

Food Connections

Capital Area Community Food Profile



Prepared by:
The C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems
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Preface

This Community Food Profile is intended to give readers a better sense of how producing, processing, distributing, retailing, preparing and eating food influence and interconnect a community's economic, ecological and social wellbeing.

We hope this sketch of the local food system will stimulate you to consider your relationship to food and how your food purchases affect your community. Use the Profile to better understand how agriculture and food fit into your work and your daily life. When we base our food choices and food-related activities in our community, multiple benefits are possible. Allow the stories in this Profile to suggest new – and perhaps unexpected – partners as you continue to make your community a better place to work and live.

This Profile focuses on the Lansing tri-county area. However, it is our hope that it becomes a model and inspiration to develop similar food system profiles for communities across Michigan.

“A human community, too, must collect leaves and stories, and turn them to account. It must build soil, and build that memory of itself – in lore and story and song – that will be its culture. These two kinds of accumulation, of local soil and local culture, are intimately related.”

Wendell Berry



**Prepared by the C. S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at Michigan State University
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The **C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems** at Michigan State University works to support people and communities as they develop sustainable, community-based food systems. As public scholars, we serve as a resource for the development of knowledge, programs and policy.

Available on the web at: <http://www.mottgroup.msu.edu>

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Circle of Connections

This Community Food Profile uses the “circle of connections” diagram to focus attention on the connections between food and farming in the Capital Area. Let the diagram be your lens to see new opportunities and partners – new connections – that will make your community a better place to work and live.

Legend

-  **Inner ring** – food system components
-  **Outer ring** – community-based food system outcomes



Land Use and Farming
page 7



Farmers' Markets
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Food Security and
Community Programs
page 20

Where does your food come from?

Everyone in our community has connections to food. Food is essential to our health and well-being. It plays a central role in the social networks and cultural traditions that help define community. Agriculture is an important industry in Michigan and in the Capital Area consisting of Clinton, Eaton and Ingham counties.

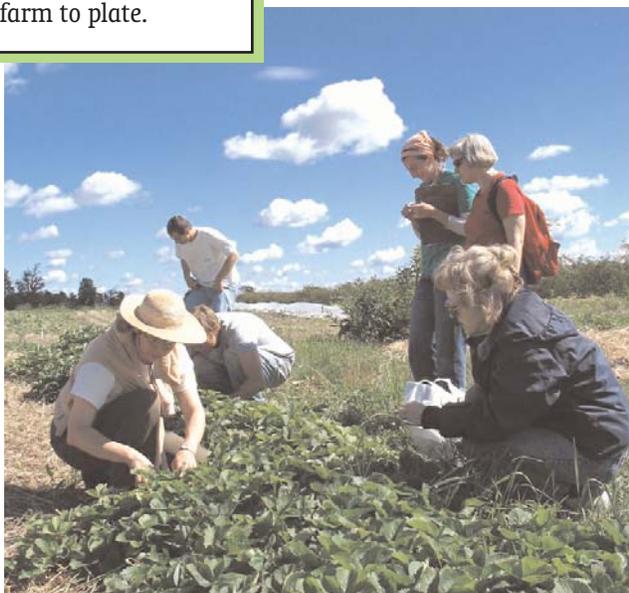
However, communities rarely see opportunities for development in the food and farming connections that make up their local food system. We see a globalized and industrialized food system, often leaving farmers and consumers separated by distance and understanding. Produce eaten in the Midwest travels an average of more than 1,500 miles, and the typical consumer doesn't imagine his steak as "livestock," let alone appreciate the resources used in its production.

Yet we can address current pressing issues as diverse as obesity, urban sprawl and economic development in part by paying closer attention to our food – what we eat; where it comes from; how it is produced, processed and distributed. Evaluating our collective food habits can open a host of new opportunities.

A Food System

includes the who, what, where, when, why and how of our food – from farm to plate.

This guide maps some of the food and farming connections in the Capital Area through stories, photos, facts and figures.



Why community-based food systems?

Community-based food systems emphasize relationships between growers and eaters, retailers and distributors, processors and preparers of food. They give priority to local resources and focus on local markets. Social equity and environmental sustainability are emphasized along with efficiency and profitability, and food security is a right and responsibility of all community members. Most importantly, they rely on the participation of well-informed consumers who have a stake and a voice in how and where their food is produced, processed and sold.

When local agriculture and food production are integrated in community, food becomes part of a community's problem-solving capacity rather than just a commodity that's bought and sold.

By eating local and developing connections among local consumers, farmers, processors and retailers, we can have profound effects on the health and wellbeing of our community.

Using this guide

Usually, we think of food as following a linear path from farm to table – produced on farms, processed in factories, distributed by trucks and purchased by consumers at grocery stores or restaurants. Thinking, instead, of the food system as a circle reminds us that we are all linked in multiple ways (see diagram, page 4). By paying attention to these connections and, when possible, strengthening them within our community, we begin to see that a host of outcomes are possible. The outer ring in the Circle of Connections diagram suggests some outcomes of a community-based food system (you can probably think of others). The following page details their importance.

Everyone – regardless of economic status, ethnicity or political bent; whether economic development professional, farmer, grocery retailer, public health advocate or eater – has a stake in the food system. It is indeed reasonable to ask, **“what type of food system do I want for my community?”** This Community Food Profile will help you answer that question.

Outcomes

Here are some of the issues a community-based food system can influence. Which ones affect you?

Small and medium scale farm viability

If current trends continue, Michigan will lose 71 percent of farms that are between 50 and 500 acres by 2040, representing nearly half of all Michigan farms. In the Capital Area, this would translate to 1120 farms – 1/3 of the area's total. This loss is not just farms but also farmland, farmers, skills and infrastructure necessary for long-term food production capability. Many studies have demonstrated the importance of small- and medium-scale farms in maintaining the social, economic and environmental health of rural communities.

Environmental Stewardship

Food production is inextricably linked to the environment. However, the intensification and industrialization of agriculture over the past 50 years have resulted in some practices that are detrimental to environmental health. A community-based food system highlights the connection between food and environment, creating opportunities for consumers to recognize and value the environmental services provided by local farms, such as water filtration and wildlife habitat.

Jobs

In a time when job outsourcing is a painful reality for many communities, local food production and processing can create significant numbers of stable jobs. Like “Buy American” campaigns, “Buy Local Food” campaigns can foster an understanding that purchasing choices affect the economic well-being of people in our community.

Healthy Individuals

Michigan is the midst of an obesity epidemic. Sixty-two percent of Michigan's adults and 11 percent of high school students are overweight.* In 2003, obesity-related medical costs in the state totaled \$2.9 billion. Most people become overweight from inadequate physical activity and poor diet. Community-based food systems encourage healthy lifestyles by making fresh, delicious fruits, vegetables and other foods more accessible. Healthier citizens mean reduced healthcare premiums, making Michigan communities more business friendly.



