Community Food Systems in Oregon

Opportunities to Build Capacity for Food Security, Health and Economic Vitality

Prepared by Kim Hanson
for Meyer Memorial Trust

December 2010

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our sincere thanks and gratitude to the people who shared their time in being interviewed for this project. These are the people who are at the forefront of the community food system movement in Oregon. Their passion and tireless daily work propel the vision forward, helping to shape healthier, more food secure communities with vibrant, sustainable farms and stronger local and regional food economies. Photo credits: Cover photo from USDA Image Gallery, Keith Weller, photographer. Photos this page, clockwise from top left, FOOD for Lane County, Denise Wendt, photographer; uepi's photostream on flickr; Southeast Oregon Regional Food Bank, Emily Fisk, photographyer; Farmworker Housing Development Corporation, Fabiola Camacho, photographer.

"In the long view, no nation is healthier than its children, or more prosperous than its farmers."
—Harry Truman

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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

BACKGROUND

"Needs may be great, but our assets are many."

Oregon is one of the strongest agricultural states in the nation in terms of length of growing season, quality of agricultural soils, and the diversity and quantity of food crops that are produced. However, at the same time, our state currently ranks second among all states for the number of people who are forced to skip or reduce the size of their meals because they cannot afford enough food (*termed very low food security*) (OHTF, 2010). As in past recessions, Oregon has been hit harder than many other states. In August 2010, unemployment was at 10.6%, the 7th highest in the nation. Rural Oregon has been especially hard hit, with several counties–including Crook, Douglas, Jefferson, Harney, and Grant–all above 15% (Worksource Oregon, 2010). A recent Oregon State University study shows that the current recession is affecting families with no prior history of poverty and two-parent households who are typically more immune to poverty (Edwards and Porter, 2010).

Food Security: In terms of food security, over the past three years, Oregon has seen a rise in applications for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP—formerly food stamps), bringing the total to over 710,000 individuals (1 in 5 Oregonians) participating in the program (OHTF, 2010). Last year, the Oregon Food Bank Statewide Network distributed 917,000 emergency food boxes—up 17% over the past three years, with double digit increases in some areas such as Washington, Coos and Curry counties (OFB, 2010). In 2009-10, 50.2% of Oregon school children were eligible for a free or reduced-price school meal. On average, just over 200,000 Oregon children eat a free or reduced price lunch each school day—many relying on school meals for a major portion of their daily nutrition (ODE, 2010).

Public Health: As a society, we are increasingly aware of a newer public health epidemic—obesity, and in particular childhood obesity. This issue has recently been brought to the forefront by First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move* campaign that aims to solve the problem of childhood obesity within a generation. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2009, 23% of Oregonians were considered obese, with closer to 2/3 considered overweight or obese. On a positive note, while nationwide more than 16 percent of children ages 10-17 are obese, Oregon has the lowest childhood obesity rate at 10%. And Oregon was the only state whose childhood obesity fell significantly from 2003 to 2007 (CDC, 2010).

Studies have shown that being overweight or obese is associated with serious health problems, including Type 2 diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure, and high blood cholesterol. There are strong correlations among hunger, food insecurity, obesity and chronic disease. Low-income communities and people of color are more likely to suffer from diet-related disease than Caucasian people or residents of affluent communities (Shak, Mikkelsen, and Chehimi, 2010).

In order to reduce hunger and diet-related disease, we must increase access to an adequate amount of one of life's most basic needs—healthy food. Equitable access to healthy food is a core issue, especially for low-income households in both urban and rural areas. And, in some areas that have been documented as urban or rural "food deserts," access itself is a critical first step. To ensure access, we must examine the multiple economic, social and environmental factors that contribute to a strong community food system. From sustainable agricultural production and processing to transportation and

marketing to the places where people live that influence their ability to access healthy food, we must find ways to strengthen the food system.

Agriculture and Economy: We are fortunate that Oregon has the climate and soils to produce more than enough food for our state, as well as strong local/regional food economies that we can build from. According to Oregon State University (OSU) Extension in their 2008 *Oregon Agriculture and the Economy* report, the number of Oregon farms and their agricultural acreage has remained more stable than expected for almost three decades and agriculture is still one of the most reliable industries in Oregon. We have high quality farmland that has been protected outside of the urban growth boundaries by our nationally recognized land-use planning policies.

To paint a picture of agriculture in Oregon, one can look to the 2007 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Census of Agriculture. The Census revealed that Oregon has a robust yet complex agricultural picture:

- 38,553 farms and 16,399,647 acres of farmland—both a 4% decrease from 2002.
- The average size of an Oregon farm is 425 acres—skewed by the larger farms on the Eastside—with county averages ranging from 15 acres in Multnomah and Clackamas Counties to 2,278 acres in Gilliam County.
- A total of 73% of Oregon farms are 99 acres or less. Approximately 83% have sales less than $50,000 annually—with 67% less than $10,000 annually.
- The average age of the farmer has risen to 58, with only 46% of farmers identifying farming as their primary occupation—the rest hold another job off the farm to supplement income.
- In 2009, Oregon's total gross farm and ranch sales were just over $4 billion dollars (70% crops and 30% livestock). The average sales income per farm in 2007 was $113,769—a 43% increase from 2002 to 2007.

According to the Oregon Farm Bureau, approximately ¾ of what is produced in Oregon is exported to other states and overseas with ¼ being sold in Oregon. The Farm Bureau noted that the total population of Oregon at approximately 3.8 million is not large enough to consume everything grown in Oregon, so farmers rely on export markets to remain viable.

However, like most sectors of the economy, the current recession has taken its toll on agriculture. In 2009, net income for farmers and ranchers fell 41 percent—down to less than $563 million from a record $1.3 billion in 2004. In Marion County—the largest agricultural county in Oregon—the heaviest declines were in grass seed and legumes, in large part connected to the decline in the housing industry (McCall, 2010). The grass seed decline has had a statewide impact.

Food System Changes: Over the past 50 years, our nation's food system has become increasingly industrialized, consolidated, and more globally focused. In general, this has led to improved efficiency for the largest farms, greater economies of scale, and reduced food prices. However, the loss of some aspects of smaller, more localized food systems that are rooted in personal relationships between farmers and the community has had a cost in terms of personal health, food security, and sense of place.

In Oregon, we have had less impact from industrialized agriculture because of the diversity of farm products. The USDA defines Oregon as a specialty crop state—meaning that we have high production of fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and nursery crops. We have a strong base of family

farmers—many of whom have farmed and cared for their land for multiple generations. We also have emerging farmers, including immigrants, who are interested in managing their own farms rather than just working on them, as well as a younger generation with a renewed interest in the lifestyle of farming.

Part of the beauty of the community food system movement is honoring our agrarian past and restoring our deep connection to the land and the farmers that sustain us. As Oregonians, many of us look forward to summertime u-picks and farm-stands, and attending our local farmers market. In addition, we are increasingly seeing fresh Oregon produce marketed from local or regional grocery stores. As we work to strengthen community food systems in Oregon and keep food production viable, we must help farmers of all sizes link to a diverse array of markets to support their economic vitality. And we must develop the regional food infrastructure for storage, processing, marketing, and distribution that supports and scales-up the movement, especially for small and mid-size growers.

Opportunities Ahead: Across Oregon, an incredible amount of community food system work is emerging. This work has great potential to create positive outcomes. Groups like Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon and the Oregon Food Bank have broadened their anti-hunger work into the community/regional food system arena. Partners recently released their new 5-year plan called *Ending Hunger Before it Begins—Oregon's Call to Action 2010-2015*. The three primary goals are:

- Increase economic stability for people, communities and the state;
- Cultivate a strong regional food system in Oregon;
- Improve the food assistance safety net.

Oregon Food Bank has worked for years on advocacy, community garden, and nutrition education initiatives. Its Community Resource Developer, Sharon Thornberry, is viewed as the primary expert and facilitator among community food systems organizations statewide, and also plays a leadership role at the state and national levels with food systems work.

In responding to the obesity epidemic, the Multnomah County Health Department recently received a $7.5 million grant from the Federal *Communities Putting Prevention to Work* program for obesity prevention. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation just awarded Multnomah County and Benton County with major *Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities* grants for initiatives that aim to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015.

During this study, a total of 11 organizations were identified as being engaged in statewide work around community food systems, and at least 32 organizations are active at the community and/or regional level. This list does not include all of the 20 regional food banks, or the smaller organizations and initiatives that touch on food system work in some way. Across the state, there is a strong focus on the public health implications of access to and consumption of healthy food centered on Healthy Eating/Active Living campaigns. Community hospitals and physicians are involved in projects and policy-oriented working groups. OSU is engaged on many levels with food system work. From the OSU Small Farms Program to campus departments to Extension there is tremendous movement at Oregon State, as well as University of Oregon, Portland State and increasing involvement from the community college system. Oregon is the first state to have Farm-to-School/School Garden staff in both the Oregon Department of Agriculture and Oregon Department of Education.

Across Oregon, people are coming together in their communities to connect directly with food producers, link growers with schools and institutions, teach people about gardening, and grapple with how to make nutritious local food available to everyone. The growth of farmers markets, community supported agriculture (weekly subscription box), and local food guides have inspired a renewed connection to the "culture" of agriculture. According to Larry Lev, a researcher with the OSU Small Farms Program, the number of farmers' markets in the state has grown from 38 in 1997 to more than 100 in 2009, while a total of $56 million was spent on direct farm sales in Oregon in 2007—a 144% increase since 2002.

If direct sales were a commodity, this would place direct sales as the 17th highest commodity just above blueberries and wine grapes. There are 6,274 Oregon farms that sell directly to consumers—the sixth highest number of direct sale farms in the country. Oregon farm direct sales of $15 per consumer are far above both the national average ($4 per consumer) and the level of neighboring states (CA at $4.48 and WA at $6.75) (Lev, 2009). The 2008 *Oregon Agriculture and the Economy* report notes under market trends, that "there is more intense consumer interest in where food is grown and processed, and consumers' increasing preference is to buy 'locally,' which can be helpful to some producers and many processors."

Tipping Point: Much of this growth in consumer demand can be attributed to an increase in awareness generated by multiple food safety scares and the increase in food system related media. Two examples being Michael Pollan's bestseller, *The Omnivore's Dilemma,* and Jamie Oliver's television show, *Food Revolution*. There are also Federal initiatives, including the White House garden, Michelle Obama's *Let's Move* campaign to reduce childhood obesity, and the new progressive USDA strategic plan. There is also the Slow Food movement, community gardening and the nationwide Farm-to-School/Institution movement, a rise in restaurant chefs sourcing fresh, local food, as well as a generation of young people who care about the social and environmental impacts of food production and are pursuing the lifestyle benefits of farming as a profession. A recent national survey showed that people are most motivated to eat differently if it impacts their personal health (SAFSF Webinar, 2010).

While we celebrate the rise of community food system efforts in Oregon, we also recognize that we are challenged by what the Multnomah County Food Initiative termed a "two-track food system." Those who have adequate economic resources and better access can purchase sustainable, local, healthy foods, while lower-income families have fewer healthy food options nearby and are often priced out of purchasing these healthy foods. There is no one easy answer to the low-income access issue; however, people statewide are grappling with it and some gains are being made through healthy retail initiatives, community gardens, training for immigrant farmers, subsidized community supported agriculture, and increased SNAP and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) opportunities at farmers markets, farm stands and grocery stores.

With Oregon's high rates of hunger and obesity, we must challenge ourselves to examine the barriers to accessing healthy food that are based on race, socio-economic status, and/or geographic location. We must strive to get beyond having an emergency and non-emergency food system and create one food system that is rooted in health, social equity, economic vitality and environmental sustainability.

This community food system report provides a snapshot of the current community food system work taking place across Oregon. Given the limitations of time and travel, *it is by no means comprehensive*. However, given the breadth of knowledge and expertise held by the people interviewed, we were able to identify key findings, as well as timely and strategic opportunity areas that have the potential to

catalyze the movement and scale-up Oregon's community food system efforts. The potential for improving food security, health, economic and community vitality across Oregon through community food system work is a positive solutions-oriented approach to persistent issues like hunger, obesity and unemployment that continue to challenge our great state. If we can invest in projects that lead to significant and meaningful outcomes, we will not only improve the quality of life and health for so many Oregonians, but we will have the opportunity to provide a model for other states.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is two-fold: 1) To provide a better understanding of the breadth of community food system work occurring across Oregon, and 2) Identify opportunity areas where additional investment could catalyze, leverage and/or expand capacity of the community food system movement. Potential outcomes of stronger community food systems in regions across Oregon include:

1. Reduced hunger and increased food security;
2. Improved access to healthy food for people of all income-levels;
3. Improved health outcomes resulting from increased consumption of fresh, local meat/produce;
4. Increased markets for farmers, especially small-mid-size;
5. Stronger local economies (especially rural) resulting from new food sector businesses, new food sector jobs, and food purchase dollars remaining in and circulating through the local economy.

This report focuses more heavily on the economic and social implications of strengthening community food systems to better understand how strengthening community food systems can improve outcomes around food security, health and economic development. The environmental impacts of agriculture have not been analyzed as part of this report, although many of the organizations interviewed work in this area.

METHODOLOGY

Interviews: A total of 48 interviews were conducted across Oregon. Interviewees included nonprofit organizations, government agencies, academics, business owners, and foundations. The full list of interviewees can be found in Appendix B. During Phase I, a total of 17 people were interviewed with 13 questions asked. These were considered primary interviews with the key leaders of community food system work in Oregon and took place in person, lasting from 1-2 hours. Phase II involved interviewing 31 people for 45 minutes-1 ½ hours, primarily by phone, with a total of 10 questions asked. In a few cases, not all questions were asked because the person had a limited amount of time and/or for research purposes the focus was on a particular topic (e.g. Farm-to-School, USDA funding).

Webinars: The consultant participated in five webinars, including four hosted by the National Good Food Network. (http://www.ngfn.org)

- May 20, 2010: Linking Diverse Communities through Healthy Food
- June 8, 2010: Rural Grocery Stores
- June 17, 2010: School Food FOCUS
- July 15, 2010: Building Local Government Support for Good Food
- July 21, 2010: Sustainable Agriculture Food Systems Funders

Community Events: The consultant participated in three community events:

- Oregon Hunger Task Force Field Hearing—Lebanon, Oregon—June 10, 2010
- USDA Secretary of Agriculture/Tom Vilsack—Salem, Oregon—August 20, 2010
- Central Oregon Food Summit—Bend, Oregon—September 10, 2010

Literature Review/Internet Research: A review of local, state and national community food system reports was conducted. Prior to each interview, a review was conducted of the organization's website. This provided insight into the agency and their programs, and the opportunity to tailor interview questions based on their specific expertise. Additional internet research was conducted to review national foundations and organizations, government initiatives, and/or specific programs in other states that could offer valuable models and/or best practices for Oregon.

CHAPTER TWO: Defining Community Food Systems

What is a Community Food System?

An initial component of this research project involved determining how the Meyer Memorial Trust wanted to define "community food system." There are numerous definitions being used for food system oriented work, including local food system, regional food system, community food security, and sustainable community food system, to name the most common.

