Local Food Advisory Committee Listening Session
at the Sustainable Farming Association Annual Conference
Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, Chaska, MN
February 16, 2013
Session conducted by Jane Jewett and Helene Murray of MISA

The listening session began with large poster-sized sheets of paper taped to the wall in the front of the room. A brainstorming session was held for about 10 minutes: participants tossed out ideas of what the main issues are around local meat sales & processing, and these were written up on the papers. That was followed by another 10 minutes of discussion of the various ideas brought forward. Finally in the last five minutes, each participant was given four sticky-dots and asked to go “vote” for the most important issues on the poster sheets.

Results of that vote:

Not enough inspected poultry processing -> potential for buyers to advocate/chip in for more inspectors

 7 green dots

On-farm or other location self-processing of a goat. *Discussion about farmers being able to serve ethnic/immigrant communities*

 2 green dots

Need for data on illness outbreaks involving local food sales *Suspicion among farmers that some regulations aren’t based on data showing a problem with local food*

 5 green dots

Scheduling Inspectors -> Funding

MN Economic Development involvement? *Discussion of need for sufficient inspectors to make sure plants are covered; it’s hard for farmers and processors to re-schedule*

 6 green dots

International border – bring inspectors in from Canada?

More advertising of availability of processing info *Discussion about lack of visibility for the lists of processing plants on the MISA and MDA websites; should get more info out to Extension, Minnesota Grown, Farmers’ Markets, SFA*

 4 green dots

Travel Distance to processing

 4 green dots

Custom Exempt *discussion about need for information to help farmers maximize use of custom-exempt plants; interest in enabling legal on-farm processing of meats*

 8 green dots