Economic Development

People in the Lansing tri-county area spend \$1.1 billion annually on food and beverages in stores, restaurants and other eating establishments. The vast majority of these food dollars are spent on products originating outside the area. Community-based food systems capitalize on opportunities for entrepreneurial farmers and small businesses to add value to local agricultural products and keep a larger portion of each food dollar within the local economy.

Farmland Preservation

Community and state efforts are under way to preserve farmland from the growing threat of urban sprawl. Preserving farmland, however, must go hand-in-hand with assuring farm viability. Re-localizing the food system – relying more on local and regional sources for our food needs – creates valuable markets that help keep farmers farming on farmland and increases awareness of the importance of preserving local farmland.

Community and Social Vitality

At the heart of a community-based food system are relationships that build social capital, strengthen social networks and form the basis of community identity. Food is a deep-rooted aspect of our social interactions. In fact, the Latin root of the words companion and company means “with bread.” Food is an inclusive focal point for rebuilding community, in urban as well as rural settings, and especially between the two.

*Source: Michigan Surgeon General's 2004 Health Status Report

Land Use and Farming

Growing Food

Farm Viability

Environmental Stewardship

Economic Development

Farmland Preservation

Community Vitality

Lansing is the urban center of a largely agricultural region. In 2002, the tri-county area had about 3400 farms, representing 62 percent of the total land. But like many Michigan communities, the Capital Area is experiencing urban sprawl pressure. From 1960 to 1990, land in the area was developed at twice the rate of population growth. Much of this development has occurred in rural areas outside existing urban service areas. From 1978 to 1999, for every acre of new urbanized land, five acres of new rural residential land were developed. As the population projections in the table below indicate, such growth is expected to continue.

Across the region, efforts are under way to curb the rapid expansion of suburban and rural residential land use. For example, the Tri-county Regional Planning

Commission is working with local governments to focus growth in urban fringes while preserving farmland. However, preserving the area's farmland must go hand-in-hand with preserving the economic viability of local agriculture. Over the past 15 years, a consistent 55 to 60 percent of tri-county area farms have experienced net financial losses.

Increasing consumer demand for food that has been grown or raised in the region, and making these foods easily accessible for purchase, is one way to enhance the viability of local agriculture.

For the past fifty years, U.S. agriculture has been moving toward fewer and larger farms, and increasing specialization. The tri-county area is no exception.

Yet studies have repeatedly shown that a diversity of farms, including small- and medium-sized farms, is important to the social and economic health of rural communities. More small- and medium-sized farms mean more business operators and their families involved in community life. A greater diversity of farms can also provide more food choices. In many cases, smaller farms allow for better land stewardship – taking care of the ecological services that farmland provides. However, smaller farms struggle to compete in global “commodities” markets – tankers of milk, bulk grain, or mass-produced meat. Smaller farms thrive in specialty and niche markets – tailoring their production to meet changing consumer demands, adding value through processing, and selling locally grown food to local consumers. All farms in the community can benefit from developing differentiated products.



If current trends continue, Michigan will lose 70% of its mid-sized farms by 2040.

Capital Area Farm Facts

- **3418 farms in 2002**
- **679,152 acres in farmland in 2002**
- **44% of farm operators worked off-farm more than 200 days in 2002**
- **\$203 million in agricultural products sold by farms in 2002:**
 - 43% from livestock and their products
- **Farms over 1000 acres increased 52%, from 92 farms in 1987 to 140 in 2002**
- **Farms of 100-500 acres decreased 36%, from 1417 in 1987 to 901 in 2002**
- **From 1987 to 2002, acres in:**
 - Corn increased 10%
 - Soybeans increased 112%
 - Vegetables decreased 51%

Source: 1987-2002 USDA Census of Agriculture

Projected Population Growth

| County | 1995 | 2000 | 2035 | 1995-2035 %Growth |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Clinton | 62,012 | 64,754 | 94,454 | 52% |
| Eaton | 98,952 | 103,654 | 142,123 | 44% |
| Ingham | 282,763 | 279,326 | 338,605 | 20% |
| Total Tri-County | 443,727 | 447,734 | 575,182 | 30% |

Source: Tri-county Regional Planning Commission, Trends: 2020 and Beyond

Land Use and Farming continued

The trend to fewer, larger farms is not inevitable – it can be changed. But it is consumers who need to act. More food purchasing at a fair price from small- and medium-sized, diversified farms will allow those farms to stay in business.

Michigan agriculture is one of the more diverse in the nation. It would indeed be possible to supply nearly all of our nutritional needs in-state, if not from the Capital Area. **Yet most of the food eaten in central Michigan comes from out of state and, increasingly, from overseas.** Some 60 years ago, a diversity of fruits, grains and livestock was grown on area farms. In 1940, 35 percent of the farms in Clinton County produced apples, 85 percent had cattle, 75 percent had chickens and 65 percent had hogs. Corn was still king, but other grains – oats, rye, barley, wheat – were also grown. Such diversity is again possible if consumers choose to support it with their dollars.

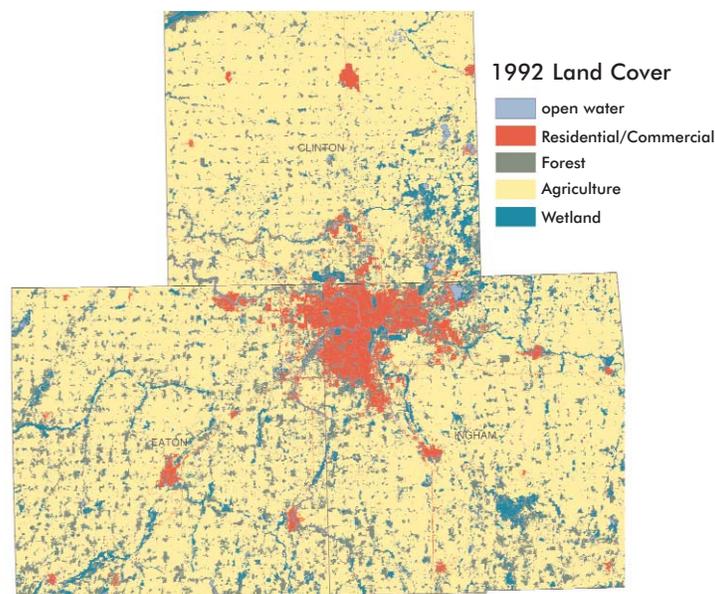
Estimates of the farmland required to supply a typical American diet range from 0.2 – 1.2 acres per person. To feed the tri-county area locally in 2035 will require between 115,000 and 690,000 acres – roughly the land we now farm.