Many people use the term "local" food to describe food that is produced within or near a community. A recent study by the USDA Economic Research Service found that there is no consensus on a definition of "local" in terms of distance between production and consumption. However, a definition adopted by the U.S. Congress is that to be considered a "locally or regionally produced agricultural food product" the product must have travelled less than 400 miles from its origin, or within the State in which it was produced (Martinez, et al. 2010).

There are additional and often complex factors to consider in addition to the distance a food product travels when examining community food systems. After a significant amount of research and discussion, we decided that the widely used definition for a sustainable community food system from the University of California at Davis best met the breadth of community impact that Meyer staff envisioned.

Sustainable Community Food System: A sustainable community food system is a collaborative network that integrates sustainable food production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste management in order to enhance the environmental, economic and social health of a particular place. Farmers, consumers and communities partner to create a more locally based, self-reliant food economy. One of the most important aspects of sustainable community food system projects is that they increase resident participation to achieve the following goals:

- Access to affordable, healthy food for all members of the community;
- A stable base of family farms that use sustainable production practices and emphasize local inputs;
- Marketing and processing practices that create more direct links between farmers and consumers;
- Improved access by all community members to an adequate, affordable, nutritious diet;
- Food and agriculture-related businesses that create jobs and recirculate financial capital within the community;
- Improved living and working conditions for farm and food system labor;
- Creation of food and agriculture policies that promote local or sustainable food production, processing and consumption;
- Adoption of dietary behaviors that reflect concern about individual, environmental and community health.

--*UC Davis Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program*

Community Food Security: For background and education about community food systems work, it is also important to share the basic principles of community food security. The national Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) recently relocated to Portland, offering opportunity to have more

input and guidance from this organization in shaping food systems work in Oregon. Since the mid-1990's the CFSC has worked with a diverse coalition of people and organizations from local to international levels to build community food security. The community food security movement focuses more heavily on social justice. The six basic principles of community food security are:

- **Low-Income Food Needs:** Like the anti-hunger movement, community food security is focused on meeting the food needs of low-income communities, reducing hunger, and improving individual health.
- **Broad Goals:** Community food security addresses a broad range of problems affecting the food system, community development, and the environment such as increasing poverty and hunger, disappearing farmland and family farms, inner city supermarket redlining, rural community disintegration, and air and water pollution from unsustainable food production and distribution patterns.
- **Community Focus:** A community food security approach seeks to build up a community's resources to meet its own needs. These resources may include supermarkets, farmers markets, gardens, transportation, community-based food processing ventures, and urban farms to name a few.
- **Self-Reliance/Empowerment:** Community Food Security projects emphasize the need to build individuals' abilities to provide for their food needs. Community Food Security seeks to build upon community and individual assets, rather than focus on their deficiencies. Community Food Security projects seek to engage community residents in all phases of project planning, implementation and evaluation.
- **Local Agriculture:** A stable local agricultural base is key to a community responsive food system. Farmers need increased access to markets to pay them a decent wage for their labor, and farmland needs planning protection from development. Building stronger ties between farmers and consumers helps consumers gain knowledge and appreciation for their food sources.
- **Systems-Oriented:** Community Food Security projects typically are "inter-disciplinary," crossing many boundaries and incorporating collaborations with multiple agencies.

--Community Food Security Coalition

Why Are Strong Community Food Systems Important?

A strong community food system is an integral part of a healthy, sustainable community. Food and the farmers who grow it not only nourish and sustain each of us on a daily basis, but food plays a vital role in shaping our communities. When did we last celebrate a special event or attend a community meeting that did not involve food?

In addition to the basic sustenance and the rich cultural contribution provided by farmers and the associated parts of the community food system, one interviewee noted that the local food movement is not about a policy or culture war like the women's or civil rights movement. But instead it provides an economic engine that is driven by farmers, entrepreneurs, and consumers that can create jobs and strengthen local economies

> *Food is a basic necessity, a celebration, a powerful medium through which sustainable, healthy, and equitable communities can be created. Food is common to all human beings; it crosses borders, creates community, and allows us to share elements of our diverse cultures.*
> *--2010 Multnomah Food Report*

by keeping food dollars circulating within communities. At the same time, it is about improving access to healthy food, building relationships between producers and consumers, caring for the environment, and learning about good nutrition to improve health for this generation and the next.

Community food system projects have the potential to positively impact food security, health, economic vitality and the environment at local, regional and state levels.

Framework for Community Food System Work

National Models:

California's Vivid Picture Project: Coordinated by the Ecotrust Food and Farms Program, the 2005 *Vivid Picture Project* sought to shape a comprehensive vision for a sustainable food system in California that addressed multiple aspects of the system including:

- Access to quality food for all people in California;
- Economic vitality for regional producers, manufacturers, distributors and purveyors;
- Personal health, well being and community building through food and nutrition;
- Natural resources used well and fairly so that their usefulness can be maintained in perpetuity;
- Enhancement of regional and cultural identities throughout California.

The project focused on developing a "change agenda" that identified policies, economic plans, and/or communication programs that could shift the entire system or entire components of the system. They also developed sustainability indicators by which to assess progress towards a sustainable food and farming system. It provides a good model for building strong community food systems shaped around economic, social and environmental goals that Oregon can use as a model, especially as efforts become more coordinated at the state level through the proposed State Food Systems Council.

The *Vivid Picture Project* also makes an important point that although developing a statewide plan can be helpful in terms of vision, goals and unified outcomes, much of this work is regional in nature. "Each region will manifest a different expression of a community-based food system, but all will adhere to the underlying goal that people eat delicious food, grown as close to home as possible—both because of the taste and variety that is available in the local food system, but also to enhance the economies and communities located close by" (Vivid Picture Project, 2005).

North Carolina's Farm-to-Fork Project: In 2010, North Carolina's Center for Environmental Farming released *From Farm to Fork: A Guide to Building North Carolina's Sustainable Local Food Economy.* The Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) is a partnership between N.C. State University, N.C. Agricultural and Technical State University and the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Its mission is to develop and promote food and farming systems that protect the environment, strengthen local communities and provide economic opportunities in North Carolina and beyond. Their Farm-to-Fork "action guide" was the product of a yearlong initiative that involved over 1,000 North Carolinians including people and organizations working in the fields of agriculture, commercial fishing, community organizing, education, faith, finance, local government, nutrition, philanthropy, planning, public health, public policy and youth outreach. The intent of the guide was to provide key action ideas for building a sustainable food economy in North Carolina at the state and local levels, with the hope that implementation would lead to significant economic development,

stewardship of natural and agricultural resources, and better health and nutrition for all North Carolina residents (Curtis, 2010).

Local Models:

Multnomah Food Initiative: The Portland/Multnomah Food Policy Council (FPC) launched the Multnomah Food Initiative in September 2009—a four-phase initiative to develop and implement a long-term food action plan for Multnomah County. The FPC determined that "the current economic and hunger crises, as well as long-term climate change challenges, create an immediate need for innovative action and visionary policy implementation to help meet food security needs, promote the nutritional health of the community, and create meaningful economic development opportunities."

The first phase involved the development of a 2010 Multnomah Food Report—a comprehensive report that compiled previous local studies and data around food system issues. It is meant to be used as a resource, tool and starting point for collaborative action and strategic planning in Multnomah County. As part of this report, the group developed a framework around which future planning and organizing will take place. For purposes of this statewide report it was edited slightly. It provides a framework that aptly describes in a more visual format the scope and complexity of the community food system work that is occurring in Oregon.

Figure 1. Multnomah Food Initiative Community Food System Action Areas

Community Food System Action Areas			
Local/Regional Food	**Healthy Eating**	**Social Equity**	**Economic Vitality**
1. Maintain the Agricultural Land Base	5. Apply Systemic Solutions to Create Healthy Food Environments	9. Address the Systemic Root Causes of Hunger, Food Insecurity and Injustice	13. Develop the Regional Food Economy and Infrastructure
2. Support Small and Mid-size Farms	6. Increase Equitable Access to Healthy, Affordable, Safe, and Culturally Appropriate Food	10. Increase Self-Sufficiency and Community Resilience	14. Promote Local and Regional Food Products and Producers
3. Increase Local Food Production (incl. community and backyard gardens)	7. Promote Individual and Community Health by Encouraging Healthy Food Choices	11. Facilitate Equitable Community Participation and Decision-Making	15. Encourage Farm-to-School and Institutional Purchasing that Support the Regional Food System
4. Encourage Environmental Resource Stewardship	8. Provide Education and Increase Access to Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs	12. Create Opportunity and Justice for Farmers and Food System Workers	16. Increase Local Supply Chain Capacity (processing, distribution, storage, and waste/recycling facilities)

Draft Logic Model for Oregon

A draft logic model for Oregon, based on the model developed for North Carolina's *Farm to Fork* study, is included on the next page.

Figure 2. Logic Model for Oregon (adapted from North Carolina *Farm to Fork* Study)

Vision: Oregon has a strong and sustainable food system where all Oregonians have access to and regularly consume fresh, healthy foods that are grown, raised, processed, distributed and marketed by local/regional producers and businesses.

Context: Why important for Oregon?

- Farmers, especially small-mid-size growers, need increased local/regional markets.
- High rates of hunger, obesity, nutrition-related diseases and related health costs.
- Unequal access to healthy food, especially for low-income people and people of color and those who live in food deserts.
- Economic recession, job loss and rural community decline.

Assets: What makes the time ripe in Oregon?

- Diverse base of farmers and strong agricultural economy.
- Increasing consumer demand, especially for local/regional direct-market opportunities.
- Strong network of community based organizations working on food system issues.
- Farm to School investment at local, state and national levels.
- Engaged universities, state and federal agencies.
- Release of innovative *Food Hub* on-line marketplace.
- New generation and immigrants interested in farming.

Inputs: What will it take to realize the vision?

- Community-based regional planning and coordination that is linked with statewide vision.
- Policy and regulatory changes that support small-mid-size farmers in Oregon.
- Capital investments, especially in regional infrastructure including storage, processing and distribution facilities.
- Training and technical assistance for farmers interested in selling to local/regional markets.
- Training and funding for schools and other institutions interested in local food purchase and educational programs.
- Consumer education, especially for youth, that teaches about the benefits of good nutrition, and reconnects the next generation with the importance of fresh food and strong local agriculture.
- Funding for Healthy Food Retail projects that create access and/or improve the quality of access, esp. in rural communities.

Strategies: How will we realize the vision?

- Conduct Community Food Assessments in all regions across Oregon to engage community members in identifying local, creative solutions to food system issues.
- Conduct regional agricultural economic analyses to better understand economic development opportunities in the food sector across Oregon.
- Build capacity of rural leadership with FEAST, RARE, and Ford Institute for Comm. Building.
- Work with producer working groups, USDA, and ODA to change policy and regulatory environment to better support farmers, especially small-mid-size.
- Provide technical support/training to farmers in order to scale-up access to local/regional markets.
- Educate consumers to increase market demand for locally/regionally produced food.
- Determine best strategies to access capital for the growth of food system infrastructure.
- Implement Farm-to-School in every district statewide and develop a garden in every school.
- Support community and home gardens that teach people about good nutrition and self-reliance.
- Address food access disparities through Healthy Food Financing initiative.
- Fund community-based organizations that support community-level food system work.

Interim Results

- State Food Systems Council.
- Oregon GROWS network of producers and regional producer working groups.
- Community Food Assessments completed for each region, including a FEAST organizing event.
- Rural leadership developed in each region of Oregon.
- Strong regional community food system organizations with Farm to School staff.
- Viable business models and public/private partnerships that provide local food infrastructure to enhance market access and increase sustainability.
- Statewide annual convening of community food system organizations.
- Enhanced sharing of best practices statewide through improved Food for Oregon website and listserv.
- Convening of interested foundations to increase learning about community food systems.

Outcomes (Shorter-term)

- Stronger regional food economy as a result of increased sales to local/regional markets (direct, retail, institutional).
- Increased knowledge of community needs through assessment process; more active, organized community members/leaders.
- More supportive policies and regulations for farmers.
- Increased access to local/regional foods throughout Oregon for people of all income levels.
- Green job creation in food sectors of economy.

Outcomes (Longer-term)

- Reduced food insecurity and hunger.
- Healthier Oregonians with less obesity and other nutrition-related diseases; reduced health-care expenditures.
- Increased food dollars spent locally supporting farmers and local/regional economies.
- Continued local/regional food production with farming knowledge passed on to a new generation.
- Green job creation in food sectors of economy.

CHAPTER THREE: Community Food System Work in Oregon

Introduction: Over the past ten years, there has been tremendous growth in the number and sophistication of organizations working on various aspects of community food systems in Oregon. Some organizations are more focused on reducing hunger, while some focus on building the local food economy through increasing direct markets for farmers. Others are working on public health issues such as obesity, diet-related disease and increasing access to healthy food, while some provide training to the next generation of farmers. Several local and statewide organizations are tackling the complexity of issues affecting community food systems. Below is a map that shows the locations of the primary nonprofit organizations in Oregon who are working on community food systems. On the next page is a list of the statewide, local and regional community food organizations. *We recognize that there may be organizations missing as a result of the limited scope of this study and the rapidly developing nature of the field.* For a more complete list, including their mission and/or vision and their website address, please see Appendix A.

