Building Capacity for Local Food Systems
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For more information on Small Farms, visit our website at: http://smallfarms.ifas.ufl.edu or contact your local County Extension Agent.

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Breaking Through & Gaining Traction
Many Programs

- Agriculture Assets
- Research
- Marketing
- Businesses
- Community-based Food Systems
- Youth
Significant Issues across the country…

• What works? Trends of consolidation for inputs and outputs;

• A systemic challenge- we can’t just play to our strength and expect a winner;

• Creative solutions needed- but they are going to challenge us to get out of our boxes;

• Things are more complicated-- regulations, verifications, traceability;
Solutions may bring together many people with different interests

- Food business innovators & agro-entrepreneurs;
- Public Officials- County, Regional, Urban Foodshed Planner Economic Development Commissions;
- Health practitioners & health insurance industry leaders;
- Farm Bureau, other agricultural NGOs;
- Restaurants, Slow Food, Chefs, “foodies”;
- Environmental partners- land preservation and conservation arrangements.
Taking Local Seriously

• While there is a global food market that is very, very strong when everything works right…

• There are many economic and social reasons to look to build a supply and demand system here…
Changing Consumer Landscape

- Consumer interest: local, sustainable, organic, fresh

- 70 percent of consumers want to know where their food comes from and would pay more for locally grown food if they could find it (packaged facts, 2007)
Multiplier effect

The more times a dollar circulates in a given geography and the faster it circulates before leaving, the more income wealth and jobs it creates.
Multiplier effect:
How many times a dollar cycles through a locale

• For an area where large farms prevail (the multiplier effect is 1.4 (ISU data)
• For an area where small farms prevail (assuming more local markets) the multiplier effect is 2.6 (UW data)
• Local businesses are more likely to use local suppliers..(and labor, and utilities, and taxes...).
Multiplier effect:
For every $100 spent at your:

- Average grocery store: $25 re-spent locally
- Local Food Economy grocery: $52 re-spent locally
- Farmers market: $62 re-spent locally
- Average restaurant: $31 re-spent locally
- Local Food Economy restaurant: $79 re-spent

Why Local Linkages Matter: Sustainable Seattle
Other Benefits

- Job creation and economic development
- Money circulates in the community, region, state
- Green space and farm viability
- Carolinians enhanced health and nutrition: reduced health care costs
- Decreased use of fossil fuels and reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Enhanced environmental quality
- Enhanced food security & access for all NC
Changing Agricultural Landscape

• Energy Issues

- Conventional fertilizer prices will rise significantly
- Transportation costs will rise
- Currently about 10 to 15 calories of fossil fuel energy are used to create 1 calorie of food.
- Average distance food travels in the US from production-to-consumption is 1546 miles.
Changing Agricultural Landscape

• Loss of Farmers

- Average age of farmers in NC is 57;
- There are now more people in prison than on farms;
- In NC, 100,000 farms in 1976 and 48,000 farms in 2008;
- Implications for viable rural communities?
Public Health Interest

- Increasingly, trends in obesity and diabetes are being tied to the current food system.
- Unequal access and health disparities exist
Health Long Term Economic Impacts…

• $147 billion currently spent to treat obesity,
• $116 billion to treat diabetes
• 30 percent of the increase in health care spending over the past 20 years has been attributed to the soaring rate of obesity.
• Think about our **kids school lunch** choices and the long-term impact on North Carolina health care costs.
Building a Local Food Economy in North Carolina

Farm to Fork

CEFS
CENTER for ENVIRONMENTAL FARMING SYSTEMS

NCSU | NCA&TSU | NCDA&CS

www.cefs.ncsu.edu

THE FARMING SYSTEMS Cultivating Thriving Communities & Sustainable Farms
Across the State We Saw:
Community Leadership, Business Entrepreneurship, Regional Planning

Southeastern NC Food Systems Project

NC Agricultural Development & Farmland Preservation Trust Fund
But….

- Lack of *coordination* and
- *Piecemeal* approach brings *Lack of* momentum.
- No Strategic Plan to move the state’s Local Food Economy forward but;
- Funders & investors wanted to know where to put their money- what would be successful?
The Farm to Fork Local Foods Initiative

- Established advisory committee (80+)
- Regional meetings across the state (6)
- Working Issues Teams established (11)
- “Game Changer Ideas developed”
- Sold out Statewide Summit (400+ attendees)
- An active listerv (1000+ subscribers)
- Directory of food system activities ([www.ncfoodnet.com](http://www.ncfoodnet.com))
- Publication of State Action Guide
State Action Guide

- Background and statistics
- Useful facts in making the case for local foods
- Description of issues faced
- Prioritized state and local action items
- NC models
Key Components to creating a winning Beginning Farmer Program

• You identify what will work in your counties and region;
• You assess your strengths and weaknesses as to what you can bring to addressing the issue;
• You connect with and use the resources of others who have strengths you do not have;
• Work together to make the working together work because it must work.
Cooperative Extension Partnership
Local Food Coordinators

- Respond to businesses signing up
- Help promote local foods in their county and help individuals signing up locate them
- Assist with community-based interest in establishing local markets
- Distribute information about the campaign
- Assist farmers in connecting with new markets
- Enter events and articles on their website
- Assist with addressing barriers
- Assist with data collection
- Serve local foods at their meetings!
Exploring distribution chain connections

- Compass Group in Charlotte;
- New Hanover Regional Medical Center;
- Blue Cross/ Blue Shield;
- Farm to School Initiative;
- Local food retailers- Loews, Piggly-Wiggly;
- Whole Foods Market;
- Conversations with food distributors- US food Service, MDI…
Issues…

- Quantity and Quality (even when distributors are willing to build from seasonality and local production limits);
- Risks of marketing;
- Food hubs and aggregation points, cold chain and HACCP;
- GAP and other food safety issues;
- Liability insurance requirements;
- Economic viability for producers;
- Labor availability???
Issues…

• Farmers of tomorrow…
• Infrastructure options- building additional links in sustainable local food chain- as Eastern Carolina Organics has done between producers and restaurants and certain retailers along I-40 corridor
• Value-adding- addressing reducing handling costs on final end user…
Making things happen...

• Recognize and work with partners who can make it happen, i.e. the health industry, public health providers and ...

• Recognize the strategic depth of these issues. They are way too big for just one county Extension program, or even Extension as an organization.

• Learn from others- VT, PA, CA, WI, NY

• Be patient. This work is going to take years.
Some References

- [http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu](http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu)
- Visit the Placer-Nevada County CA website to see an entire Extension Program design (including CRAFT); [http://ceplacer.ucdavis.edu/](http://ceplacer.ucdavis.edu/)
- Visit the Rogue River OR Farm Corps: [http://roguefarmcorps.org/](http://roguefarmcorps.org/)
- Visit the CA land based learning website youth high school and college students, beginning farmer [http://landbasedlearning.org/](http://landbasedlearning.org/)