Though the sprawl of urban populations into rural communities threatens farming, it also presents opportunities for farms to market directly to consumers. On-farm stores, u-pick, roadside stands, Farmers' Markets (page 10) and Community Supported Agriculture (page 16) are examples of how farmers can market their products directly. The dollar value of direct sales in

the tri-county area is still less than 1 percent of total agricultural sales, but that percentage has doubled every 5 years since 1992*. Nearly 8 percent of farms in the Lansing area (263 farms) reported some direct marketing in 2002, for a total direct market value of \$1.6 million. What would it take to increase the amount of direct-marketed agricultural sales to 10 percent?

*1987-2002 USDA Census of Agriculture

What impact would \$20 million, that is, 10 percent of current agricultural sales, have on the Lansing area economy if it stayed in the area and circulated through local businesses?



Source: USGS National Land Cover Data

What You Can Do

INDIVIDUALS:

Spend \$10 per week during the growing season at a farmers' market, CSA farm, or roadside farm stand.

COMMUNITY:

Develop a local food directory to help identify places to buy locally produced food in your community. See, for example, <http://www.buyappalachian.org/>

MUNICIPALITY:

Keep your community's food system in mind when making decisions about land use, planning and development.

Please Care for My Cow



John and Patti Warnke own a 40-acre farm outside St. Johns. They've launched a plan to support their family of seven on their acreage by milking 25 dairy cows. Even though the Warnkes' milking parlor and operation exceed legal standards of cleanliness, they do not ship or sell any milk.

Instead, they provide a service. The Warnkes operate a cow-share program called Our Farm and Dairy, L.L.C. They sell shares of their cow herd to people who want their own fresh milk. In addition to the

\$125 share price, share-owners pay the Warnkes a monthly boarding fee for feeding, milking and caring for the cows. In return, the share-owners have access to a portion of the milk – usually 2 gallons every week.

“The people who come to our farm to participate in the cow-share program probably would have their own cows if they had the space and the ability and the time, and if they knew more

about it. They want that more than anything. We're helping them get that in a safe way,” says Patti.

In addition to boarding cows, the Warnkes sell pasture-raised beef and pork and eggs gathered from their hens to share-owners and neighbors. In the summer of 2004, they offered Farm Camp, an opportunity for kids to spend a few days experiencing farm life first-hand. But, as Patti puts it, “Mostly the crop we have is grass, so we'd be grass farmers.”

This commitment to grass is a lesson learned from

Patti's parents, Howard and Mary-Jo Straub, who operate a 100-cow grazing dairy down the road from the Warnkes. In the early 1990s, the Straubs, like most dairy farmers in Michigan, kept their cows indoors and fed them grain to maximize milk production. In 1994, however, the Straubs switched to a system known as management-intensive grazing which relies on the cows to harvest most of their own feed, in the form of pasture grass. Milk production dropped, but costs and workload dropped further. The Straubs started making money and their attitude toward farming changed. Their children quickly followed their lead. Three of their four children now operate grazing-based dairies – an encouraging statistic for the Lansing area's farming future.

The Warnkes' cow-share program has grown in its first year from five cows and 20 shares to 15 cows and 90 shares. While they still have a way to go to reach their goal of 250 shares, they remain optimistic. Health-conscious shareowners drive up to 90 minutes one-way to pick up their milk.

“I think they want to know where their food comes from. They're upset with the food industry today; they don't trust it,” says Patti.

Though they look forward to the day when farming on 40 acres will fully support their family, the Warnkes also recognize the less tangible values in their chosen lifestyle, such as knowing that they are helping people obtain a high degree of health, supporting other small, local businesses with their purchases, and sharing the thrill and miracle of a newborn calf with the whole family – and maybe even a few cow owners.

The average dairy herd in Clinton County has 215 cows. Most dairy cows in the county are on farms with more than 500 cows.



Farm Camp at Our Farm and Dairy.

Contact Information

Our Farm and Dairy and other local farms can be found at:
www.localharvest.org

Farmers' Markets

Distributing
Farm Viability
Healthy Individuals
Community Vitality

Around the country and across the region, farmers' markets offer a way for local farmers to connect directly with consumers. Fresh fruits and vegetables are the mainstay of farmers' markets, but locally produced meat, eggs, honey, maple syrup, baked goods, bedding plants and flowers, and craft items are often available.

By selling directly to consumers, farmers eliminate the middle man and maximize their profits. For many farmers, the direct connection with consumers gives them a deep sense of purpose and community. Consumers also benefit from a chance to buy the freshest food available from farmers they know and trust. Farmers' markets also generate economic benefits for the community. According to studies conducted in Oregon and Ontario, Canada, 40 to 60 percent of farmers' market customers also shop at neighboring

businesses before or after their visit to the market. In addition, spending at farmers' markets has a high multiplier effect – money circulates more times in the local economy before leaving.

Well-functioning farmers markets are vibrant social occasions, offering a meeting place and giving a community a sense of identity. The friendly, relaxed atmosphere of the market represents a valuable alternative to mainstream supermarket shopping.



Farmers' markets, like this one in Grand Ledge, offer a vibrant community meeting place.



Farmers' markets make fresh fruit and vegetables more accessible.

Capital Area Farmers' Markets

- **Allen Neighborhood Center**
 - Corner of Kalamazoo and Allen Sts., Lansing
 - June - Oct, Wed., 4:30 - 6:30pm
- **DeWitt**
 - corner of Main and Bridge Sts.
 - June -Oct, Sat., 8am - 12
- **Grand Ledge**
 - near Island Park
 - June - Oct, Sat., 8am - 12
- **Lansing City Market**
 - 333 North Cedar St.
 - year-round Tues., Thurs., Fri., Sat., 8am - 6pm.
- **Meridian Township**
 - 5151 Marsh Rd., Okemos
 - June - Oct., Sat., 8am - 2pm and July - Oct., Wed, 8am - 5pm.
- **St. John's**
 - West side of courthouse
 - July - Oct., Sat., 8am - 12
- **Williamston**
 - Corner of North Putnam and High Sts.
 - May - Oct., Thurs., 3 - 8pm



What You Can Do

INDIVIDUALS:

Shop regularly at your local farmers' market; tell others about it!

COMMUNITY:

Make your farmers' market a festive community event with music, cooking demonstrations, kids' activities.

MUNICIPALITY:

Sponsor a farmers market in your town center. See:

<http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/farmmarket.pdf>

Innovative Orchardist Seeks Market



When Jane Bush bought Apple Schram Orchard from her uncle 17 years ago, two things were clear: for personal health reasons, she would manage the orchard organically, and if she were going to make a living off the farm, she would need to do more direct sales of the apples.

Apple Schram is located on West Mount Hope Highway outside Charlotte, about 20 miles southwest of Lansing. Apples, cider, apple sauce, apple butter and other farm products are sold at the farm seasonally from September through the first of November, as well as through retail outlets in the Lansing, Ann Arbor and Detroit areas.

Jane reflected on her learning curve for growing and marketing organic fruits. In the days before the Alar scare, information and resources for organic orcharding were scarce. But customers also didn't expect organic fruit to look perfect. As the demand for organic food has grown, so have the resources available to the organic farmer – and customers' expectations.