Figure 3. Map of Community Food Organizations in Oregon

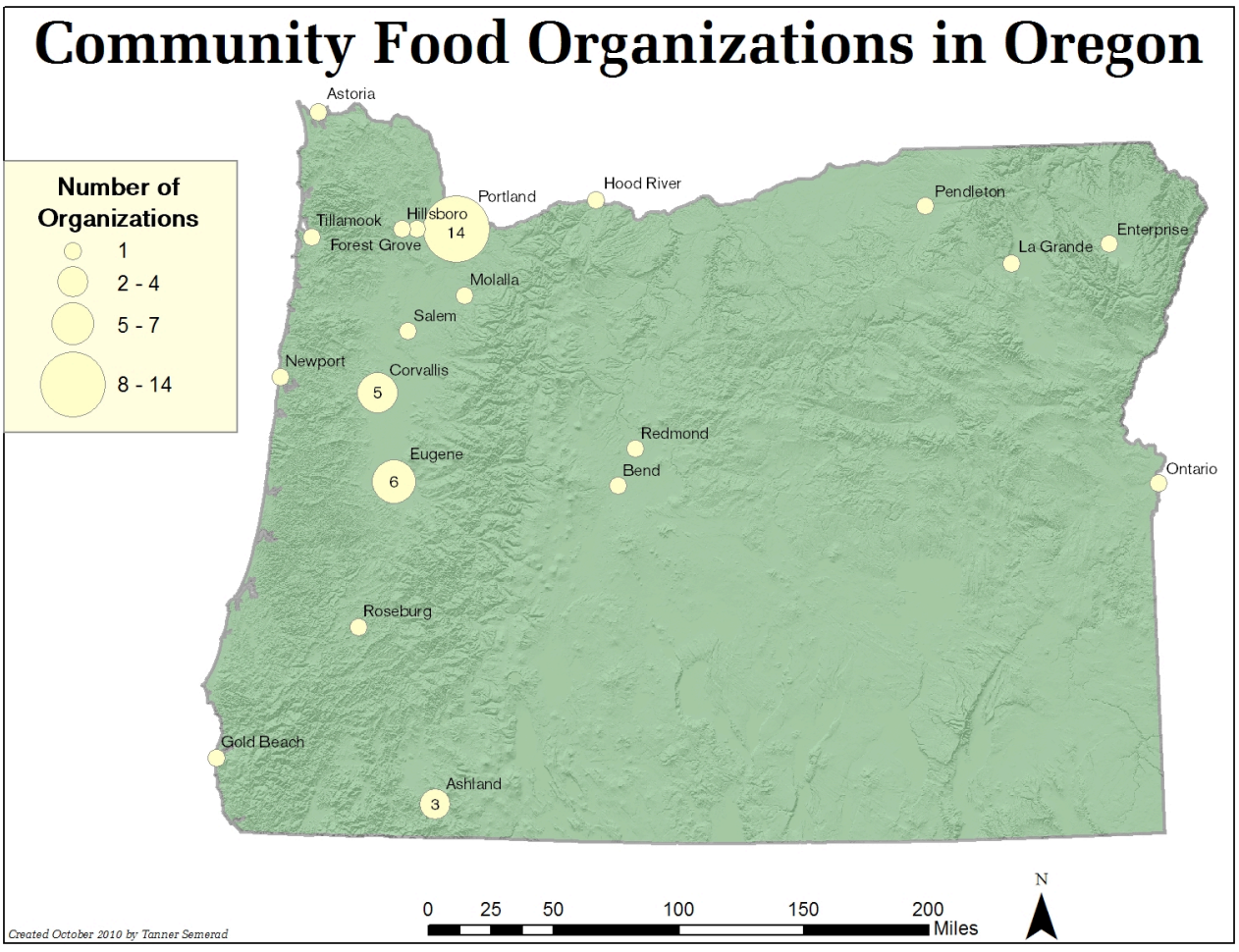

Figure 4. Statewide, Local and Regional Community Food Organizations

Statewide Community Food Organizations	
Oregon Hunger Task Force/Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon (PDX)	Ecotrust/Food and Farms Program (PDX)
Oregon Food Bank (PDX)	Oregon Environmental Council (PDX)
Friends of Family Farmers (Molalla)	Community Food Security Coalition (PDX-national scope)
Oregon GROWS-Partnership for Food and Farms (Molalla)	Farmers Ending Hunger (Salem)
Oregon Farmers Market Association (PDX)	Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (PDX)
Food Alliance (PDX)	
Local/Regional Community Food Organizations	
OFB Regional Food Banks (Pendleton/Ontario on map)	Growing Gardens (PDX)
Gorge Grown Food Network (Hood River)	Janus Youth Gardens (PDX)
Willamette Farm and Food Coalition (Eugene)	Multnomah Food Policy Council (PDX)
Huerta de la Familia (Eugene)	Multnomah Food Initiative (PDX)
Rural Development Initiatives (Eugene)	Community Health Partnership (PDX)
Lane County Food Policy Council (Eugene)	Upstream Public Health (PDX)
Lane Coalition for Healthy Active Youth (Eugene)	Lincoln County Sustainability Action Committee (Newport)
Neighborhood Economic Development Corp. (Eugene)	Food Roots (Tillamook)
Oregon Tilth (Corvallis)	North Coast Food Web (Astoria)
Ten Rivers Food Web (Corvallis)	Thrive (Ashland)
Southern Willamette Bean and Grain Project (Corvallis)	Rogue Farm Corps (Ashland)
Corvallis Environmental Center (Corvallis)	Rogue Valley Farm to School (Ashland)
Central Oregon Food Network (Bend)	Oregon Rural Action (La Grande)
Wy'East RC&D Area Council, Inc. (Redmond)	Slow Food Wallowa County (Enterprise)
Adelante Mujeres (Forest Grove)	South Coast Watersheds (Gold Beach)
Bienestar (Hillsboro)	Think Local Umpqua (Roseburg)

In addition to the work of the nonprofit organizations, there are also academic programs, state agencies, federal agencies, state and/or federal initiatives and foundations engaged in this work. Below is a list of the key players that came up during this study.

Oregon Academic Programs

- OSU Extension
- OSU Small Farms Program
- OSU Anthropology, Sociology, Agricultural and Resource Economics, Horticulture, Rural Studies
- Portland State University
- University of Oregon Planning, Public Policy and Management
- University of Oregon Community Service Center--Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) AmeriCorps Program

State Agencies

- Oregon Department of Agriculture--Farm-to-School, Specialty Crop Grant Program, Marketing Team
- Oregon Department of Education--Farm-to-School and School Garden position
- Oregon Small Business Center

- Oregon Economic Development Association
- Oregon Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Statewide Food System Related Initiatives and/or Working Groups

- Statewide Farm-to-School Network
- OHCS—Farmworker Housing Facilitation Workgroup
- Oregon Nutrition Policy Alliance
- Oregon Pediatric Society (working on sugar sweet beverage and disease)
- Oregon Health Improvement Plan
- Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility--Healthy Food and Health Care Project
- Oregon Farmers Market Association

Federal Agencies/National Initiatives

- USDA Rural Development, especially Community Facilities Program
- USDA Farm Services Agency
- USDA *"Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food"* Campaign
- White House *"Let's Move"* childhood obesity campaign
- USDA Community Food Project Grant Program
- USDA National Farmers Market Promotion Program
- USDA WIC Farmer's Market Nutrition Program
- USDA Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program
- USDA State Marketing Improvement Program
- USDA Western Sustainable Agriculture Research Education Program (SAREP)
- Wallace Center's Healthy Urban Food Enterprise Grant Program
- Food Corps (new food-system related AmeriCorps Program)
- Federal Center for Disease Control: *Communities Putting Prevention to Work* (Obesity)
- National Institute for Health (NIH)
- Federal Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)
- Wallace Center's National Good Food Network
- School Food FOCUS
- National Farm-to-School Network
- Healthy Cornerstore Initiative (Community Food Security Coalition)

Foundations

In addition to the Meyer Memorial Trust's Responsive and Grassroots grant programs, the following Oregon and National Foundations are funding community food system work in Oregon as reported by the people interviewed.

- Ford Family Foundation—Ford Institute for Community Building + Technical Assistance
- Northwest Health Foundation—Kaiser Permanente Community Fund
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- The Collins Foundation
- Oregon Community Foundation
- Providence Health Foundation
- McKenzie River Gathering Foundation

The two national foundation partnerships listed below address community food system issues.

- *The Convergence Partnership:* The Convergence Partnership was formed in 2006 with the goal that policy and environmental change will help reinvent communities of healthy people living in healthy places. The partnership's vision will be realized when all neighborhoods, schools, preschools and workplaces offer fresh, local, healthy food, and safe places to play and be active. The national steering committee includes representatives from The California Endowment, Kaiser Permanente, Kresge Foundation, Nemours, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention serve as technical advisors and PolicyLink, a national research and action institute devoted to advancing economic and social equity, serves as program director. The Prevention Institute, a national non-profit organization dedicated to improving community health and equity through effective primary prevention, provides policy research and analysis along with strategic support. Northwest Health Foundation (NWHF) is spearheading a Multnomah County Convergence Partnership Project (with MMT and other foundation support) specifically focused on engaging communities of color.

- *Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Funders:* The Sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems Funders (SAFSF) was formed in 1991 by funders with a shared interest in economically viable, environmentally sound and socially responsible systems of food production, processing, distribution and consumption. SAFSF is a broad national network of grantmakers that works to foster communication, shared learning and information exchange about issues connected to sustainable agriculture and food systems. SAFSF seeks to carry out its mission by providing opportunities for collaboration, increasing awareness of the issues as well as funding needs, and expanding beyond the current membership to increase support and funding for organizations that: 1) Promote sustainable food production; 2) Link to concerns about sustainability of our food system; and/or 3) Connect food production with issues of environmental stewardship, diet and health, and viability of rural communities.

CHAPTER FOUR: Key Findings

The research conducted for this project involved 48 qualitative interviews combined with the review of written reports, books, and websites. The researcher also participated in five national webinars and three community events in Salem, Lebanon and Bend. As a result of a listening and dialogue oriented approach, there are no quantitative results from which to produce graphs and charts tracking trends. However, the findings do reveal the thoughtful wisdom and expertise of the business, agency and organizational leaders who are at the forefront of working to strengthen community food systems in Oregon.

The interview questions, which can be found in Appendix C, focused on specific issue areas such as infrastructure, statewide leadership, Farm-to-School and low-income access, and also left room for more open-ended discussion, especially in regards to key opportunities to build the capacity of the movement. The interview notes have been grouped into thematic areas that correspond to the findings presented below. The complete set of compiled interview notes can be found in Appendix D.

1) Local Food Infrastructure

Background: Across Oregon, the need for local or regional food storage, processing, and distribution facilities came up repeatedly in interviews. Historically most communities had adequate infrastructure in place. With changes in the agricultural system that focused on consolidation, commodities and export, many facilities closed and those that are still operating are often at capacity, especially during the height of the growing season. By expanding local/regional food system infrastructure there is the potential to reduce the environmental impact of agriculture by lessening food miles traveled, create "food hubs" that increase regional food self-sufficiency, and boost local/regional economies by providing food sector jobs.

Need for Local/Regional Storage, Processing and Distribution Facilities: A first step in identifying infrastructure needs is to research the capacity of current storage, processing and distribution companies/facilities to meet local need. The second step is to examine the potential for renovating vacant facilities and/or constructing new facilities. One benefit of having strong, regional food system organizations is that they often have this knowledge from their work in the community. For example, the Gorge Grown Network in Hood River has already analyzed where vacant facilities exist and has this knowledge to share with the community. The primary challenge is finding the capital and/or investors willing to take on food sector businesses. Looking at private/public partnerships may prove most promising.

As the link is increasingly made between producer and buyer through new outlets such as Ecotrust's new on-line *Food Hub*, there is a need for farmers to have access to value-added processing and for buyers to be able to access local products that meet their needs in terms of prepping and packaging. For example, school districts and other institutional buyers are often used to buying a product such as sliced carrot coins from a wholesale distributor at a decent price. If they are willing to work with a local farmer, they know that it will likely cost more for the raw product, but they also do not have the money or time to get it chopped into the appropriate form. More profit is derived from the value-added processing piece of the food sector, and these new "food brokers" are needed at the local level. There appears to be opportunity to create new institutional processing centers that provide for school districts, hospitals, universities and other large buyers. These centers could provide job training and employment while linking producers with larger local markets.

In addition, as more grass seed farmers, and others, in response to shifts in the market, start growing wheat in the Willamette Valley, there is a need for local grain storage facilities. The Willamette Grain and Bean Project is one initiative in the Southern Willamette Valley that has focused on this need. As part of their efforts to increase grain and bean production in the valley, they have evaluated the deficiencies in the food system infrastructure and have worked with a farmer in Junction City to install a new grain mill. The Willamette Farm and Food Coalition will be researching models for cooperatives this year as the bean and grain farmers negotiate how best to rotate crops and work together on this project. This project provides a good model for similar initiatives in other regions. For a complete review of this project go to http://www.mudcitypress.com/beanandgrain.html.

Cooperatives, including worker-owned cooperatives, can address multiple social and economic benefits and provide a strong business model for new food sector businesses. One interviewee noted that to be successful a sustainable business model is critical. In Oregon, we have an excellent example of a farmer owned cooperative in NORPAC. Since their founding in 1924, NORPAC has grown from a small group of Oregon farmers to a nationally recognized farmer cooperative and processor of premium quality vegetable and fruit products. NORPAC now has approximately 260 farmers growing on about 60,000 acres in the Northwest—producing on average 60,000 cases of product each day year-round. Another state resource is the Agricultural Cooperative Council of Oregon, located in Salem. They can provide technical assistance and mentoring with start-up or existing cooperatives.

Nationally, the Evergreen Cooperatives in Cleveland, Ohio, provides an example of a new approach to reducing poverty and hunger through job creation, wealth building, and sustainability. Evergreen's employee-owned, for-profit companies are locally based and hire from within the community. Their multiple cooperatives (including a laundry business, urban farm, and solar energy company) create meaningful green jobs and keep financial resources within the community. Workers earn a living wage and build equity as owners of each cooperative business. For more information about the Evergreen Cooperatives, go to www.evergreencoop.com

Need for USDA-certified Meat Processing Facilities: The need for increased meat processing facilities arose in the majority of interviews across Oregon. Being able to access local or regionally produced meat is critical to growing a strong community food system. In Oregon, meat processors are now larger and fewer in number. In several parts of Oregon, including the Coast and Eastern Oregon, people must travel long distances to access slaughter and processing facilities. For ranchers in Wasco/Sherman this means a 200 mile roundtrip to Portland. For La Grande area ranchers, it is a three-hour trip to Nampa, Idaho. For farmers on the North Coast, a trip to the valley and back increases the cost of their products so dramatically that it is not even economically feasible.

In early 2010, a new organization called Friends of Family Farmers held 17 focus groups with farmers and ranchers across Oregon. They documented the current situation around meat and poultry in more detail in their *"Agricultural Reclamation Act."* One of the key issues identified was a profound lack of USDA-certified slaughter and processing facilities in several parts of Oregon that they said results in

- limited facility access, especially at busy times of the year;
- prohibitive costs with traveling great distances to access facilities;
- increased animal stress involved with long-distance travel, decreasing the quality of the product and quality of life for the animals;
- increased risk to the producer when basing business on access to only one custom shop that is at capacity;

- decreased ability to expand business without processing capabilities.

They also identified the lack of rendering facilities in Oregon, which for some communities like Tillamook through the use of their port, might present economic development opportunities. They recognized the differing needs of family-scale (small-mid-size) farmers for slaughter and processing. Their state-level priority action items that resonated with what was heard in this project are

- help fund and assist Custom-exempt shops (those that can process halves and wholes only) to convert to USDA standards.
- provide matching funds for USDA mobile meat and poultry processing units.

Across the state, people talked about how the Oregon Department of Agriculture could expand its state inspection program as long as it meets USDA requirements. There was also a great deal of discussion about mobile units, which can vary in price from $150,000-$350,000. For rural areas, people wondered if a mobile unit might be able to operate regionally—stopping in a certain community several times per month. Again, there is the question of where to find the capital to fund a mobile unit. Currently, Oregon State University and the Oregon Department of Agriculture have a meat processing work group that is further analyzing the issues and looking for solutions.

Distribution Sector Challenges for Farmers and Small Retailers: Small and mid-size farmers need access to a diverse array of local and regional markets to remain economically viable. Many small farmers sell at farmers markets, farm-stands, through community support agriculture (weekly subscription boxes), or other direct market means. However, some small farms and many who are mid-size (what has been termed "ag-in-the-middle") need access to larger markets. These mid-size farms, because of their production capabilities, actually have great potential to scale-up the impact of local/regional food and increase access to healthy food for more people.

Many people interviewed discussed the challenges of working with the current distribution system. From distributors who will not work with a smaller farmer because of quantity or consistency to the small rural grocery store who has trouble getting a delivery or stocking the shelves at a reasonable cost. One comment was that we need more "mission-driven distributors, local businesses, and nonprofits to take on the supply chain." More research is needed into what small and mid-size farmers and smaller retailers need in terms of support with wholesale distribution. More research is also needed into the distribution industry and how it can better support the growth of community food systems.

