

Food and Place in Vermont



What is Taste of Place?

Vermont's take on *terroir*

The Taste of Place Initiative aims to:

- Recognize products that are of high quality and unique to Vermont
- Create producer driven tools and standards to promote and market place based products
- Find new ways to promote and



Working Sessions

October 1 – Burlington

- 57 participants, including 20 producers
- Presentations and discussions focused on process and opportunities for place based foods and designation systems
- Maple, cheese, wine, apple, and meat producers met in industry specific groups

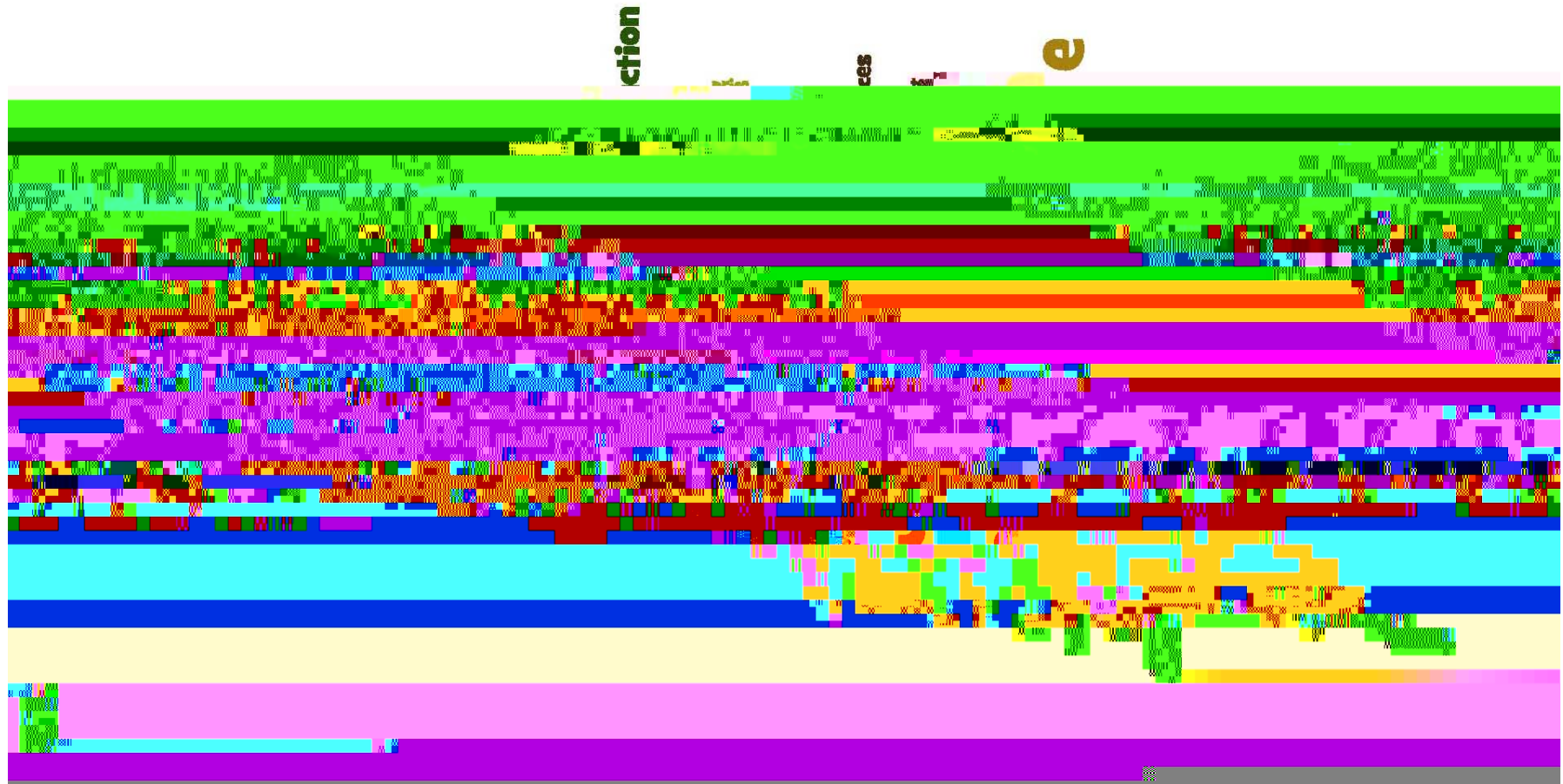
November 18 – Randolph Center

- 32 participants, including 18 producers
- Group discussion on where producers see cooperation taking place and research, tools, and policy needs
- Discussion focused on consistent quality, the importance of quality raw products, and self regulation





The Discussion







Industry Specific Issues

Apple: Focus on in state sales or export; fresh product or value added; questions about economic advantage to a



What We Heard

Research action items

- Perform economic analyses for



Producer Action

Producer discussions and action

- Maple association merger and continued discussion of best management practices and certification
- Vermont Grape and Wine Council Taste of Place Committee
- Cheese makers discussions on self regulation and standards to insure quality and safety
- Apple producers plan to bring up topic at February meeting

Recommended next step:

- **Strategic facilitation for producer groups to develop shared standards and priorities for moving forward**



Supporting Research

Seal of Quality

- Recent research into Vermont's Seal of Quality and an investigation of state labeling and marketing efforts around the country illustrated that



Supporting Research

Market research

- Recent studies suggest that a place based designation system for Vermont food products should originate Vermont



Complementary Research

Tools and strategies

- Missouri Regional Cuisines Project
- California's regional marketing groups
- New Jersey state label (Jersey Fresh, Jersey Grown, Jersey Seafood)
- Concord Grape Belt
- Oregon and Oklahoma nonagricultural state agencies regulate state label
- Wisconsin "Healthy Grown"
- American Origin Products (Napa Wine, Idaho Potato, Kona Coffee, Vidalia Onion)

State sponsored programs

- Goals range from marketing campaigns to promoting culture to increasing production and consumption of local products.
- As of 2009, 64% of state-sponsored programs did not have minimum requirements for a product to claim the state's label.

* see full report for more examples *

Taste of Place Report

Expert Recommendations

Elizabeth Barham, University of Arkansas

- Focus on maple and cheese and use those designations to reinforce other sectors
- Provide support/assistance to producer groups to develop and articulate standards
- Look at collaborating with other northeast states and Quebec to create a globally significant region

Quality and Standards

Producer group roles

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Recommendation

Based on a careful analysis of the outcomes of the producer working sessions, the expert recommendations, and extensive research into tools and strategies used for place based designation systems around the world, it is clear that the next step is **strategic facilitation for producer groups to develop shared standards and priorities for moving forward.**

“Let the industry groups come up with their own standards that will continue to perpetuate the quality.” – *Jacques Couture*

“The state can’t oversee quality, but can encourage economic vitality, environmental stewardship, and the preservation of the working landscape.”
– *Amy Trubek*



Strategic Facilitation for Producer Groups





Thank You

Working Session Attendees

74 producers, researchers, legislators, visiting experts, and others working in the agricultural sector

Working Session Advisory Committee

- **Koi Boynton**, Vermont Agency of Agriculture
- **Paul Costello**, Vermont Council on Rural Development
- **Jacques Couture**, Couture's Maple Shop and

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