"It's just really changed over the years. A lot of the organic fruit that we can grow in Michigan is very comparable, in terms of visual effects, to conventional," Jane says.



Both farmers and customers value the direct connection of a farmers' market.

Farmer's Egg Cooperative is currently made up of six egg producers within an hour's drive of Apple Schram. The other farmers supply the product and Jane provides distribution. The cooperative began with modest financial assistance from Michigan Integrated Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS). Banding together enables the farmers to maintain the consistent supply necessary to keep direct retail markets. But demand still outstrips supply.

But apples weren't the only thing consumers were looking for. Through her interactions with retail markets in southeastern Michigan, Jane saw that the supply of local free-range eggs wasn't consistent with a demand that was "just dripping off the trees." So in 1996, she formed an egg marketing cooperative. Grazing Fields, the brand name of the

In 2004, the Grand Ledge Chamber of Commerce contacted Jane to ask for help in organizing its farmers' market. After a shaky first season, members recognized that they didn't have farm connections. But the community demanded a farmers' market. So Jane secured a grant from the USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program to recruit farmers in the Lansing tri-county area interested in expanding their direct market sales.

Meanwhile, Jane continues to lead by example. In spring, 2004, Apple Schram erected a simple unheated hoophouse to extend its offerings of organically grown flowers and vegetables. Local organic fruits and veggies from Apple Schram, along with the wares of other farmers that Jane has enlisted, have brought new life to the Grand Ledge Farmers' Market. Apple Schram is also part of the farmers' market at the Allen Neighborhood Center on Lansing's east side. And Jane is excitedly transforming the old Apple Schram orchard into a new system of high-density plantings of low-vigor trees that require less labor for pruning and picking. When asked what a community-based food system means to her, Jane replies with the wisdom of someone who's been there.

"[It means] that there's more understanding with the consumers and the farmers, just understanding everybody's needs. Just like in any relationship, you've really got to understand the other person. And I think a community-based [food] system just multiplies that by a couple of hundred or thousand or whatever you call your community. You have to be willing to be open, to expand yourself and think about the possibilities. And have trust, and patience and sympathy for the other person."



Jane Bush

Contact Information

Apple Schram Orchard and other Michigan farms can be found at:
www.miffsmarketline.org

Grocery Stores and Restaurants Focus on Local

Retailing
Preparing
Eating
Farm Viability
Jobs
Healthy Individuals
Economic Development

Voting with your dollars by shopping or eating at businesses that purchase Michigan farm products is one way to help create a community-based food system.

The East Lansing Food Co-op (ELFCO) features locally grown produce whenever it is available. Produce manager Melissa Robbins explains that ELFCO members and shoppers value the connection with local farmers.

Local businesses such as Horrocks Farm Market, Van Houten Produce and Beck's Country Market (see story, next page) all began as small fruit and vegetable stands and maintain a preference for Michigan-grown products. The purchasing freedom of independent grocers allows them to differentiate themselves from supermarket chains by featuring local foods. Currently, the barriers include convenience, accessibility and often, price. Ultimately, demand for local products needs to come from consumers. Can you justify paying a few extra cents when it supports the local community and helps maintain the viability of local farms?



Produce manager Melissa Robbins enjoys purchasing from local farmers.

admits is a quagmire of ordering and paperwork, and can be a significant barrier for other chefs. But others are interested. Many chefs know that local is their freshest and most flavorful option. They're eager to support the local community and local agriculture with their

purchases. Unfortunately, current food distribution channels aren't set up to deal with local food. But there may be entrepreneurial opportunities for local businesses to get foods produced on local farms into area groceries, restaurants, schools and hospitals.

Examples from across the country show that a focus on local foods is not only for upscale restaurants. At Rudy's Tacos in Waterloo, Iowa, nearly 70 percent of the food comes from within a 100-mile radius. Owner Barry Eastman got hooked on the taste of local fresh foods, and the slightly higher cost of buying local has more than paid for itself with increased business. In Barre, Vermont, farmer Tod Murphy started the Farmers Diner with the goal of relying on local ingredients. The venture stunned investors by hitting its break-even point in the first year, and now 70 percent of the products served at the Farmers Diner are coming from area farms. And it's paying off. Customers get it and support the efforts.

The Capital area spends \$1.1 billion annually on food and beverages. How much of this stays within the local community?

Okemos chef and restaurant owner Eric Villegas is a passionate and committed proponent of local food and agriculture. Seventeen years ago, he brought the classical French idea of regional cuisine to Michigan. Michigan food and farms are prominently featured on the menu at the upscale Restaurant Villegas, as well as on his PBS TV show, *Fork in the Road*.

To get this wealth of local and regional foods into the restaurant, Villegas works with 70 to 100 individual food purveyors. This, he

What You Can Do

INDIVIDUALS:

Ask your favorite grocery stores and restaurants to buy local and Michigan foods – then purchase it from them!

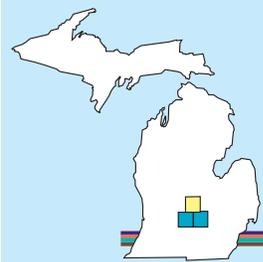
COMMUNITY:

Sponsor "buy local" campaigns to encourage eaters to seek out locally grown foods. See: <http://www.foodroutes.org/>

MUNICIPALITY:

Encourage schools, hospitals, and senior centers to regularly purchase local food to include in served meals.

One Mid-MI Market Finds: "Everybody Wants Michigan Produce"



For Paula and Eric Wilbourn, owner-managers of Beck's Country Market, hope lies in a notion that the big supermarkets seem to have forgotten:

"Everybody wants Michigan produce. They walk in the door just for that."

This notion has been part of Beck's Country Market since Paula's father, Ben Beck, started the store in 1958. Originally, Beck's Farm Market was a small stick frame with plastic walls and a dirt floor where Ben sold locally grown produce. The business grew steadily and became a booming supermarket. Throughout the growth, Ben maintained his connections with local farmers.



The Wilbourns offer Michigan grown produce whenever possible at Beck's Country Market.

Paula grew up working at the store but left the family business in 1978 to become the state's first female fruit and vegetable inspector. She later took a job with a grocery wholesaler in Grand Rapids, where she met her husband, Eric.

Meanwhile, Paula's brother Bob struggled to keep the market in business after their father died in 1988. He tried to compete with the large chain stores that had moved into St. Johns, but the pressure became too much. Beck's Country Market went out of business in June 2003, and everything was sold.

Eric and Paula had been trying hard to come up with the money to keep the store open, but banks would not offer start-up loans. Unwilling to let the family history and community connections die, the Wilbourns cashed

their 401(k)'s and used every bit of their savings to remodel and reopen the store. The doors opened again for seasonal business in spring, 2004, and the Wilbourns hope to regain community loyalty by focusing on fresh, local produce.