Ecotrust's new on-line tool, *Food Hub*, has made a significant contribution in terms of connecting producers and buyers on-line through its virtual marketplace. The goal of *Food Hub* is a "robust regional food economy" that provides economic opportunity to preserve family farms. Currently, *Food Hub* staff are focused on outreach, especially rural outreach, which is needed in order to engage all corners of the state. There are some concerns for farmers who are not on-line or tech savvy, and other concerns about farmers needing training and/or support in terms of preparing, packaging and distributing their products so they are ready to sell on *Food Hub*. On the other side, some farmers have struggled to find a sufficient number of buyers on *Food Hub*, but the number of members is growing daily. Ecotrust is exploring efforts to strengthen on-the-ground distribution systems, or physical "food hubs," where there is more support for growers and buyers to link together, but this work is in the developmental stages.

2) Job Potential in the Food and Agriculture Sector

Background: According to OSU Extension's *Oregon Agriculture and the Economy* report from February 2008, the "economic footprint" of agriculture in Oregon—defined as the output, employment and value-added measures of direct, indirect and induced expenditures—contributed to 10% of the employment in Oregon. Primary job sectors in the agricultural industry include production, processing, agricultural support services, wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing, and retail trade.

The processing sector is the largest in terms of market share, followed by production and then wholesale trade. The *Oregon Agriculture and Economy* report also states that "government at all levels in Oregon can affect agriculture's contribution to the local and statewide economies by creating public policies that encourage and add incentive for local ownership, purchase of inputs locally, production of finished products rather than exporting of unfinished or raw products, and creativity to differentiate products to maximize the value added in Oregon and achieve a premium in the marketplace." If these supportive policies were put in place they would have the potential to strengthen the agricultural economy in Oregon and create new jobs, especially in the value-added processing sector.

In talking with Eileen Brady from the Portland-based New Seasons market chain, she noted the need to scale-up the community food movement. This would help to bring high quality, healthy food to the masses rather than a small subsection of the Oregon population. She shared that an average retail store has 30,000 "sku" (scan coded) items. At New Seasons, 10,000 of these items are part of their "Home Grown" program—products produced from Northern California to Washington. We discussed the potential for researching the other 20,000 items that New Seasons sells and looking at the possible economic development and job creation that could occur from shifting the production of certain targeted food items (e.g. more cereal) to Oregon. Overall, there appears to be the most potential to increase family wage jobs in this value-added processing sector. However, more economic analysis is needed to determine exactly which food products have the most economic viability and where they could best be produced in Oregon.

If we analyze the dollars spent on food each year, we can see the potential impact on local and regional economies if more food dollars were kept closer to home. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, in 2009 families and individuals nationwide spent 6.8%, or $572 billion dollars, of their disposable income on "food at home" which means cash purchases from grocery stores, other retail outlets, and direct from farmers. (By contrast, Americans spent 19.3% of their disposable income on food in 1929). Oregon already ranks sixth in the nation for farm-direct sales with $56 million spent in 2007—an average of $15 per consumer. If we can continue to increase direct markets for Oregon food products and educate consumers with "Buy Local" campaigns, we have the potential to keep even more food dollars circulating in our local and regional economies—flowing back to farmers and food businesses, creating local jobs, and contributing to the revitalization of urban and rural communities.

Creating Jobs--Local/Regional Storage, Processing and Distribution Facilities: If regional food systems are going to be able to meet the needs of buyers, especially institutional buyers, we will need to establish more local and/or regional storage, processing and distribution facilities. In many communities, the word is that processors and distributors appear to be at capacity. More research is needed to analyze this further. However, the interviews pointed to the need for additional "local food brokers" who can provide food storage, processing, and distribution for local growers, or cooperatives of growers. Jobs would be created in managing these facilities, as well as in the on-site processing

(washing, chopping and packaging) that buyers, especially institutional buyers are looking for. One challenge is the increased cost for the products that comes from the value-added processing. However, one idea is to shape these facilities as job training centers for those who are unemployed. Potentially there could be a link to regional food banks, utilizing shared storage and processing facilities that could benefit both the emergency and non-emergency food systems at the same time.

Creating Jobs—Farming and Value-Added Food Products: Across the state, there is the buzz that people of all ages, and especially young people, are interested in being farmers again. They are looking for the lifestyle benefits of farming and see the profession as a good match for their social and environmental values. Some of these new farmers need access to land, and most need small business development skills. If we can expand training programs, such as the OSU Beginning Farmer Program, Southern Oregon Farm Incubator Program, and Rogue Farm Corps, more interested emerging farmers will be able to connect with farms, receive training and support, and we will maintain the number of farms and farming jobs for the next generation. In addition, training programs for immigrant farmers such as Adelante Mujeres and their related Adelante Empresas in Washington County, and Huerta de la Familia in Eugene, are providing business skills and access to land to start farms and sell through farmers markets and other direct outlets. Adelante Mujeres believes that you can "achieve social justice through land management and economic viability."

Several organizations, including Adelante Mujeres, are also focused on building community commercial kitchens. Food businesses, especially niche markets for higher end retailers like New Seasons, can provide stable family wage jobs. The Food Alliance estimated the average return on investment (ROI) for farmers at 2%, while for processors it is 18%. There are more jobs in processing and more money can be made in this value-added sector for a win-win employment situation.

3) Health, Social-Equity, and Food Access

Background: The question about low-income access to local food brought out some of the most complex discussions around justice, equity, the built environment, and health. There are complex intersections among hunger, health, and obesity that have been researched and documented in recent years. Most often these disparities result from unequal access to healthy food based on race, socio-economic status and geographic location. Questions arose about whether we should subsidize healthy food so it is available to all? Whether we need to change the "food environment" and get rid of junk food and fast food before education programs will help? And, how we can focus on empowering those most affected—low-income populations and people of color—to be leaders and change agents in this movement. It was rich conversation with key findings highlighted below.

Expanding Home, Community and School Garden Opportunities: Home, community and school gardens came up in many interviews as tools for empowerment, education, and increasing self-reliance. One interviewee said, "We should teach gardening to everyone—Home Garden 101." Across Oregon, interest in community and school gardens is on the rise. In Portland, there are currently 1,300 people on the waiting list for a community garden plot and the community is actively addressing this issue. As part of the gardening discussion, one person mentioned the need to "have a systemic shift in culture where we embrace self-reliance and learn again how to live on very little money." School gardens, especially when combined with Farm to School programs, offer great potential to teach children about where their food comes from, local agriculture and the benefits of good nutrition. Studies point to the fact that fruit and vegetable consumption increases as children participate in school garden projects.

Improving Food Environment/Expanding Healthy Retail: One interviewee said, "Obesity is a public health and economic crisis—hunger and obesity are both malnutrition issues." The public health sector work around community food systems is heavily focused on access and improving the food environment. In recent years, Healthy Retail has taken off nationwide. The Community Food Security Coalition, located in Portland, provides technical assistance and training nationwide through conference calls, webinars and project consulting for its Healthy Cornerstore Initiative. Across the country, this aspect of the movement is spreading quickly at the grassroots level, and a new $400 million Healthy Food Financing Initiative has been proposed by President Obama for this budget cycle.

The focus of the Healthy Retail movement is bringing grocery stores and other healthy retailers to underserved urban and rural communities, especially food deserts where there is little to no access to foods needed for a healthy diet. Healthy Food Retail projects can improve healthy food options at urban corner stores, rural grocery stores and other places with limited access to healthy food. In Oregon, the Community Healthy Partnership (CHP) will soon release a white paper analyzing Healthy Food Retail, with a focus on efforts in the Portland metro area. According to CHP, rationale for the work includes: 1) For many low-income communities access to sufficient healthful food options is limited; 2) Improving healthy options in corner stores (or rural markets) improves consumption of fruits and vegetables, and; 3) Establishing new food retail in low-income neighborhoods leads to weight loss (Dobson, 2010).

A Healthy Food Retail Group has been meeting on a regular basis in the Portland area. The Janus Youth Program in Portland is developing a "Village Market" run by residents that will sell healthy food to the neighborhood. The store will not sell tobacco, alcohol or lottery tickets—the most lucrative grocery items—and the jury is still out as to whether a store can make it financially without these items. The Lane Coalition for Healthy Active Youth (LCHAY) recently received funding from the NWHF for a pilot Healthy Cornerstore Initiative working with Dairy Mart in Eugene/Springfield. The project will include analyzing the Dairy Mart manager's purchase list with a dietician, the goal being to change what is offered to managers to select from (e.g., healthier choices like tuna in water or fruit without syrup). The project will also create a mini-farmstand in the Dairy Mart parking lot, and analyze SNAP (formerly food stamp program) sales data. In addition to these two projects, the UO RARE Community Food Assessments that have occurred in a several rural regions of Oregon have included a rural grocery store survey.

At the national level, Pennsylvania has established an innovative Fresh Food Financing Initiative that Oregon could replicate. President Obama has proposed a national Healthy Food Financing Initiative that would provide more than $400 million in competitive grant funding to bring grocery stores and other healthy food retailers to underserved urban and rural communities throughout the country. The multi-faceted initiative has as its goal to eliminate food deserts within seven years and create thousands of jobs in the healthy retail sector. There is tremendous need and momentum that Oregon could leverage at this time with public/private investment.

Subsidizing Access to Local Healthy Food: Programs across the state are subsidizing access to healthy, local food. From electronic benefit transfer (EBT) machines at farmers markets to SNAP match incentives to WIC farmers market coupons to subsidized CSAs to local food in emergency food pantries, there are strategies being developed to encourage low-income households to access local food directly from farmers. The Oregon Farmers Market Association is currently exploring ways to educate

people, especially low-income and immigrant families, about the benefits of fresh, local food and that you can shop on a budget at a farmers market if you know where to look. However, there are perceived and real cost barriers at farmers markets for low-income people. One person mentioned the need to expand farmers market hours to meet the needs of working people. Another talked about increasing the ethnic diversity of vendors because people prefer to buy from someone who looks and talks like them.

Mobile produce markets were cited as an excellent strategy for reaching rural communities and urban food deserts. The Gorge Grown Network's mobile market operates from July 4 - September 6, bringing a 14-foot box truck filled with locally-grown produce from farmers all around the Gorge to several locations, including rural Maupin, each weekend. The mobile market also brings an order of produce for the grocery store in Maupin when it comes to town for the market on Sundays. The market welcomes other small farmers and backyard gardeners to sell their own produce alongside the mobile market. The goal of the Gorge Grown Mobile Farmers' Market is twofold: to increase local market opportunities for small farmers in the Gorge region, and to increase access to locally-grown fresh foods for rural Gorge communities. The mobile market accepts SNAP and debit cards too.

One interviewee talked about the need to scale-up local food so that it is available at Winco, Thriftway and Walmart at prices people can afford due to economies of scale. And, in terms of access to local meat, several people mentioned the possibility of marketing custom-butchered meat (e.g. quarters and halves, which can be lower in cost) to low-income families as way to improve health and save money.

Looking outside the United States, there is an innovative government program in Brazil that is getting attention. The program subsidizes the healthiest basic foods and ensures that citizens have access to these foods on a regular basis through government stores. It is similar to the WIC model in the U.S. that requires people to buy specific nutritious core food items, and WIC stores do exist around the country.

Maximizing use of Federal Nutrition Programs: It was emphasized in many interviews that we should maximize use of the Federal programs, including SNAP, WIC and the child nutrition programs. Several organizations are matching SNAP/WIC dollars at farmers markets as one way to encourage people to discover the markets and to support the purchase of local food. Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon is working to maximize the use of Federal programs in Oregon through its SNAP Outreach and Child Nutrition positions. Currently, Partners is researching senior and rural use of SNAP and seeking to better understand how low-income people and seniors access food in different counties and communities across Oregon. A topic that arose in the interviews was the need to better understand what people are using their SNAP dollars to purchase so that we can determine if more education is needed to encourage healthy choices. This can be a sensitive issue because many advocates believe that low-income people should have autonomy and that the government should not restrict what they can or cannot purchase and/or consume. As a first step in better understanding what is being purchased, LCHAY's pilot project in Eugene/Springfield will provide SNAP purchase data for local Dairy Mart stores.

Support Nutrition Education and Cooking Programs: With the emphasis on the importance of the retail food environment in Healthy Retail work, one person mentioned, "how can you teach about healthy food and then send people back into a toxic environment full of junk food and fast food." However, it was not an either/or issue, and the general sentiment was to continue providing education

programs around nutrition education, food budgeting and cooking while work is being done on improving the food environment.

One interviewee mentioned the importance of breastfeeding education and that breastfeeding needs to be part of the conversation in food system work. In addition, there is a need to focus on good nutrition in-utero and for the 0-5 population. Another interviewee emphasized the opportunity for new moms to participate in classes about cooking and good nutrition—potentially in partnership with Head Start/Early Head Start. She mentioned that new moms are one of the most open populations for learning because they have entered this new and very important time in their lives when they are receptive to new information and potentially willing to change behaviors in order to be "good moms." These ideas could be linked to the existing Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative sponsored by OCF, Ford Family Foundation, MMT, and several other funders.

4) Farm-to-School/School Gardens

Background: Farm to School programs connect local farmers and food processors with school cafeterias in preschools, K-12, and colleges. They include serving more Oregon agricultural products on the lunch line, and activities that directly connect youth to food production through school gardens, field trip to farms/ranches, and farmers in the classroom (Ratcliffe, 2010).

Farm to School and school garden programs are a win for Oregon's kids and a win for Oregon's agricultural community. These programs have been shown to

- increase children's participation in the school meals program and consumption of fruits and vegetables, thereby improving childhood nutrition, reducing hunger and preventing obesity and obesity-related diseases (Thomas, 2006; Meyers, et al. 1989);
- improve children's and the communities' knowledge about, and attitudes toward, agriculture, food, nutrition and the environment (Liquori, et al. 1998; McAleese and Rankin, 2007);
- increase market opportunities and support economic development for farmers, fishers, ranchers, food processors and food manufacturers (Sanger and Zenz, 2003);
- promote food security while reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and reliance on oil because these programs decrease distance between producers and consumers.

In 2007 a Farm to School Coordinator position was established within the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) and the following year a Farm to School and School Garden Coordinator position was funded in the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) Child Nutrition Program. Oregon is the first state to create state-level Farm to School and School Garden positions, and there is an opportunity to leverage this public sector investment with private dollars to scale-up the program.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation and Northwest Health Foundation (NWHF) have both contributed resources to Farm to School in Oregon. Kellogg provided $2 million over two years to fund the National Farm to School Network, including eight regional lead agencies. Since 2008, the Ecotrust Food and Farms Program has served as the regional lead agency and a grant is pending for this to continue for several more years. In this role, Ecotrust transmits national information to informal state leads in multiple Western states, including Oregon; serves as a technical resource; and works to connect food service companies like Sodexho to *Food Hub* and get them started with purchasing local food products. The informal state leads in Oregon are the ODA and ODE positions.

In addition NWHF funded a statewide Farm to School Network for two years that was co-facilitated by Ecotrust, Growing Gardens, Upstream Public Health, and the Willamette Farm and Food Coalition. Funding recently ran out and the network is temporarily being facilitated by Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon as the group evaluates the most valuable aspects of the network and how to organize and fund their continued work together. The main value appears to be the networking and work groups, especially the policy workgroup.

