

# Discussion Group: Profitability & Policy

## **Assets**

- MILKCO in Asheville, processing/bottling facility for milk
- Blue Ridge Ventures/ Family Central
- Farms
- Growing season that compliments other regions
- ECO, NROG, Charles Church
- ASAP, BRWIA
- Aware and supportive community
- Great farmers' market in Boone, Asheville
- Money from tourism and Floridians (high end market)
- Agritourism is popular
- ASU volunteers, research, funding
- Warren Wilson
- Extension, 4-H, Ag teachers in High Schools
- Section 521 Agricultural Cooperative option
  - Achieve economy of scale
- Media outlets: Mtn Times. High Country Press, Citizen Times, Mtn Express

## **Barriers**

- USDA not supportive of small farms
- Lack of local policies to support small farms
- State level: no sales tax exemption for 1-3 years (high start-up costs)
- County: policies not applicable to scale of farms in WNC
- Lack of meat and dairy facilities

- Corporate concentration of food industry
- Lack of knowledge in public sphere of food policy and importance of food systems
- Public bio laws @ institutions

## **Questions**

- How to make acreage profitable and keep it as natural as possible?
- How can we get funding to build our local food system/infrastructure?
- How can we affect policy at the local level?
- Who are our allies in local government?
- How do we link existing orgs and infrastructure to create a local food system?
- How can we raise the value of food to true cost accounting & keep it affordable to all income levels?
- How can we get policy makers and politicians involved?
- How can we involve the general population in this dialogue?