Eric has had little trouble finding local produce to fill the store – a long history of farms that had worked with Ben and Bob Beck began calling him when the store reopened. Felske Farms in DeWitt, Anderson Farm in Belding, and Rasche Farms outside Greenville supply a wealth of Michigan fruit and vegetables including strawberries, cherries, blueberries, peaches, apples, tomatoes and corn. A host of other growers fill in with specialty crops – rhubarb, raspberries, asparagus.

"I can get things ripe first in DeWitt and then as they start to dwindle out, we can move a little farther north," Eric says about navigating Michigan's growing season. The Wilbourns do use a wholesale produce supplier in Grand Rapids to fill in the gaps and provide produce through the off-season. Brats and sausages are made fresh in the store, but regulations and lack of processing facilities make 'locally grown' in the fresh meats counter prohibitive.

For now, the Beck's Country Market will be open from May through October, reflecting both the Michigan growing season and the business of the "weekenders" who stop in for fruit and brats on their way north. But support from the local community is also essential.

"Everybody has to support the community. Or what's going to be left?" says Eric. Paula adds that, "[It's] not just the farms but the grocery stores and the schools and the barber shop and..."



Local Food Processing and Adding Value

Processing

Farm Viability

Jobs

Economic Development

Historically, the Lansing area supported a number of local businesses such as meat and dairy processors that primarily catered to the local market. Slowly, more centralized facilities displaced most of the local shops. The 1997 Business Census lists 29 food manufacturing establishments in the Lansing tri-county area, with a total annual payroll of \$17 million. How many of these manufacturers process food that was grown on local farms? How many create products that are primarily for consumption within the region?

“Going local does not mean walling off the outside world. It means nurturing locally owned businesses which use local resources sustainably, employ local workers at decent wages, and serve primarily local consumers.”

Michael H. Schuman
author of *Going Local*

With a growing consumer interest in local foods, are there untapped entrepreneurial opportunities in local food processing?

More small farms are adding value to their products through on-farm processing. From fresh apple cider to peppermint teas, these value-added farm products are often sold directly to local consumers.

Local food processing creates additional market opportunities for local farmers, and gives consumers more choice in purchasing products that reflect their values. Despite popular beliefs about economies of scale, locally processed food might save consumers money because of reduced shipping and handling costs. Of course, money spent at locally owned businesses stays in the community and benefits the local economy. A recent study of Chicago’s Andersonville neighborhood found that when money is spent at locally

owned businesses, 73 percent stays within the community. Only 43 percent of those same dollars remain in the community when spent at non-locally owned businesses.

Where can aspiring food and agriculture entrepreneurs go for help? MSU’s Product Center for Agriculture and Natural Resources helps develop and commercialize high-value, consumer-responsive products and businesses in the agriculture and food sectors. The Lansing Community Micro-enterprise Fund offers business plan development courses and operates a revolving loan program to help small businesses get started.

Although executive director Denise Peek hasn’t seen many food-related loan applications, she says that funds are available for any individual with a passion and a strong business plan.



Made in St. Johns, Hanover’s Michigan Mint chocolates contain mint oil from local farms.

What You Can Do

INDIVIDUALS:

Seek out and purchase locally processed foods.

COMMUNITY:

Start a community kitchen as a food processing business incubator.

See: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/agmarkets/kitchdir.html>

MUNICIPALITY:

Create opportunities and incentives for food processing businesses in your area.



On-farm processing adds to farm viability, increases local product diversity, and builds the local economy.

Where's the (Local) Beef?



When was the last time you actually paid a visit to the butcher, baker or candlestick maker? Linn Merindorf recognizes that his custom meat market in Mason is a dying breed. But as local butchers become increasingly rare, Merindorf is comfortable filling what he sees as an important niche, offering a face behind the eating experience of a delicious steak or one-of-a-kind smoked sausage.

Merindorf Meats is a small retail outlet in Mason. The store carries a host of marinating spices, barbecue sauces and a selection of convenience foods. But the focal point is the meat counter. Merindorf prides himself in offering upper choice and prime beef, along with a variety of in-house smoked and processed sausages, jerky, hams and bacon. The shop does some custom meat processing for local farmers and hunters, but regulations and a lack of local slaughtering facilities limit that activity. Linn's wife, Melinda, also runs a full-service catering business that ties in with the activities in the processing kitchens.

Linn is quick to note that he is a first-generation processor – he has no family history in the business and followed this path out of pure enjoyment. “The reason I got into the business was I enjoy making sausage, I enjoy cutting meat,” says Merindorf.

But running a business also demands time spent taking and placing orders, managing 24 employees and, more pertinent, dealing with regulations.

One of the primary reasons that small-scale meat processing facilities are now sparse in Michigan communities, as well as across the country, is the high cost of complying with regulations designed for much larger processing plants. To offer retail cuts of beef, pork or lamb, a slaughterer must be federally licensed and have a USDA inspector onsite every day of operation. Navigating the complicated federal regulations can be prohibitive for a smaller plant.

Merindorf Meats does not have a slaughtering facility, so the animals providing the cuts that go into the retail case have to be slaughtered elsewhere. The nearest federally licensed plant is outside Grand Rapids.

Merindorf is allowed to “custom process” meat for the owner's personal consumption, and these animals can be slaughtered in a “custom-exempt” facility. The nearest one is in Jackson. The custom exemption is commonly interpreted to mean that livestock producers can sell portions of the live animal to consumers before it is processed into meat. But Linn sees a consumer demand for greater meat choices that exceeds the limitations of such custom processing arrangements.

“There is a movement that people want to know where their meat comes from. I do believe that. How can the area farmers capitalize on that?” he ponders.

One way to meet the needs of local producers and the demands of consumers is to create opportunities for small, community-based food processing businesses. And, from Merindorf's perspective, those opportunities also mean stable local jobs.



Linn Merindorf



Shopping first at locally owned businesses keeps your food dollars in the community.

Community Supported Agriculture

- Growing Food
- Distributing
- Eating
- Farm Viability
- Environmental Stewardship
- Healthy Individuals
- Community Vitality

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a new way for farmers and consumers to connect. Typically, families or individuals purchase a share of a CSA farm through a single payment at the beginning of the season. In exchange, farmers provide weekly portions of a variety of fresh seasonal produce. Everyone benefits.

Most CSA farms in Michigan concentrate on fresh vegetables during the growing season (typically June through October), but considerable opportunities exist for extending this season and for expanding the types of food included. For example, the Student Organic Farm at Michigan State University offers CSA shares nearly year round (48 weeks). The student-operated farm uses unheated hoophouses to protect cold-hardy vegetables from frost damage and make them harvestable throughout the winter. They also store many crops such as potatoes, onions, carrots, cabbage and winter squash for distribution throughout the winter. (For more info on the Student Farm, see www.msuorganicfarm.org.) Other farms are banding together into multi-farm CSAs to offer their share members additional foods such as meat, cheese and other dairy products, eggs or honey.