Primarily, the Farm to School policy workgroup has focused on advocating for state legislation that would provide additional funds from the state for the purchase of local agricultural products in school meals. In 2009, HB 2800—which included an additional $.15 per school lunch and $.07 per school breakfast, as well as a small pot of grant dollars for school garden and education programs--failed. If it had passed, $22 million in lottery funds would have funded the bill, allowing for the purchase of more Oregon grown, processed and manufactured foods for the lunchroom. The bill had a great deal of support and will most likely be reintroduced in the 2011 legislative session, although given the current state budget situation, it will be a tough battle to secure funding.

In addition to ODA, ODE and Ecotrust, there are regional Farm to School coordinators working in the following areas: Willamette Farm and Food Coalition (Eugene); Gorge Grown (Hood River); Corvallis Environmental Center (Corvallis); Rogue Valley Farm to School (Ashland); Oregon Rural Action (La Grande); Bend-La Pine Farm to School (Bend/LaPine); Ecotrust/Growing Gardens (Portland). Food Roots in Tillamook is increasingly getting involved with Farm to School. The Lane County Farm to School Program was recently honored by having two districts (4J and Bethel) selected as two of 15 locations nationwide that USDA visited on its model Farm to School tour.

Regional Coordinators are needed on the Oregon Coast and in Southeast Oregon. Overall, the regional coordinator positions are critical to the movement because they help make connections between school districts and farmers, and deliver the hands-on education programs, such as school gardens, farm tours and classroom activities. They are primarily funded by community grants and donations and could use more private support at this time.

ODA was recently selected to become the statewide coordinator for FoodCorps in Oregon. FoodCorps is a new Federal AmeriCorps program focused on Farm to School and school gardens. These positions have the potential to grow Farm to School and school gardens by providing more local/regional coordinators, school garden positions, and additional food service staff. The goal is to have 5-10 FoodCorps members starting in the 2011-12 school year—going up to 20 members the following year. For each position, there is a required $4,000 match from the sponsoring organization (e.g. school district or nonprofit) and local communities who are struggling with tight budgets would benefit from private support to cover this match. Oregon was one of 10 states selected in this round.

The 2010 Federal Child Nutrition Reauthorization, which passed in December 2010, provides for $40 million in funding for Farm to School programs. The bill also includes a 6-cent per meal increase in school lunch reimbursements, expands school meal eligibility, and establishes stronger nutrition standards for all foods sold in schools. Unfortunately, this increase in funding to improve school meals was made available by making cuts in the SNAP (food stamp) program.

Positive Economic Impact of Farm to School: In late 2007, Ecotrust received a grant from the NWHF-Kaiser Permanente Community Fund to fund a pilot project in the Portland and Gervais school districts. The pilot project worked with 91 schools that served approximately 22,000 lunches per day.

From September 15-December 31, 2008, approximately $66,000 ($.07 per lunch) was invested in the two districts, which in turn *inspired* total purchases of $225,000 in local foods—a 241% ROI. School districts leveraged the investment by substituting locally produced items for items they had been buying non-locally. The schools bought a wide variety of products—both fresh, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables—as well as Oregon wheat, cheese and chicken noodle soup. Schools purchased these products directly from farms and food processors and also through their mainline distributors (Kane, 2009).

According to Ecotrust, the pilot revealed that for every $1 spent on Oregon products, another $.87 continues to cycle throughout the Oregon economy. And furthermore, resources used to buy school food ended up affecting, or showing up in, 401 of 409 economic sectors within the Oregon economy. Ecotrust has a complete copy of this economic analysis, but the results show the impressive potential that an investment in local food purchase for school meals can have on Oregon agriculture and the economy in general.

Overall, the school food market presents an emerging market for farmers, especially for fruits and vegetables. According to the USDA required meal pattern, schools must serve ½ cup of fruits or vegetables per lunch. This translates to approximately 26,154,500 cups per year in Oregon. If carrots were served every day as this ½ cup that would equate to serving 19,046 tons of carrots during the nine-month period across Oregon. At $70 per ton, that is $1,333,220 of farm value (Ratcliffe, 2010). Currently, Portland Public Schools is sourcing 32% of their product locally, and specific products like the Truitt Brothers three-bean chili are being created for the lunch line.

Positive Impact on Health Outcomes For Children: In 2009-10, 50.2% of the 559,100 school-age children in Oregon (280,668 children) were eligible for a free or reduced priced school meal. On a daily basis, just over 200,000 children in Oregon actually eat a free or reduced priced lunch (ODE, 2010). With the impact of the recession, more than ever, families are relying on the food served in schools as their children's primary source of nutrients and calories.

Research shows increasing participation in school meal programs is relevant in the fight against obesity because children who eat school lunch are known to consume twice the servings of fruits and vegetables and greater amounts of grains and dairy than students who do not participate in the school meal program (Rainville, 2001). The good nutrition that school meals can offer combined with a hands-on educational program about healthy eating and agriculture can potentially change behaviors and help us turn back the tide on obesity and health related disease in Oregon.

Support for Farm to School Transition: Approximately 69 school districts out of 200 have indicated that they are purchasing Oregon agricultural products in addition to milk (Ratcliffe, 2010). One of the major barriers to implementation that came up in interviews was the increased cost of local products. Another barrier was the community's capacity to process local products so that they are ready for the school cafeteria. According to the Corvallis School District, "bringing local produce into the school kitchen and cafeteria is not as simple as it may seem." On their district website, they share that "typically price, supply, condition of produce and delivery are the most common obstacles that both districts and farms must resolve." They go on to mention that due to budget cut-backs the Central Kitchen Staff do not have time to wash, clean and de-stem product to prepare it for use. This area presents opportunities throughout the state for new local food processors; and the potential for job training programs and job creation that can lead to economic development in the food sector.

In addition, the transformation of school cafeterias to convenience food took place over the last 20 years. For many districts, kitchens are not set-up to cook from scratch and there can be a lack of freezer/refrigerator capacity for storing farm-fresh products, such as frozen corn-on-the-cob. One interviewee noted that it would be helpful to have "mini-grants to allow food service to test what works and what does not work well and to fund equipment and kitchen renovations." In addition, cooking from fresh ingredients takes more staff time—which on the positive side means more jobs, but on the negative side increases the cost of each meal and the total budget.

One interviewee mentioned the need to provide training, and especially mentoring, to school food service directors to increase participation in the program. The LiveWell Colorado Initiative that emerged out of the Convergence Partnership is sponsoring "Culinary Boot Camps" to improve the capacity for Colorado school districts to serve cooked-from-scratch meals to students. Professional chefs are trained to teach week-long boot camps for school food service providers.

Importance of Measuring Outcomes: The Oregon Department of Agriculture is currently working on common templates and reporting forms for schools so that Oregon can track the impact of Farm to School. They are also working to secure grants for Farm to School and school garden pilot projects—one in Salem-Keizer and one in North Powder. Upstream Public Health recently received a grant for a Farm to School Health Impact Assessment.

Other Farm to School/School Meal Suggestions: In several interviews comments were made about the structure of school meals. One interviewee commented, "Could schools serve fewer options, but make them more nutritious?" It was also suggested that there should be a campaign to get more middle and higher-income parents to encourage their children to eat school meals because this provides additional revenue that can then support local food purchase. ODA also mentioned that most of the funding goes to schools where over 50% of the children are eligible for the free or reduced meal program. However, there are many schools across Oregon that fall into the 40-50% eligible range that still have high need, but do not qualify for funding.

5) Community Involvement/Leadership Development

Background: Community involvement is a key principle of community food system work. As noted in the definition presented in Chapter Two, one of the most important aspects of sustainable community food system projects is that they increase resident participation. Increasing the capacity of communities to work together and become empowered to meet their own food needs is critical. There is a new organizing model in Oregon called FEAST—Food Education Agriculture Solutions Together. Created by Sharon Thornberry, the Community Resource Developer (and community food systems expert) at Oregon Food Bank, the FEAST model provides an opportunity for community members to participate in a facilitated discussion about Food, Education, and Agriculture in their local area, and begin to work towards Solutions Together to build a healthier, more equitable and resilient food systems.

> "I felt that the "FEAST" was the event that energized and activated people in Clatsop County to take action on the important issues surrounding our food system. Since the FEAST I have seen great leaders, and great ideas emerge to direct the food system coalition. The FEAST revitalized not just conversation, but enacted a vision filled with goals and proactive action."
>
> *--Marlin Martin, Food Program Developer*
> *Clatsop Community Action Regional Food Bank*

To date, FEAST events have taken place in nine targeted rural areas in Oregon. The events have been a powerful organizing tool to bring diverse sectors of the food system together. A successful FEAST event was recently held in Lebanon, Oregon, that led to the development of a local market and at least five new Farm to School buying relationships in Lebanon and Sweet Home. In addition, the Sweet Home School District is now providing leftover food to the United Methodist Church's free meal program, allowing them to be open one additional night per week (and reducing food waste). In Astoria, the North Coast Food Web, a food and farming coalition, emerged from the Clatsop County FEAST meeting. You can learn more about the history of farming in Clatsop County, and the emerging work of the North Coast Food Web at www.northcoastfoodweb.org.

Several FEAST events have occurred in conjunction with a Community Food Assessment being conducted by a one-year University of Oregon (UO) Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) AmeriCorps participant. RARE participants are typically pre-graduate level students who are seeking a year of community based planning experience. The RARE program is administered through the UO Community Service Center (CSC). The CSC is a research center affiliated with the Department of Planning, Public Policy and Management at the UO. It is an interdisciplinary organization that assists Oregon communities by providing planning and technical assistance to help solve local issues and improve the quality of life for Oregon residents. The role of the CSC is to link the skills, expertise, and innovation of higher education with the transportation, economic development, and environmental needs of communities and regions in the State of Oregon, thereby providing service to Oregon and learning opportunities to the students involved (CSC, 2010).

Created in 1994, RARE has placed more than 300 participants in communities where they spend eleven weeks assisting local groups and agencies in the planning for sustainable economic and rural development. In recognition of the long-term impact of the UO RARE program, in November 2008, the Ford Family Foundation gave the program a three-year $235,000 grant that was designed to assist the RARE program in planning for its long-term growth and expansion.

Over the past few years, RARE AmeriCorps participants have been placed in Southeast Oregon, Pendleton, La Grande, Astoria, Grant County, and Hood River to conduct community food assessments and organize community members around food system projects. Each RARE volunteer has made a significant contribution to the community they have served and several impressive Community Food Assessments are available on-line and are in active use in each community. The biggest issue has been that they research, create the community food assessment and do initial community organizing in Year 1, but then are gone for the implementation phase in Year 2. Most of those interviewed thought it would be beneficial to have a second-year RARE to coordinate the implementation phase.

At the same time, many rural communities have, or are in the process, of participating in the 5-year Ford Institute for Community Building that is funded and coordinated by the Ford Family Foundation. The Institute focuses on increasing community vitality through a series of training classes called the Ford Institute Leadership Program. The program is based on the belief that vital rural communities develop from a broad base of knowledgeable, skilled and motivated leaders, a diversity of effective organizations, and productive collaborations among organizations. The Institute was first offered in 2003 and four new communities are selected to enter the program each spring and each fall. There are now approximately 250 "Ford Ambassadors" who have completed the program in Oregon. Classes include Leadership Development, Effective Organizations and Community Collaborations. The

majority of classes are taught by Rural Development Initiatives (RDI) with some taught by TACS (now called The Nonprofit Association of Oregon) and Human Systems based in Ashland.

Currently there is formalized collaboration between the Oregon Food Bank's community food system work and the UO RARE program—with Sharon Thornberry training and supervising the food system focused RARE participants. The Ford Family Foundation has provided the significant grant mentioned above to support long-term planning for the UO RARE program. RDI facilitates the majority of the leadership training classes for the Ford Institute Leadership Program. A more formalized collaboration that engaged OFB, UO RARE, Ford and RDI in a partnership could be beneficial in terms of building the capacity of each of their efforts, as well in terms of improved outcomes for the rural communities they are working with.

Expansion of FEAST, RARE, and Community Food Assessments: The vision for expanding the FEAST model to additional communities was recently described in the Federal *Hunger Free Communities* grant proposal submitted by Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon. The plan is to expand capacity by training 12 facilitators and then taking the event model to at least 24 more areas over a two-year period. To support this work additional RARE AmeriCorps participants are need to help facilitate FEAST forums and conduct Community Food Assessments, and an additional Community Resource Development position at OFB to could better support Sharon Thornberry in supervising the expansion of this work.

Need for Additional Community Resource Developer Position: In order to effectively supervise the roll-out of additional FEAST events and the community food system work of additional RARE participants each year, an additional Community Resource Developer is needed to work with Sharon Thornberry. A second position is important on several levels for capacity building. Sharon is seen by many as the "linchpin in the movement." Interviewees made comments such as, "she has so much knowledge," "she has a good pulse on the issues and understands rural communities" "she has helped birth so many organizations." However, at the same time there was concern about what would happen when Sharon retires and that there is a need for her to have a role in training the next generation of food system leaders. There is also the geographic challenge of having one person serve all of Oregon. In Sharon's view, ideally there could be one person focused on the west side of Oregon and one on the eastside.

RARE AmeriCorps Participants Needed for Year 2 Implementation: A RARE AmeriCorps participant usually serves a community for one-year at a "match" cost of $19,000. In some cases, Oregon Food Bank has covered the match for community food system RARE's with ARRA funding. From interviewing several RARE participants, as well as organizations who have worked with RARE, the consensus was that it would be beneficial to have Year 1 for conducting the community food assessment and community organizing and Year 2 for implementation. Gorge Grown, a model for an effective community food system organization, benefitted from three years of RARE and was initially formed by a RARE participant. If the first year of funding were provided by public funders or private foundations, the community could be asked to fund at least half of the 2nd year in order to build capacity and show community commitment.

Empower Low-Income and Communities of Color as Leaders and Change Agents: The "health epidemic is hitting low-income and people of color harder—people most vulnerable to the system…but we cannot change the system for one segment without changing it for all." Several people interviewed emphasized the importance of social justice and including those most affected (low-

income and people of color) in identifying the issues and the solutions. The Janus Youth Program in Portland provides an excellent model for working to empower communities to positively change the food system. NWHF is spearheading a Multnomah County Convergence Partnership Project specifically focused on engaging communities of color.

6) Statewide Leadership/Convening

Background: The majority of people interviewed did not see the need for a new statewide nonprofit organization or an existing nonprofit to coordinate community food system efforts statewide. One person said, "the state is too big for a statewide group." Another echoed that it would be better to invest in local and regional efforts. Most people had trouble selecting which existing agency could play an effective and neutral leadership role. There was clear value in many organizations, but some were too focused on hunger, others too political, and in the end the real need came down to enhanced networking, annual convening, and the desire for free, user-friendly web-based means to stay connected and share best practices. Use of the internet was especially important for those in rural areas who have a limited travel budget and less access to larger meetings and conferences.

