.



KEY TAKEAWAYS: MEAT

- USDA loans and custom meat sales bolster the meat economy.
- Waste management is a challenging issue that will benefit from a coordinated approach.
- Infrastructure investments for custom sales are needed.
- Advocacy is essential for securing governmental support in the absence of recurring WSDA regional meat funding.
- Communication, coordination, mentorship, and regulatory funding (NWMPPA's apprenticeship program and the WA Meat-Up) are necessary to navigate challenges.



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KEY TAKEAWAYS: GRAINS

- Scale-appropriate infrastructure is vital
- Policy at state and local levels is needed.
- Transition to Organic Partnership Program could benefit grain growers with adjusted parameters.
- Grain production requires a specialized skill set which is less available than other systems.
- Collaborative partnerships and cooperative models are driving innovation (SW WA Grain Project).
- Consumer education and comprehensive local and national market analysis are crucial.



Southwest Washington GRAIN PROJECT

SW WA Growers Cooperative

Producer Payments:

Grain: \$100,500.00

Food Hub: \$44,000.00

600 metric tons in 2020

1350 metric tons in 2021



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KEY TAKEAWAYS: FOOD HUBS

- Financial support (We Feed WA, WSDA grants, USDA-RD VAPG and USDA-AMS LFPP) is crucial.
- Food safety protocols, bookkeeping, business technical assistance and grant writing assistance is crucial.
- Assistance is required to secure funding for labor-related expenses, access to angel investors, and reframing the narrative around Food Hubs for food security.
- Food Hubs require streamlined operational processes (efficient invoicing systems, EBT access, Local Food Marketplace (LFM)).
- Regulatory advocacy for supportive policies.
- Establishing shared Food Hub standards.
- Essential infrastructure, common communication systems, and workforce development initiatives are pivotal.



CONCLUSION



Collaboration, innovation, workforce development, and regulatory advocacy are essential.



Challenges require concerted efforts from stakeholders across the grains, meat, and food hub sectors.



Advocating for policy changes, securing funding opportunities, and supporting initiatives aimed at addressing workforce, infrastructure, and organizational development needs is essential.



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BY WORKING TOGETHER, WE CAN CREATE A
MORE RESILIENT, SUSTAINABLE, AND EQUITABLE
FOOD SYSTEM FOR WESTERN WASHINGTON.



READ THE REPORT:

WWFSP.ORG

- Share the report with others.
- Fill out [Lunch & Learn Evaluation](#).
- Stay tuned for fall Lunch & Learn series.
- Sign up for WWFSP e-news: [WWFSP.org](#).



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THANK YOU

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