CSAs are growing in number! Surveys in Michigan found:

- 8 CSA farms in 1999
- 32 CSA farms in 2002

For more information on the CSA model, visit <http://www.csacenter.org/> or <http://tcf.itgo.com/>.

CSA farmers know their market demand – and their income – before planting. Payment before the growing season provides farmers with cash for purchasing supplies, seed and labor. By pre-paying, members join in the benefits and the risks of farming. They receive a

diversity of top quality produce as well as a sense of connectedness and interdependence with their community and their farmer. On many CSA farms, share-members visit the farm weekly to pick up their food and also help plant, weed and harvest.



CSA members at the Student Organic Farm at MSU pick up their produce share.



What You Can Do

INDIVIDUALS:

Join a CSA farm!
See www.localharvest.org for a farm in your area.

COMMUNITY:

Organize centralized locations for CSA food pick-ups; promote local CSA farms.

MUNICIPALITY:

Subsidize CSA shares for low-income residents.

Owning a Share of the Farm



Lansing residents Melissa Hill and Gerry Ginzel hope to run a farm of their own someday.

In the meantime, however, they're happy to own a share of a local farm.

Like over 100 other families in Lansing, they were share members in Giving Tree Farm's 2004 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program.

The CSA works like this: during the early spring, share members buy into the farm by paying up front for five months of fresh, organic produce. Each week from late May through the end of October, they go to the designated pick-up site and collect their "share" of the week's harvest. Early in the season there are fresh salad greens and spinach, spring radishes and peas. Summer brings beans, corn, cucumbers, and tomatoes. In the fall, root crops, winter squash and Brussels sprouts abound.



Planting lettuce at Giving Tree Farm.

disabilities and their families to dig in the dirt and enjoy the open spaces. In 2000, a greenhouse and a horticultural therapy program, complete with part-time staff, were added. To sustain this successful program, interests turned to the rest of the farm and its potential to grow a marketable crop. Enter farm manager Susan Houghton.

Giving Tree Farm was established in 1991 with a mission to enrich the lives of people with disabilities and their families through horticultural therapy and horticultural training. Founders Bob and Carolyn Bower saw a lack of support services in the area for their own daughter who is disabled, so they donated 21 acres of rich, dark muck soil located a few miles north of Lansing as a place for people with disabilities and their families. Since 1991, an organic leisure garden has offered a safe haven for kids with

To follow Susan around the farm is a thrill.

A whirlwind of instruction, activity, sweat and dirty fingernails ensues, and when the dust settles, beautiful produce abounds. In the 2004 season, Giving Tree supplied a 104-share CSA while also providing year-round salad greens and other specialty produce items to the likes of Villegas Restaurant and the East Lansing Food Co-op.

For Susan, the CSA model offers financial stability and planting flexibility. CSA members recognize that farming depends on the weather; some crops will do exceptionally well while others will produce less than expected.

For share members like Melissa and Gerry, the CSA provides affordable, high quality, organic produce. It also reflects their values of knowing where their food comes from and that it was grown in a socially and environmentally sustainable manner.

"It's about having more direct control over our basic needs," says Gerry.



Susan Houghton



Another satisfied share member!

Contact Information

Giving Tree Farm and other CSAs can be found at:
www.csacenter.org

Farm-to-School

Growing Food

Distributing

Preparing

Eating

Farm Viability

Environmental Stewardship

Healthy Individuals

Farm-to-school programs link local farms and schools to provide increased marketing opportunities for local farmers and to build a stronger connection among children, farmers, the community and the land. In addition to direct sales by farmers to school food service programs, farm-to-school programs can include hands-on education through school gardens and composting projects, nutrition education through kitchen classrooms and seasonal eating, field trips to local farms and alternative fundraising using local farm products such as dried cherries.

“Connecting local farmers and school food service directors is a win-win situation for all concerned. Combined with nutrition education, farm visits, school gardens and education in the classroom, children can develop healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime.”

Marla Moss, Food Distribution Program supervisor, Michigan Department of Education

Across the country, farm-to-school programs represent an important opportunity to help farmers remain profitable while addressing national concerns about childhood obesity. Increased globalization has forced many farmers to identify new markets for their products. With statewide total school food service expenditures of \$200 million per year, this is potentially a huge market for Michigan farmers.

Nationally over the past twenty years, the proportion of students who are overweight has almost tripled, with more than 25 percent of Michigan youth overweight or at risk for becoming overweight.* These children are at higher risk for chronic diseases such as diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure. One way to promote health and reduce the risk for chronic disease is to eat more fruits and vegetables. However, less than 20 percent of Michigan youth meet the recommended daily minimum requirements for fruit and vegetables.

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

School gardens build a sense of wonderment and connection with nature.



Schoolchildren visiting MSU's Student Organic Farm learn where food comes from.

Farm-to-school programs around the country report that **students eat more fruits and vegetables when products are brought in from local sources.** Direct interaction with farmers and hands-on experience in the cafeteria, classroom or school garden can raise children's curiosity about and appreciation for fresh, healthy food and for the farmer who grows it. Developing children's awareness of local agriculture and nutrition supports students in the development of lifelong healthy eating behaviors.

What You Can Do

INDIVIDUALS:

Start a school garden or composting project. Volunteer to chaperone a classroom visit to a local farm.

Prepare more fresh fruits and vegetables at home.

COMMUNITY:

Develop a school fundraiser around locally produced foods. Educate the local school board about farm-to-school issues.

MUNICIPALITY:

Partner with other governmental agencies to promote healthy eating.

A School That Grows Hope



Gunnisonville Elementary School lies on the rural northern edge of the Lansing School District. Gunnisonville students are bused from an inner-city neighborhood that lost its school and from a nearby trailer park. New students come and go as their parents follow job opportunities or face eviction from their homes. Staff turnover at the school is high. The school is now on its fifth principal in three years. Still, a sense of hope, wonderment and community grows from a small back corner of the schoolyard. Gunnisonville has a garden.

It began as a way to heal from a personal loss. Dr. Laurie Thorp, director of MSU's Residential Initiative of the Study of the Environment (RISE) Program, wanted to share her passion for gardening which she learned from her father, who had recently passed away. Thorp helped develop the garden and has stayed around. "When this thing started, I thought it might be a way to raise the school's MEAP scores," she said. "I quickly realized that the garden meant so much more to those kids."

The garden's magic began with a box of outdated seeds. A teacher's husband plowed up a plot behind the school. The local solid waste company donated a load of leaf compost. Soon a 30- by 30-foot plot became a wealth of garden diversity: strawberries and popcorn, sunflowers and potatoes, lettuce and carrots. Students now participate in garden planning and planting in the spring and return in the fall to enjoy a bountiful harvest.

Experience shows "if they grow it, they'll eat it!"

The garden has taken root throughout the school, offering teachers many tangible "hooks" that hold the students' attention.