State-Level Policy Work: It is a widely held sentiment that systemic change needs to happen in the food system arena, and that state and federal policy changes are a fundamental part of this process. Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon is currently taking the lead on the formation of a Statewide Food Systems Council, along with other partners, as part of the regional food system portion of *Ending Hunger Before it Begins—Oregon's Call to Action 2010-2015*. They have worked on developing the state level council for many years and supportive legislators will reintroduce the concept in the 2011 session.

According to those involved in its formation, a statewide Council would recommend policies, programs and food initiatives that strengthen Oregon's food economy, improve access to healthy and nutritious food, engage citizens in food system planning and leverage community resources. The vision is for a comprehensive approach to addressing the multitude of food-related concerns that affect different agencies and organizations. However, throughout the interviews there were concerns expressed about the purpose and structure of a statewide food policy council in Oregon. The most common concern was that it would be an appointed government agency group with little connection to the grassroots, community level and a lack of diverse representation (especially low-income and people of color). When it was seen as a resource for community organizations and a means to hold up best practices, the sentiment generally became more supportive.

According to the Community Food Security Coalition, there are over 100 food policy councils nationwide, with at least 18 state-level food policy councils in the U.S. In June 2010, Washington Governor Christine Gregoire signed an executive order to form a Washington Food Policy Council. According to an Urban Farm Hub article, the Washington State Food Policy Council will, "set the table to consider the many needs across our diverse state for strengthening our food system in a comprehensive way… creating food systems in the state that strengthen business for small, medium and large farms, create viable retail and institutional markets, improve social justice, and improve outcomes for the environment and public health…" The vision for the Oregon council is similar and we can learn from our neighbors to the north as their council is implemented.

For farmers and those organizations working with small-mid-size farmers, there is enthusiasm for the newer group Friends of Family Farmers (FOFF) located in Molalla that is working to "build a strong

and united voice for Oregon's independent family farmers, food advocates, and concerned citizens who are working to foster an approach to agriculture that respects the land, treats animals humanely, sustains local communities, and provides a viable livelihood for family farmers." In the winter of 2009-10, FOFF staff traveled throughout Oregon meeting with 17 groups of farmers and ranchers to hear their concerns. From these meetings, they created *The Agricultural Reclamation Act*. In it they identify priority action items at the state and federal levels for meat and poultry; milk and dairy; rules, regulations and safety; regional food system infrastructure and markets; and, farm and land viability. It is not possible to summarize the entire act in this report, but it provides succinct summaries of the current status of each focus area and clear priority action items. Those interested in food system issues in Oregon can review the full document on the Friends of Family Farmers website, www.friendsoffamilyfarmers.org

The Friends of Family Farmers is also forming a new Oregon coalition called *Oregon GROWS—A Partnership for Food and Farms*. The draft guiding document stated that the group is an "alliance of Oregon farm, rural development, local food and food security organizations that advance common positions to support Oregon family farmers, promote healthy rural communities and ensure safe and nutritious food for all Oregonians." The group has drafted common priorities, outcomes, and rules for member engagement. However, it is premature to include a list of member organizations here because the group is still in its formative stages.

It is important to note that statewide there are different approaches to policy and advocacy for Oregon's farmers, based on different sets of values and views of agriculture. Many small-mid-size farmers are motivated by the work of Friends of Family Farmers and say they are relieved to "finally have a voice in Salem that represents their interests." Other farm organizations, such as the Oregon Farm Bureau, have worked for years on policy-level work for farmers and believe they effectively represent the interests of all Oregon farmers, including small farmers.

Fully Implement *Oregon's Call to Action 2010-2015:* The Oregon Hunger Task Force was created by the state legislature in 1989, while Partners for a Hunger Free Oregon, the newer nonprofit arm that "works with the community to end hunger before it begins," was formed a few years ago. To create the ***Call to Action*** plan, the Oregon Hunger Task Force and Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon spent nine months (with support from the NWHF-Kaiser Permanente Community Fund) gathering information about hunger and food security in Oregon, seeking out many voices and viewpoints. They reached out to communities of color, rural communities, and the public health community. The project involved a statewide survey completed by more than 370 Oregonians; community forums and statewide conferences; in-depth interviews with food pantry volunteers, affordable housing advocates, Oregon Hunger Task Force members, public health experts, and gardening/farming advocates; review of reports and data sets from Oregon, other states, and national advocacy and public policy organizations; as well as a full-day Hunger Summit in Salem.

The plan provides an excellent road-map for ending hunger in Oregon, with three primary goals: 1) Increase economic stability for people, communities, and the state; 2) Cultivate a strong regional food system in Oregon, and; 3) Improve the food assistance safety net. The vision is to implement the plan in partnership with other community-based organizations. Several of the priority strategies for regional food system work are conducting community food assessments in each region of the state, increasing investments in farm to school and school garden initiatives, and assessing and improving the viability and healthy food choices in small rural grocery stores, all supporting findings and recommendations from this study. To view the complete *Call to Action* go to www.oregonhunger.org

Encourage Sharing of Best Practices: Although the sentiment was not to fund a statewide convening organization, many community organizations, especially in more rural parts of Oregon, wanted to be more connected to other organizations doing similar work. They all agreed that meeting face-to-face once a year would be beneficial. Since many organizations are already attending the OSU Small Farms Conference in February, it was proposed that a community food system day be added before or after this conference. This idea needs to be explored more fully with the OSU Small Farms Conference organizers, as well as Oregon Food Bank and Partners for a Hunger Free Oregon, who could also play a lead role in facilitating this additional day.

Strengthening on-line resources was also suggested as an effective and low-cost strategy to increase communication and networking. The Food for Oregon website and listserv is a partnership between Oregon Food Bank and Oregon State University. This searchable site allows people across Oregon to connect to other organizations statewide. This website and listserv needs further development in order to be more participatory and user-friendly and to enhance its capability to host webinars, blogging, etc. The award-winning RIPPLE website, recently developed by Rural Development Initiatives, provides a model for an on-line forum-based website that supports community and economic development in the rural Northwest. It covers some rural food system topics through specific bloggers, like Sarah Hackney from Gorge Grown. However, the Food for Oregon website could delve further into urban and rural food system topics.

7) Food System Funders and Funding Gaps

Background: One interview question asked about which sources of funding organizations are utilizing for community food system work and which aspects of their work are most challenging to secure funding for. There is a long list of public sector and a shorter list of private sector foundation funding sources that is included in the compiled notes in Appendix D. The Federal funding sources are highly competitive nationwide and in many cases are for start-up or pilot projects. Both Responsive and Grassroots Grants from the Meyer Memorial Trust have played a significant role in building the community food system work to date. A few interviewees mentioned the importance of MMT remaining a "general purpose" foundation without rigid criteria that limit the types of organizations or programs that can apply.

In addition to MMT, Oregon foundations that interviewees mentioned were NWHF (primarily Kaiser Permanente Community Fund), The Collins Foundation, Oregon Community Foundation, McKenzie River Gathering Foundation, Providence Health Foundation, plus United Way. Foundations outside Oregon that are funding Oregon groups included The Surdna Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, HEAL Convergence, Kresge Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson, Socially Responsible Agriculture Project, Western Conservation Foundation, Farm Aid, Jessie Smith Noyes and Heifer. The Schmidt Family Foundation has engaged in some exploratory work around sustainable agriculture efforts in Oregon and may decide to provide funding in the future. The Sustainable Agriculture Food System Funders are active in Oregon as a networking group for funders, but do not directly provide grants. The general sentiment was that it would help build the capacity of the movement to have more local or statewide private foundation funding opportunities available.

Convene Foundations Interested in Community Food Systems: The two foundations interviewed for this project (Ford Family Foundation and Northwest Health Foundation) both expressed interest in being connected with a group of funders to learn more about community food system issues and

discuss funding needs and strategies. The Ford Family Foundation was also interested in exploring how best to partner on funding rural community food system projects. Ford has funded community matches for RARE AmeriCorps positions in the past, and has provided small project grants through their technical assistance funding stream as part of the Ford Institute Leadership Program. Northwest Health Foundation noted the increasing number of applications for the Kaiser Permanente Community Fund that focus on social determinants of health, including food system issues. As interest grows, they also realize the funding gap that exists for the rest of the state since they only cover the geographic area from Longview, WA, to Corvallis, OR.

Potential to Leverage Oregon Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Grant Program: Each year the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) receives an allocated amount of funding from the USDA to provide grants to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in Oregon. In 2010, ODA received $1.7 million dollars. For the purposes of the grant program, specialty crops are defined as commonly recognized fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and nursery crops. Feed crops, food grains, livestock, dairy products, seafood products and oil seed crops are not eligible. Eligible organizations include nonprofits, local government entities, for-profit organizations, industry trade associations, producer groups, and commodity commissions. It was mentioned during one interview that ODA is working to increase outreach about the program so that a more diverse pool of applications comes in next year, including more nonprofit organizations. The 2010 funding priorities were:

- Market development and access, both international and local/farm-direct
- Product and varietal development
- Value-added initiatives
- Innovation and productivity
- Consumer education
- Food safety and traceability
- Certification and producer outreach, including, but not limited to: GAP/GHP (Good Agricultural/Handling Practices), identity preserved, organic, sustainability, or other market assurance programs.

Grants can range in size from $25,000-$100,000 and cannot directly benefit or provide profit only to a single organization. Matching funds are highly encouraged with a 1:1 cash match preferable to in-kind. The Specialty Crop Grant Program could be leveraged with additional private foundation support, especially to encourage more grants that support community food system projects. ODA is interested in exploring this partnership concept further with Oregon foundations.

Funding Gaps and Challenges: The challenges of accessing Federal funding came up in most of the interviews, from how does a farmer or community organization figure out where to go for funding to how does a person with little grant experience pull off a complex Federal grant application? It was noted that USDA Rural Development, especially Jeff Deiss in Portland, does a great job trying to break down Federal opportunities, but that it is still challenging for many to pursue Federal grants. More research is needed to figure out how to most effectively provide technical assistance and support more Federal grant applications so we can maximize the amount of Federal dollars coming into Oregon.

Interviewees mentioned that as the movement grows, there is increasing competition for a limited pot of funding. For some there were challenges with foundations having specific criteria that ruled out community food system projects. Another interviewee shared that "funding drives the focus on the

low-income population which can be a barrier to comprehensive food system work." Many interviewees mentioned the importance of funding general operating support and providing multi-year grants. It also works well for organizations when foundations proactively work together to jointly fund a proposal.

Funding is challenging to secure for travel to meetings and conferences and/or networking. Yet, many community food system practitioners stressed the importance of networking in order to share best practices, especially for those in more isolated rural communities. Other funding gaps/challenges include:

- Market and feasibility studies related to food sector economic development;
- Micro-loans for equipment (school districts, farmers, etc.);
- Policy work, especially on the national level;
- Matches for Federal grants;
- Healthy Retail because it is a new arena;
- Resources specifically for low-income and/or communities of color;
- Funding that is available quickly to take advantage of an immediate opportunity.

8) Training and Research

Background: In addition to the trainings that have already been mentioned for farmers and school district/food service personnel, it was mentioned that in general, "technical assistance is needed to speed up innovation." Research areas were also identified that would help build the capacity of the community food system movement by providing baseline information from which solid food system planning can occur.

Training and Technical Assistance: One training model that could be expanded to other parts of Oregon is the Food Entrepreneurs Workshop (otherwise known as "Food Biz Bootcamp") that took place in Jan/Feb. 2010 in Corvallis. A partnership between Oregon Tilth, OSU, and Linn-Benton Community College, the workshop focused on giving people the skills to start their own food business.

Other training needs that emerged statewide were:

- Training for smaller, especially rural, grocery store owners regarding the rules and regulations governing the direct purchase of local food products;
- Funding for professional development of nonprofit community organizations;
- Technical assistance with Farmers Market applications, and;
- Technical assistance to determine appropriate funding sources and help with Federal grant applications.

Agricultural Economic Analysis for Community Food Systems: The Community Food Assessments that RARE AmeriCorps participants conduct do provide some agricultural analysis. However, what was discussed in several interviews was the need to expand food system research from an economic perspective.

Several interviewees suggested Ken Meter of the Crossroads Resource Center in Minnesota (www.crcworks.org) who consults nationwide, as a good person to potentially conduct this research. He provided agricultural economic analysis to *The Vivid Picture Project* in California, has already

completed an agricultural analysis for Harney County, Oregon, and has worked with Sharon Thornberry at Oregon Food Bank on other projects. When contacted about this research prospect, he created a proposal for a statewide assessment that would include seven sub-regions in Oregon. For each region, he would compile solid quantitative data that would provide baseline data for understanding the workings of the regional farm and food economy, assist local stakeholders in identifying strategic priorities for community economic development, and assess the economic impact of community-based food systems.

OSU Rural Studies department also collects significant local and statewide economic data and has the expertise to conduct economic analyses in the food/agricultural sectors. As part of this economic analysis, it would be beneficial to examine the 20,000 products that are not in the New Seasons Home Grown program (N. CA to Washington products) and determine which might be feasible to produce in Oregon.

Farm Transition Planning for Food Production Farms: What is the future of food production in Oregon when the average age of a farmer has risen to 58? Across the state people are talking about the average age of farmers, which has crept higher over the past few years and how to address transition. Friends of Family Farmers has a new on-line I-Farm program to link transitioning farmers with emerging farmers. Rogue Farms Corps and the Southern Oregon Farmer Incubator program are training and mentoring new farmers.

In 2008, a working group began meeting to discuss issues related to farm transition. In February 2009, a one-day summit was held in Corvallis to identify a cohesive vision and strategy to address transition issues. The sponsors of the summit were ODA, OSU, PSU, and the USDA Farm Services Agency. A background paper was created for the day that included summaries about issue areas including land, financial capital, markets, and technical assistance. The paper also addressed existing Farm Link and beginner farmer programs in the U.S.

However, during the interview process, no one could identify any one organization that is going out in a deliberate way to document what food producing farmers plans are for transition. There seems to be a great opportunity to communicate with farmers about the importance of what they do for local and regional food security and to share resources that they may need if they are interested in keeping their farm in food production, but do not have a family member to pass it on to. If this proactive work does not occur, we risk losing valuable food producing farms.

Low-income Access to Healthy Food: More research and creative thinking is needed to derive solutions to the barriers facing low-income access to healthy food, and especially healthy, local food. It is important to note that a team of researchers and community partners affiliated with OSU recently applied for a Federal Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) Grant in partnership with UC Davis and University of Missouri. The project is entitled *Increasing Food Security and Economic Viability through Local Food Systems Innovations in California, Missouri and Oregon***.** The long-term goal of this project is to improve food security outcomes for disadvantaged communities and to strengthen local economies in selected local food systems in California, Missouri and Oregon through research, education and outreach programs designed with local collaborators (Edwards, Rosenberger, Thornberry, and Weber, 2010). Primary objectives of the grant include:

- To assess the current status of low-income consumers' access to food, especially locally produced food, and to identify barriers to greater access;

- To identify successes among programs designed to link low-income people to local food systems and to identify factors impacting the effectiveness of such programs;
- To better understand production and marketing decisions of farmers as they relate to marketing locally to low-income consumers, to identify barriers to such marketing, and to explore solutions to identified barriers;
- To answer the following questions for the selected foodsheds: (A) How does participation in the local food system impact food security, diet quality and access to preferred foods (regional food sufficiency)? (B) What is the local food system knowledge base among low-income households, and how do they act on this knowledge? (C) Why do some low-income households participate in the local food system, while others do not?
- To estimate the economic impacts of programs and practices that improve the access of low-income households to local food.

