

**CALS Strategic Planning Meeting – Listening Session #11**  
**Madison County Extension Center, Marshall, NC**  
**February 8, 2013**

This document is a summary of ideas that surfaced during a Listening Session of 79 participants on February 8, 2013. The session focused on six questions to guide the discussion. You are encouraged to review this document and consider the themes that are emerging from this session. This is the original language used by groups as they discussed the questions (it has not been edited). As the listening sessions continue, these lists of ideas will be consolidated into major themes.

**Question 1** - What do you see as the three most significant POSITIVE trends on the horizon for your area of work over the next five years?

- Local food movement
- Safe traditional/organic ag practices
- Increase innovation (i.e. permaculture, mushrooms, agritourism)
- Trend toward sustainable food production
- More informed public
- Increase population
- Buy local (creates demand)
- Focus on healthy eating
- Diversity of crops
- Market improvement
- NCSU extension efforts (research) for WNC commodities
- Environmental consciousness (green-ness)
- Technology, markets, 4-H
- Interest is growing in local and organic foods
- Growing interest in ag related careers and education
- Cattle prices (current) are carrying farmers' survival
- Increase food production
- Demand local food and diverse crop production
- Technology

**Question 2** – What do you see as the three most significant NEGATIVE trends on the horizon for your area of work over the next five years?

- Water quality-development, clean water
- Increase of GMO & loss of diversity
- Lack of funding
- Increase population over consumption
- Cuts in education

- Subsidizing grains instead of fruits and vegetables
- Labor shortage
- Out-of-touch government regulations
- Too expensive to make a living
- Loss of access/cost of agricultural land
- Oppressive government regulation for small producer
- International/national competition
- Funding, parent involvement with their children in agriculture and like skilled activities
- Hard to reach ever youth (screen time, sports)
- Contract farming issues
- Generic engineering issues
- Loss of farm land and loss of labor
- Reproduction land and money resources
- Interest in agriculture
- Up rise in population

**Question 3** – How would you define the purpose of CALS today and in the near future (next 5 years)?

- Prepare students in all aspects of agriculture (org. traditional etc.)
- Safe research & delivering of results to consumers
- Increase urban ag
- Local leadership programs for youth
- More research on sustainable and organic, small direct market farms
- Economic development for rural communities
- Local leadership programs for youth
- More emphasis on good agricultural practices
- Give students tools needed in ag field
- Research
- Sustainable strategies for pests
- Follow the land grant mission
- Keep research farms active and funded
- Educate current and future farmers, food processors and distributors because the future is depending on us
- Unbiased research
- Ag education (post-secondary) made available at local level
- Increase organic methodology research
- Educate youth
- Provide resources

**Question 4** – What do you see as the 1 to 3 greatest opportunities for CALS over the next 5 years?

- Helping grow economy by focusing on issues in 2&3

- Raise awareness of waste of natural resources
- Increase awareness among organic , traditional, and natural producers & consumers
- Continued access of high speed technology in remote rural areas
- Partnership of CALS and community colleges for technology training with food to table operations
- Provide/create incubators for new opportunities
- Funding local programs
- Work with high schools and lower levels
- Research based on farmers' needs
- Development of value added crops/new uses for crops
- New methods for sharing information
- Distance learning and to support youth in agriculture related areas
- Need for unbiased, independent research (current trend in research slants toward corporate farms & price supported products)
- Growing industry
- Diversity
- Funding

**Question 5** – What do you see as the 1 to 3 greatest challenges for CALS over the next 5 years?

- Avoid one size fits all science
- Corporate money swaying research
- Funding
- Fastest changing agriculture system in history
- Changes in weather patterns
- Funding
- Keep the small farms
- Recognize difference between mountain and flat land agriculture
- Funding for research-allocating limited funds w/o shorting mountains
- More boots on the ground
- Ag awareness, media support
- Preparing youth for employable future
- Improve marketing to today's youth
- Funding
- Legislation
- High demand in agriculture
- Recruitment

**Question 6** – How can CALS best help your area of interest (subject, constituency, program, etc.) over the next 5 years?

- Advocate for producers
- Increase research holistic approaches
- Advocacy education and research in all areas

- Continued support of extension
- Solicit ongoing input from county extension programs
- Support extension
- Encourage student interest
- Conduct research to help farmers
- Continue research & field demonstration efforts
- Increase priority of specialty crops: grapes, hops, Christmas trees and local produce
- Transition from community to major college
- Honeybee decline research
- Continued support of NCCE
- Building/developing disease resistant organic cultivars
- Curriculum updates
- Programs and partnerships