The obvious life science lessons are there, as are hands-on experiences with wildlife such as earthworms and insects. Students also learn market economics by selling baked goods made from the garden's produce. Writing assignments focus on describing experiences in the garden. The garden offers students a means to see, feel and taste their lessons. Gunnisonville students are also learning that fresh vegetables aren't "gross," and that carrots aren't made in the supermarket. Connecting with the source of their food may be a first step toward lifelong healthy eating.

Field trips to the MSU Student Organic Farm give Gunnisonville students a chance to experience the changing seasons on a working farm. Through another collaboration with MSU, a hoophouse erected at Gunnisonville in summer, 2004, allows the growing season to extend well into the winter and begin early in the spring.

The project has not been without its challenges. Frequent staff turnover means repeated justification that the garden is a special place where students can experience life and learning and still meet curriculum requirements.

"We're dealing with a generation that doesn't have an opportunity to connect to nature," says Thorp. "And you're not going to take care of something you don't know. That little garden is their place, their living classroom."



Gunnisonville students inspect their school's new hoophouse filled with late fall salad greens.

Contact Information

**For information on farm-to-school programs, contact Viki Lorraine at Michigan State University.
(517) 353-0751**

Community-based Programs Increase Food Security

| |
|---------------------------|
| Distributing |
| Growing Food |
| Eating |
| Community Vitality |
| Environmental Stewardship |
| Healthy Individuals |

Food security is a necessary aspect of a community-based food system. People in many communities lack reasonable access to fresh, healthy, culturally appropriate foods. Community groups in Lansing and across the state have organized around a systems approach to food security. For example, The Allen Neighborhood Center has launched a program called “Growing Food Citizens: Connecting Eastside Residents to Lansing-area

Farmers.” Through this program, the center hosts a farmers’ market (page 10), served as a CSA drop-off point for Giving Tree Farm (page 17), organizes a youth garden group, and is developing food and nutrition awareness materials. On the other side of town, the NorthWest Lansing Healthy Communities Initiative (NWLHCI) has organized a team of citizens to tackle food system issues such as recruiting a full-service grocery store to northwest Lansing and

developing additional community gardens and a neighborhood kitchen. NWLHCI also organized a Giving Tree Farm CSA drop-off point and launched an annual celebratory harvest festival in October, 2004, complete with a farmers’ market, children’s activities, and food canning and preservation demonstrations.

Food assistance programs such as the National School Lunch Program, the Food Stamp program and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program are important safety nets for community members. \$28.9 million in food stamps alone were issued in the tri-county area in 2003. For comparison, this represents 2.6% of the total food dollars spent in the Capital area. However, the network of private, non-profit food banks, food pantries, soup kitchens and gleaning organizations is critical to ensuring food security at a local level. Non-profits such as the Greater Lansing Food Bank play a significant role.

The Greater Lansing Food Bank (GLFB) raises funds to purchase food for 18 food pantries in the region. In 2003, the community responded by donating over \$650,000. The GLFB also runs two programs: Food Movers and the Garden Project. Started in 1992, Food Movers collects excess prepared and perishable food from licensed kitchens, local grocery stores and bakeries and delivers it to shelters, food pantries, community centers, senior citizen and subsidized housing, and human service agencies.

“It’s kind of like an ambulance for food,” quips program director Phyllis Handley. Through the work of a small staff and more than 6000 volunteer hours, Food Movers distributed nearly 500,000 pounds of food in fiscal 2003.

The Garden Project gleans from area farms, but the mainstay of their mission is to improve food self-reliance for Lansing-area residents through community gardening.



Food Movers rescue prepared and perishable foods.

“Community food security is a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice.”

Mike Hamm, C.S. Mott Chair of Sustainable Agriculture, MSU and Anne Bellows, Rutgers University

What You Can Do

INDIVIDUALS:

Volunteer for a neighborhood or other community group interested in improving access to healthy food.

COMMUNITY:

Conduct a community food assessment. See: http://www.foodsecurity.org/cfa_home.html

MUNICIPALITY:

Start a local Food Policy Council. See: http://www.worldhungeryear.org/fslc/faqs/ria_090.asp

Growing Healthy Food, Growing Healthy Neighborhoods



On a bright, sunny morning in late September, Jim Zubkus walks the community garden plot that he had tended all summer. A few green onions and pepper plants remained among the debris of a bountiful summer. Exploring the neighboring plots, Jim tells the stories of the gardeners that tend them. One quickly realizes that this little plot of sunshine is growing much more than vegetables.

The Garden Project, a program of the Greater Lansing Food Bank, began in 1983 as an effort to improve the food self-reliance of people throughout the Greater Lansing area. Today, the project provides more than 500 gardeners with seeds, plants, compost, tools, tillage, educational support and, in most cases, a community garden plot to sow their seeds. A plot in one of the 17 established community gardens scattered across town, and the use of the necessary supplies to make it grow, are free to the gardeners. A second 25- by 25-foot plot costs \$5.



Community gardeners build a compost pile together.

Gleaning has been part of the Garden Project program since its inception. In 2003 more than 300,000 pounds of fresh produce, with an estimated retail value of \$230,000, were gleaned from area farms by volunteers and distributed to food pantries, human service agencies and low-income housing complexes.

Community gardens offer urban residents an opportunity to grow their own nutritious food. Community gardening also improves quality of life in other ways – by stimulating social interaction; encouraging self-reliance; beautifying neighborhoods; reducing family food budgets; creating opportunities for recreation, exercise, therapy and education; and catalyzing neighborhood and community development. Roberta Miller, director of the Garden Project, hears about these intangible benefits when gardeners say

The Elf Community Garden in downtown Lansing.



“I know where my food came from,” “When I’m in the garden I forget about my aches and pains,” or “I did it with my family. My children helped me with this.”

Zubkus is also quick to point out that the benefits of a community garden go well beyond fresh brussels sprouts. He speaks of the garden as a social event, with lots of camaraderie and sharing. The gardens also help many people manage tight budgets. Garden Project participants grew an estimated \$42,000 worth of food in home and community gardens in 2003.

For the sizable Hmong and other immigrant communities in Lansing, the Garden Project is a tie to their home culture. Cheu Xiong of the Hmong American Community Association estimates that there are 80 to 90 Hmong families with community garden plots in the Lansing area. They often bring seeds from overseas and grow traditional vegetables uncommon in American groceries. Freezing and preserving are common.

The community gardens made possible by the Garden Project are a patchwork of cultures and experiences where people share their knowledge, seeds, produce or a simple smile. For some people, the gardens are an essential link to a healthy, affordable diet. To others, they are a reason to get out of bed. The weeds may not all get pulled, the tomatoes may not all get harvested, but the gardens continue to feed the community.

Contact Information

For more information on the Garden Project: (517) 887-4660, or email: gardenproject@ingham.org

What Does a Community-based Food System Look Like?