Unfortunately, as this report was being finalized, we were notified that they did not receive this grant. Ideally the Oregon component of this project could be broken out and funded. This project has great potential to build capacity within the community food system movement and strengthen efforts to improve food security, health and economic development in Oregon. OSU did recently receive an AFRI grant to develop an obesity prevention program for children in rural Oregon. OSU is also in the midst of developing a new Food and Culture Initiative that will link several departments that are involved in research and teaching around food systems, and eventually provide a major and minor in this area.

Shared Values and Measurable Outcomes: During the interviews, many people talked about the need for more research and especially the development of measurable outcomes within community food system work. One interviewee said, "Evaluation is critical, we need to evaluate what is being accomplished." Another person mentioned the need to identify common or shared values for community food system work in Oregon. This would allow for the creation of a clear vision of where we are headed (where do we want to be ten years from now?) and which indicators or measurable outcomes can help measure the progress in reaching that goal/vision.

According to the recent USDA Economic Research Service report, *Local Food Systems: Concepts, Impacts and Issues*, as of early 2010 there were few studies on the impacts of local (or community) food systems on economic development, health, or environmental quality. Empirical research has found that local (or community) food systems can increase employment and income for that community, but more research is needed to determine how the availability of local food impacts diet quality, food security, and the environment (Martinez, et al. 2010).

In terms of starting to dialogue about a vision and outcomes, the draft logic model included at the end of Chapter Two provides a starting place. Leaders among the community food system movement could refine a logic model for Oregon, especially for use by the State Food Systems Council. Additionally, in 2009, the Community Food Security Coalition released *Whole Measures for Community Food Systems—Values-Based Planning and Evaluation*. This report provides useful tools for evaluation and planning, including information on developing a shared vision and common measures among partner organizations. In addition to the catalyzing potential of more financial investment, the development of a shared vision and measurable outcomes for community food system work in Oregon would dramatically increase the capacity of the movement at this time.

CONCLUSION:

The main goal of this field assessment of community food system work in Oregon is to help inform the staff and Trustees at Meyer Memorial Trust and provide value to other funders and to those already working in this arena or interested in becoming involved in this work. *It is important to reinforce the limitations of this assessment.* Almost certainly, more efforts are going on in community food system work than is captured in this report, and the activity is expanding and changing almost daily.

It is our hope that those working to advance community food systems work in Oregon as well as public and private funders appreciate the breadth and depth of this work and find ways to join in and enhance these efforts. Oregon has a long agricultural history and enormous riches, in its land, workers, brains and talent. We are not afraid to be entrepreneurial and greatly value the power of community to make positive change happen. All these characteristics set the stage for great things to happen to our food system in Oregon, resulting in increased food security, health and economic prosperity.

Appendix A: Community Food System Organizations in Oregon

Across Oregon there are a growing number of nonprofit organizations working on community food system issues. There are also numerous for-profit businesses, such as retailers, processors, and distributors who are part of the movement. However, due to limited space and research time, the list below includes only the nonprofit organizations that we identified through the study.

Statewide Organizations

Oregon Hunger Task Force/Partners for a Hunger Free Oregon (Portland) -- www.oregonhunger.org
Mission: Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to complement and aid the work of the Oregon Hunger Task Force in strengthening Oregon's families and communities. Together, we work to **end hunger before it begins by addressing root causes.** Our common goal is to build families' economic stability and food security so that all Oregonians have sufficient means and ready access to nutritious, quality food.

Oregon Food Bank (Portland) -- www.oregonfoodbank.org
Mission: To eliminate hunger and its root causes *... because no one should be hungry.*

Oregon Farmers Market Association (Portland) -- www.oregonfarmersmarkets.org
Mission: To sustain and promote Oregon farmers' markets while building community support and economic stability for Oregon family farms, small food producers, processors and artisans.

Food Alliance (Portland) -- www.foodalliance.org
Mission: Food Alliance works at the juncture of science, business and values to define and promote sustainability in agriculture and the food industry, and to ensure safe and fair working conditions, humane treatment of animals, and careful stewardship of ecosystems.

Ecotrust/Food and Farms Program (Portland) -- www.ecotrust.org
Mission: Ecotrust's mission is to inspire fresh thinking that creates social equity, economic opportunity, and environmental well-being. With regard to our Food & Farms program, we see a world of possibilities for flourishing farms, vibrant communities, and healthy eaters. In fact, we believe all three are inextricably linked.

Oregon Environmental Council/Healthy Food and Farms (Portland) -- www.oeconline.org
Mission/Vision: Oregon will become a leader in food production and farming that protects our health and our environment; Oregon's farmers and food businesses will flourish economically, and be rewarded for their stewardship of our rivers and water, air, and wildlife; Oregonians will have the opportunity to support local agriculture, and eat local, healthy, sustainably produced food as part of our everyday lives.

Community Food Security Coalition (Portland) – National Focus -- www.foodsecurity.org
Mission: The Community Food Security Coalition catalyzes food systems that are healthy, sustainable, just, and democratic by building community voice and capacity for change.

Friends of Family Farmers (Molalla) -- www.friendsoffamilyfarmers.org
Mission: We are a grassroots organization promoting sensible policies, programs, and regulations that protect and expand the ability of Oregon's family farmers to run a successful land-based enterprise

while providing safe and nutritious food for all Oregonians. Through education, advocacy, and community organizing, Friends of Family Farmers supports socially and environmentally responsible family-scale agriculture and citizens working to shape healthy rural communities.

Oregon Grows—Partnership for Food and Farms (Molalla) -- www.friendsoffamilyfarmers.org
A newly formed coalition of Oregon farm, rural development, local food and food security organizations that advance common positions to support Oregon family farmers, promote healthy rural communities, and ensure safe and nutritious food for all Oregonians.

Farmers Ending Hunger (Salem) -- www.farmersendinghunger.com
Mission: The mission of Farmers Ending Hunger (FEH) is to utilize the production power of local farmers to eliminate Oregon's hunger problem. The idea behind the organization is enlisting local growers to provide help to local hungry communities.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon/Food and Farms (Portland/Corvallis) -- www.emoregon.org
Mission: To empower faith communities, farmers and neighborhoods to build rural-urban alliances and create innovative partnerships for just and sustainable food systems that promote community health.

Local/Regional Organizations/Programs

OFB Network/Regional Food Banks -- www.oregonfoodbank.org
Many of the 20 regional food banks that are part of the Oregon Food Bank network have started to work on community food system efforts, especially over the past ten years. Many offer self-reliance programs (community gardens, educational classes), partner with local food system efforts, and advocate and work with community partners to address the root causes of hunger. Food for Lane County has been involved with community food security work since 1997 and played a leadership role in the formation of the Willamette Farm and Food Coalition and the Lane County Food Policy Council. CAPECO in Pendleton has worked this past year on community food system projects as a result of ARRA funding and hosting a UO/RARE volunteer. The Southeast Oregon Regional Food Bank in Ontario hosted a RARE volunteer for the past two years who conducted a community food assessment and implemented several projects with the community, including a community garden. Marion-Polk Food Share has a rapidly expanding community garden program and is working with the farm community to create a land trust program. Given the time limitations of this study, we were not able to interview each regional food bank, but the network has the potential to offer tremendous resources and infrastructure to the community food system movement.

Community Health Partnership (Portland) -- www.communityhealthpartnership.org
Mission: Community Health Partnership (CHP) is an independent, not-for-profit organization committed to improving the health of Oregonians through advocacy and support of effective public health policy and activities.

Upstream Public Health (Portland) -- www.upstreampublichealth.org
Mission/Vision: **Imagine an Oregon** where everyone can live a healthy life. We advocate in a way that helps state and local decision-makers understand how social and physical environments profoundly affect the wellbeing of Oregonians-and then encourage them to enact innovative policies that will foster our good health. These kinds of changes will help Oregon become a state that creates vibrant communities and protects the health of all Oregonians while reducing the cost of health care through prevention.

Growing Gardens (Portland) -- www.growing-gardens.org
Mission/Vision: GROWING**GARDENS** gets at the root of hunger in Portland, Oregon. We organize hundreds of volunteers to build organic, raised bed vegetable gardens in backyards, front yards, side yards and even on balconies. We support low-income households for three years with seeds, plants, classes, mentors and more. Our Youth Grow after-school garden clubs grow the next generation of veggie eaters and growers! Through Learn & Grow workshops and work parties, we teach gardeners all about growing, preparing and preserving healthful food while respecting the health of the environment. We plant seeds for good food and healthy people by making sure low-income people have the resources they need to grow organic vegetables at home.

Janus Youth Programs (Portland) -- www.janusyouth.org
Mission: Janus Youth Programs is a leader in creating innovative, community-based services which enhance the quality of life for children, youth, and families. We work in partnership with others to create a safe and healthy community.

Multnomah Food Policy Council (Portland) -- www.portlandonline.com
The Food Policy Council is a citizen-based advisory council to the City of Portland and Multnomah County. The Council brings citizens and professionals together from the region to address issues regarding food access, land use planning issues, local food purchasing plans and many other policy initiatives in the current regional food system.

Multnomah Food Initiative (Portland) -- www.multnomahfood.org
The Multnomah Food Initiative is an innovative partnership between community organizations, businesses, and local governments to promote a more sustainable, equitable and healthy local food system.

Lane Coalition for Healthy Active Youth (LCHAY) (Eugene) -- www.lchay.org
Mission: To prevent childhood obesity and related diseases, in Lane County. *Vision:* Lane County, Oregon is a community in which all youth lead healthy active lives fueled by nutritious food.

Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation (Eugene) -- www.nedcocdc.org
Mission: NEDCO collaboratively builds human and capital assets to strengthen neighborhoods and broaden participation in community ownership and governance.

Rural Development Initiatives (Eugene) -- www.rdiinc.org
Mission/Vision: Rural Development Initiatives builds leadership networks and rural communities. Rural communities in our region are strong and vibrant as a result of skilled, inclusive local leaders who engage residents and promote diverse, resilient economies. People enjoy a strong sense of place, regional pride and a commitment to working through differences. They share a common vision for the future that fuels hope, optimism, and positive action and collaborate with other communities and regions to achieve mutual benefit.

Willamette Farm and Food Coalition (Eugene) -- www.lanefood.org
Mission: The Willamette Farm and Food Coalition facilitates and supports the development of a secure and sustainable food system in Lane County, Oregon.

Lane County Food Policy Council (Eugene) -- www.fpclanecounty.org
Mission: To foster community food security and local food system development in Lane County

Huerta de la Familia (Eugene) -- www.huertadelafamilia.org
Mission: Huerta de la Familia strives to alleviate poverty and hunger among low-income Latino families by assisting them to grow their own organic food.

Adelante Mujeres (Forest Grove) -- www.adelantemujeres.org
Mission/Vision: Adelante Mujeres is a community-based, non-profit organization located in Forest Grove, Oregon. Adelante provides participants a forum in which to learn and discuss the root causes of social ills, and plan collective action for change. By beginning with reflection on one's own experience, participants are able to grapple with their own struggles and hopes, and take concrete steps to improve their lives. Adelante is structured to give immigrant families the tools to achieve self-determination through 3 areas: Education, Empowerment & Enterprise.

Bienestar (Hillsboro) -- www.bienestar-or.org
Mission/Vision: Bienestar builds housing, hope and futures for the well-being of working families. Quality affordable housing is essential for individuals, families and communities to thrive. We envision and develop communities where residents find dignity, hope, confidence, skills, and courage to pursue their dreams. Bienestar believes that all work is honorable and champions those who provide essential labor to the community. We work in the midst of the poorest neighborhoods to unleash the potential of people to improve the quality of life for themselves, their children, their families, and the community.

Lincoln County Sustainability Action Committee (Newport) – www.co.lincoln.or.us

Ten Rivers Food Web (Corvallis) -- www.tenriversfoodweb.org
Mission: The Ten Rivers Food Web supports, educates and organizes farmers, processors, buyers, retailers and individuals to increase and diversify local food acreage, promote local food processing and expand access to affordable and nutritious foods.

Oregon Tilth (Corvallis) -- www.tilth.org
Mission/Vision: Oregon Tilth is a nonprofit organization supporting and promoting biologically sound and socially equitable agriculture through education, research, advocacy, and certification. Oregon Tilth advocates sustainable approaches to agricultural production systems and processing, handling and marketing. Oregon Tilth's purpose is to educate gardeners, farmers, legislators, and the general public about the need to develop and use sustainable growing practices that promote soil health, conserve natural resources, and prevent environmental degradation while producing a clean and healthful food supply for humanity.

Southern Willamette Valley Bean and Grain Project (Corvallis) -- www.mudcitypress.com
Mission/Vision: A step by step strategy to rebuild the local food system by increasing the quantity and diversity of food crops that are grown in the valley, evaluating deficiencies in the food system infrastructure, building buyer/seller relationships for locally grown food, incorporating the culture of community into the fabric of the food system, and compiling resources on organic and sustainable agricultural practices specific to this region. As the name of the project implies, central to the task is stimulating the cultivation and local marketing of organically grown beans and grains to provide a foundation for year-round food resources in the valley.

Corvallis Environmental Center—Farm to School (Corvallis)
http://corvallisenvironmental.wordpress.com
The Edible Corvallis Initiative (ECI) is a community-based, collaborative initiative to promote an environmentally and economically thriving foodshed in the mid-Willamette Valley. The CEC coordinates the Corvallis Farm to School program.

Food Roots (Tillamook) -- www.foodrootsnw.org
Mission: Food Roots exists to cultivate a healthy food system in Tillamook County.

Northcoast Food Web (Astoria) -- www.northcoastfoodweb.org
Mission: The North Coast Food Web is a coalition of people and organizations coming together to connect the dots of the local food landscape on the North Pacific Coast, from Pacific County Washington to Tillamook County Oregon

Gorge Grown Food Network (Hood River) -- www.gorgegrown.com
Mission: To build an economically and environmentally sound regional food system that engages, educates, and improves the health and well-being of our community.

Central Oregon Food Network (Bend) -- www.centraloregonfoodnetwork.com
Mission: To connect agricultural producers with their community. This is currently a website only.

Wy'East RC&D Area Council, Inc. (Redmond) -- www.wyeast-rcd.org
Mission: To help build sustainable rural communities to improve and enhance social, economic, and natural resources in the Columbia River Gorge, Mid-Columbia and Central Oregon.

Oregon Rural Action (La Grande) -- www.oregonrural.org
Mission: Oregon Rural Action is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit membership-based community organization working to promote social justice, agricultural and economic sustainability, and stewardship of the region's land, air and water. We're bringing people together to build strong communities by providing information and tools for local people to use in addressing the issues affecting our communities.

Slow Food Wallowa County (Enterprise) – no website at this time
Slow Food Wallowa County is an official chapter of Slow Food USA, a non-profit seeking to create dramatic and lasting change in the food system.