The preceding pages present examples of parts of a community-based food system. These examples are by no means all-inclusive, nor do they represent a required or magical combination. They are a starting point. Much like the interconnections that hold together any ecosystem, the webs of connections within a community-based food system are central to its strength. These connections create long-term stability, encourage community self-reliance and present numerous synergies and opportunities.

What is a community-based food system like in practice?



Eating in such a system may involve purchasing some portion of your food directly from local farmers. This simple act helps to support small-scale family farms in the area by passing the greatest amount of your food dollar back to the farmer. Local farmers in turn purchase goods and services from local business people, keeping your food dollars within the community. Buying

local provides Michigan agriculture with a viable market and thus helps keep farmland in farming and curb urban sprawl. When more eaters choose a diversity of local food, the demand translates into farms that grow a wide variety of crops rather than large monocultures of corn or soybeans. These diverse farms offer local jobs because such mixed operations do not lend themselves well to complete mechanization.

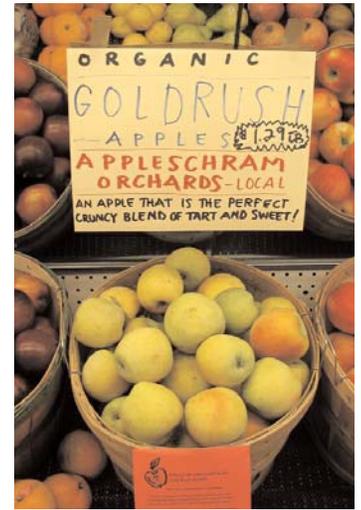
With appropriate incentives and start-up assistance, entrepreneurial on-farm and specialty food processing businesses develop and offer greater choice at the local market and bring additional jobs and stable economic development to the area. Restaurants, cafeterias, hospitals, retirement homes and schools can all commit

to buying a portion of their food purchases from local sources, presenting even greater markets for local farmers and food processors.

The interdependence that arises through this local food system creates a strong sense of community and encourages people to help one another and assure that everyone

has equal access to healthy food. As awareness of the food system increases, attention turns to diet quality as an important aspect of preventative health care. Increased access to local foods through farmers' markets, CSAs and farm stands presents many options for healthy eating – fresh fruits and vegetables, antibiotic- and hormone-free meat and eggs, locally processed jams and sauces, and more. Healthy people means a dependable work force and lower healthcare costs for employers. The strong sense of community encourages young professionals to stay in the area.

In the end, a community-based food system is a wonderful opportunity to improve public health, strengthen the local economy, and develop sound land use stewardship. But it can be done only with a large number of community members working together. Strong connections and meaningful partnerships are needed.



Strengthening Connections

Now that you have a clearer picture of what makes up a community-based food system, it's time to begin building on the connections in your community. Much of this can be done simply by paying attention to your food choices and buying local and direct when possible. But some efforts need broader support.

Below is a list of some community leaders and decision-makers and suggestions of roles they can play. Share your ideas – and this booklet – with them. A community-based food system frame can be useful in finding common interests and building strong partnerships. Together we can build the type of food system that we want, and strengthen our community along the way.

- **County planning commissions** make decisions that affect where food can be grown and processed.
- **Local elected officials** such as mayors and township supervisors may be able to offer support in starting and building a farmers' market.
- You may consider joining the **citizen planners** in your area to advocate for including food system issues in local planning efforts.
- **Health professionals** may be interested in improving their patients' awareness of and access to healthy food.
- **Local Departments of Public Health** provide WIC participants with Project FRESH coupons for local, fresh fruits and vegetables. They also design and implement a host of public health programs that are increasingly focused on disease prevention.
- **Chambers of Commerce** can assist in building alliances around business and infrastructure development. They may also be interested in supporting a farmers' market.
- **Local and regional economic development teams** can assist in creating opportunities for food processing and other businesses. They may be able to identify potential funding sources to develop food system infrastructure.
- **Communities of faith** can help to organize CSA groups, offer space for a neighborhood farmers' market, and teach "eating as a moral act."
- **Farmers** grow the food and are essential in any partnership.
- **Schools** can incorporate food and agriculture in both curriculum and cafeteria.
- **Environmental groups** can support farming systems that preserve biodiversity, provide wildlife habitat and minimize pollutions to air and water.
- **MSU Extension** can assist with information and facilitation expertise. They can also help you identify researchers interested in community-based food systems.
- **Neighborhood groups and community organizations** can help mobilize communities and implement programs.

This list is just the beginning. You will think of many others to involve in your work.

Some Community Food Systems Resources

Capital Area

Capital Area Community Voices

<http://www.cacvoices.org/>

Greater Lansing Food Bank

517-887-4307

<http://www.lansingfoodbank.org/>

Tri-county Regional Planning Commission

913 W Holmes Rd, Suite 201, Lansing, MI 48910

517-393-0342

<http://www.tri-co.org/>

Allen Neighborhood Center

1619 E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing, MI 48912

517-485-7630

<http://www.allenneighborhoodcenter.org>

NorthWest Lansing Healthy Communities Initiative

125 W. Main St., Lansing, MI 48933

517-483-4499

<http://www.nwlhci.org>

Michigan

Michigan Department of Agriculture

<http://www.michigan.gov/mda>

Click on the Michigan Marketplace tab for information and directories on Michigan grown and produced foods.

Michigan Health Tools

<http://www.mihealthtools.org/>

A suite of websites aimed at promoting good health for all Michigan residents.

Michigan Surgeon General's

Michigan Steps Up program

<http://www.michigan.gov/surgeongeneral>

C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at Michigan State University

312 Natural Resources Building, MSU

East Lansing, MI 48824-1222

517-432-1612.

Email: mottgroup@carrs.msu.edu

<http://www.mottgroup.msu.edu>

Michigan Integrated Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS)

<http://www.miffs.org/>

Michigan Land Use Institute

<http://www.mlui.org/>

See especially "The New Entrepreneurial Agriculture,"

<http://www.mlui.org/downloads/newag.pdf>

Michigan Organic Food and Farming Alliance (MOFFA)

<http://www.moffa.org/>

MSU Product Center for Agriculture and Natural Resources

<http://www.aec.msu.edu/product/index.htm>

Regional and National

Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS)

<http://www.cias.wisc.edu/>

Community Food Security Coalition

<http://www.foodsecurity.org/>

Land Stewardship Project

<http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/>

Michael Fields Agricultural Institute

<http://www.michaelfieldsaginst.org/>

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SARE), USDA

<http://www.sare.org/>

USDA Farmer Direct Marketing Website

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing/>

The Food Project

<http://www.thefoodproject.org/>

Growing Power

<http://www.growingpower.org/>

Hartford Food System

<http://www.hartfordfood.org/>

Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture

<http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/>

Food Routes

<http://www.foodroutes.org/>

Eat Well Guide

<http://www.eatwellguide.org>

National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service

<http://www.attra.org/>