Think Local Umpqua (Roseburg) -- www.thinklocalumpqua.org
Mission: We are a group of farmers, entrepreneurs, educators, business people, public officials and consumers who are dedicated to fostering a vibrant, self reliant community in the Umpqua valley by encouraging people to Think Local First when selecting goods and services.

Thrive (Ashland) -- www.buylocalrogue.org
Mission: THRIVE helps create a more prosperous and sustainable Rogue Valley economy. We are dedicated to: 1) Diversifying and deepening the local economy; 2) Supporting family farmers and other locally owned businesses in becoming more sustainable; 3) Preserving farm land and the unique character of the Rogue Valley: 4) Educating businesses and consumers about sustainable food and business practices .

Rogue Farm Corps (Ashland) -- www.roguefarmcorps.org
Mission: Rogue Farm Corps exists to create hands-on educational programs to train the next generation of farmers and land stewards, to support our cooperative agricultural economy, and serve as a model for other communities.

Rogue Valley Farm to School (Ashland) -- www.rvfarm2school.org
Mission: Rogue Valley Farm to School educates children about our food system through hands-on farm and garden programs, and by increasing local foods in school meals. We work to inspire an appreciation of local agriculture that improves the economy and environment of our community and the health of its members

South Coast Watersheds (Gold Beach) -- www.currywatersheds.org
Mission: To protect and enhance the watersheds of Curry County. The South Coast Foodsheds project envisions a local Foodshed where the distance between producer and consumers is short and direct.

Appendix B: Interview Participant List (48 total)

Name	Organization	Title
Sharon Thornberry	Oregon Food Bank	Community Resource Developer
Joyce Aske	Ford Family Foundation	Assoc. Dir., Ford Institute for Comm. Building
Patti Whitney-Wise	Oregon Hunger Task Force/Partners	Executive Director
Jessica Chanay	Oregon Hunger Task Force/Partners	Deputy Director
Sally Eliason	Oregon Hunger Task Force/Partners	Child Nutrition Programs
Allison Hensey	Oregon Environmental Council	Program Director, Healthy Food and Farms
Debra Lippoldt	Growing Gardens	Executive Director
Andy Fisher	Community Food Security Coalition	Executive Director
Deborah Kane	Ecotrust	Vice-President, Food and Farms Program
Dan Sundseth	US Farm Services Agency/Tangent	Director
Lynne Fessenden	Willamette Farm and Food Coalition	Executive Director
Megan Kemple	Willamette Farm and Food Coalition	Farm-to-School Coordinator
Kim Leval	NCAP	Executive Director
Megan Smith	UO/RARE Program	Managing Director
Aimee Collins	UO/RARE Program	Field Coordinator
Laurel McMillan	Rural Development Initiatives	Regional Program Manager, Economic Vitality
Sara Worl	Rural Development Initiatives	Regional Program Associate
Katie Weaver	CAPECO	RARE Volunteer
John Dean	Clatsop Community Action	RARE Volunteer
Sarah Hackney	Gorge Grown	Executive Director
Amber Baker	Janus	Program Manager
Laurie Trieger	LCHAY	Executive Director
Andrew Mueller	Adelante Mujeres	Program Staff
Tera Couchman	Previously with Janus/CFSC	N/A
Gina Bell	Adelante Mujeres	Program Staff
Betty Izumi	PSU	Professor/Researcher
Chris Schreiner	Oregon Tilth	Executive Director
Stacey Sobell	Ecotrust	Farm-to-School Coordinator
Karen Shawcross	Bienestar	Executive Director
Teresa Ratzlaff	North Coast Food Web	Farmer
Kirstin Albrecht	OSU Extension/North Coast Food Web	Co-President N. Coast Food Web
Joan Gross	OSU	Professor/Researcher
Nancy Rosenberger	OSU	Professor/Researcher
Kendra Kimbirauskas	Friends of Family Farmers	Board President/de-facto Executive Director
Noelle Dobson	Community Health Partnership	Project Director--Healthy Eating/Active Living
Andrea Malmberg	Oregon Rural Action	Executive Director
Deb Shelton-Johnson	Lane County Food Policy Council	President
Shelley Bowe	Food Roots	Executive Director
Chris Kabel	Northwest Health Foundation	Program Officer
Katie Pearmine	Oregon Department of Agriculture	Specialty Crop Grant Program
Matthew Buck	Food Alliance	Assistant Director
Michelle Ratcliffe	Oregon Department of Agriculture	Farm-to-School
Eileen Brady	New Seasons	Co-Founder
Rick Jacobsen	Norpac	President
Jeff Diess	USDA Rural Development	Business and Cooperative Program Director
Dave Dillon	Oregon Farm Bureau	Executive Vice President
Wendy Siporen	Thrive	Executive Director
Peter Lawson	Southeast Oregon Regional Food Bank	Branch Coordinator

Appendix C: Interview Questions

Phase I

Q1. What is the mission and/or vision of your organization?

Q2. Can you please tell me about the project(s) that your organization is working on that are focused on strengthening community food systems (probes: food security/food access, improving health outcomes, and strengthening the local economy).

Q3. Who are the primary community partners involved in your work?

Q4. What do you see as the unique opportunities and challenges of working on community food system projects in rural vs. urban communities?

Q5. What more could be done to support local food production, processing, marketing and distribution in your community and/or Oregon?

Q6. How would these strategies lead to more local jobs in the food/agriculture sector?

Q7. Is the food producing farmland being adequately protected in your community?

Q8. Which strategies do you believe are most effective for helping low-income households access nutritious local food? What ideas could be expanded upon and/or developed?

Q9. Which sources of funding are available for community food system work? Which foundations are funding your work? Are there private or public funding sources that are more available for urban vs. rural projects? What are the funding gaps (e.g. projects that are difficult to get funding for)?

Q10. What do you see as the current collaborative structure and/or leadership model for community food system work in Oregon? (e.g. OFB and the food bank network) Are there gaps in coordination/ leadership?

Q11. What do you see as the key opportunities to build a stronger food system in your community and/or for all Oregonians?

Q12. What strategic role(s) could the state and/or a private foundation play in increasing support for local community food system efforts in your community and/or Oregon?

Phase II

Q1. Can you please tell me about the project(s) that your organization is working on that are focused on strengthening community food systems? (probes: food security/food access, improving health outcomes, and strengthening the local economy).

Q2. Who are the primary community partners involved in your work?

Q3. At this time, what do you see as the key *opportunities* to build a stronger food system in your community and/or for all Oregonians?

Q4. What more could be done to support local food production, processing, marketing and distribution in your community and/or Oregon? What types of support do rural communities need in particular?

Q5. How would these strategies lead to more local jobs in the food/agriculture sector?

Q6. Which strategies do you believe are most effective for helping low-income households access nutritious local food?

Q7. How is your community/region involved with Farm-to-School or Institution? What support is needed to build the capacity of this program?

Q8. Which sources of funding are you utilizing for your community food systems work? What are the funding gaps (e.g. projects that are difficult to get funding for)?

Q9. What do you see as the current collaborative structure and/or leadership model for community food system work in Oregon? Is there a need for more leadership/organization/convening? If yes, who is best positioned to lead/coordinate on a statewide level?

Q10. What strategic role can a private foundation play in building the capacity of the community food system movement in your community and/or statewide?

Appendix D: Compiled Interview Notes

LOCAL FOOD—ISSUES, INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS, PUBLIC EDUCATION

Food System Issues and/or Infrastructure Needs:

- Need to focus on scale within movement. Scale-up to involve not just farmers markets, etc., but major grocery stores (e.g. Davis, CA has largest farmers market in nation which grosses $2 million per year, but one Safeway in area grosses $19 or 20 million per year).
- ODA lens is "more crops sold."
- ODA working with marketing team on access to retail/direct markets.
- Need rebuilding of infrastructure—"do we need to return to what towns used to look like with grain silo, mill, etc.?"
- Need ready access to capital, business planning and market development.
- Farmers and small businesses often need support to succeed—concept of "Rapid Response Team."
- Good example of success with private label/quality difference of "full-value" product is Truitt Brothers (e.g. their chili and other products that are served in school districts and other institutions).
- Local/regional knowledge critical—Gorge Grown knows where vacant storage/processing located.
- Commercial kitchens needed for value-added processing/catering (how to make licenses more affordable through county health and ODA).
- "North Coast Food Web needs to exist because infrastructure is not there."
- North Coast Food Center to provide value-added to get farmers through the winter.
- Some contracts require that you not sell in any other way (e.g. if sell to Tillamook Creamery cannot also make your own cheese).
- Tool/equipment lending needed, but can be a challenge certain times of year when everyone need same item.
- Need "brokers" between producers and buyers.
- Transportation critical issue for access and sustainability.
- Need to research vacant storage and processing facilities/assess capacity.
- Need institutional purchasing and processing facilities (would create jobs); look at Fresh Food Financing strategy to fund it.
- Review soon to be completed City of Eugene study, "Barriers to Local Food Distribution."
- Food Hub—excellent tool, but need rural outreach, farmer training on how to use and how to get product ready for certain markets.
- Food Hub designed with open source technology to be able to export technology.
- Food Hub for OR/WA and all states that touch them, as well as Montana and Alaska.
- Food Hub goal: "robust regional food economy" "economic opportunity to preserve family farms."
- Ranchers launching Eat Oregon First—"entrepreneurs will increasingly be getting into food—it's 5-8 years behind green energy."
- Year-round Farmers Markets.
- What is the best way for large and small farms to co-exist?
- Need to save food producing farms…they are a small % of total.
- ODA Marketing Team working to help farmers.
- Need mission driven distributors/local businesses/nonprofits to take on supply chain.

- Strategic opportunities at all levels of the supply chain.
- Local markets are needed for bigger farms (scaling it up—ag in the middle).
- Eugene Local Foods good model—software being sold.
- Willamette Bean and Grain Project—good model, including infrastructure (see mudcitypress.com).
- Domestic Oregon Dept. of Ag staff—Michelle, Laura and Jerry (3 total).
- Grain storage—how best to convert grass seed storage to grain? Or, can railroad cars or another creative strategy be used?
- Willamette Farm and Food Coalition researching ag cooperative models in Fall 2010
- How to get venture capitalists interested in food?
- Need on-site refrigeration for farmers—otherwise local is not necessarily fresher.
- "Need public/private partnerships to fund projects because grant $ are limited."
- No packing house for organic fruit producers in Hood River area so have to take conventional price.
- Oregon is a specialty crop state—over 200 different commodities…we have diverse agriculture due to climate and soil quality.
- Challenge with local food movement: ¾ of Oregon food products go out of state and ½ leaves the country. So, amount that is produced here cannot all be consumed here in state. Need to not romanticize the ideal with 9 billion people in the world who need to be fed.
- It would a tremendous loss to farmers to lose any of the export markets, especially if a big state like CA decided to only buy CA products.
- "Appreciate that Ecotrust's Food Hub is value neutral. Buyers set criteria based on what is important to them (quantity, price, organic, etc.).
- Food safety is critical issue.
- "Need to get out of the way of business…private sector drives economy."
- Cooperatives can provide a good model, but need to have sustainable business model.
- Not a lot of access to a variety of processors, especially on microenterprise level (e.g. community kitchens).

Meat Processing Infrastructure:

- USDA inspectors needed, but state could have its own as long as conform to USDA requirements.
- Need state inspection program rather than Federal USDA.
- Need Entrepreneurs to run meat processing facilities.
- Need meat processing on N. Coast—not economical to bring to valley and then back.
- Meat processing in Wasco/Sherman means a 200 mile roundtrip to PDX.
- "What would it take to get custom facilities (half or whole facilities) up to USDA standards?"
- Mobile meat processing units vary dramatically in price--$150-$350K.
- For La Grande closest USDA facility is 3 hours away in Nampa, Idaho.
- Could Meyer help with infrastructure and job training for meat processing?
- Could there be mobile regional unit that comes to each community 1-2x per month—regional models important when lack economy of scale.
- Protein (meat, nuts) higher $ commodity.
- Loren Gwinn at OSU is heading up a statewide meat working group.

Public Education/Community Awareness:

- Can be challenging to articulate food system work, especially in rural areas.
- Reminder that SNAP brings $ into communities, rural and urban.

- Rural Stores—social, economic, health issues tied into it—need to educate people about importance of having a local store and encourage them to keep dollars in their community and shop there.
- Ag in the Middle needs relationship marketing…too large for farmstand or restaurant, but too small for chain store.
- Need to brand consumer loyalty.
- Need to "support local, rather than just buy local."
- Need public awareness campaign in each region about benefits of buying locally/regionally + local food guides.
- There are economies of scale that not everyone recognizes.
- "Local sales (e.g. farmers markets) are great because they draw attention to agriculture, but they are not on the same scale as big producers, cooperatives, etc."

JOB CREATION IN THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE SECTOR

- "Food and farms are building blocks of rebuilding local economy."
- "Need to pair food system work with economic development."
- "Need to localize food system as fuel is more expensive."
- "Rural communities need sustainability, viability, job development and self-sufficiency."
- Food system job training for local processing facilities…utilize regional food bank for job training, storage and processing.
- Local processing facilities (washing, chopping, packaging), especially for institutional purchase.
- Co-op grocery stores in rural areas—could be student run—provide job training opportunity.
- Small business development part of Adelante Mujeres; called Adelante Empresas—working with immigrant farmers to get a plot of land, sell at local farmers markets, start marketing cooperatively, etc.
- Commercial kitchen interest statewide, but concept most developed in Washington County with Adelante Mujeres and Bienestar and on North Coast as part of new North Coast Food Center
- Microenterprise.
- Food businesses (niche products) can provide stable family wage jobs…especially high end products for Whole Foods, New Seasons, type of market.
- Value added products more lucrative (processed in some way).
- ROI for farmers 2%/ROI for processors 18% (Food Alliance).
- North Carolina has some excellent models for economic development; there is a 50/50 urban/rural balance across the state; some of the funding comes from tobacco settlements
- Cooperatives can provide good model: John McCully; Agricultural Cooperative Council of Oregon tremendous resource; Evergreen Cooperatives (Cleveland).

HEALTH, SOCIAL-EQUITY, AND FOOD ACCESS

- "Obesity is a public health and economic crises—hunger and obesity are both malnutrition issues."
- Recognize health, hunger and obesity connection.
- New Farmer Subsidy Program in Southern Oregon is paying farmers to deliver nutritious local food to food banks at wholesale prices (funded by Cow Creek).
- Farmers Markets open more hours so that working people can better access.
- Teach gardening to everyone—Home Garden 101
- "Health epidemic hitting low-income and people of color harder—people most vulnerable to system…but cannot change system for one segment until change it for all."
- Can we subsidize small farmers or certain healthy foods so healthy food not so expensive?

- Need more programs about how to feed your baby. With new moms have a great opportunity to teach about cooking, good nutrition, etc. Partner with Head Start.
- Can we create low-cost meat option by organizing/promoting purchase of quarters and halves of custom butchered local meat?
- "We are focusing on kids because most opportunity to effect change."
- "We need a systemic shift in culture—need to embrace self-reliance and learn again how to manage with very little money."
- 1300 people are currently on the waiting list for the PDX community gardens.
- "Can you have a self-sustaining market without alcohol, tobacco, and lottery sales?—healthiest products have lowest profit margin.
- Promote community, home and school gardens.
- Rural grocery store surveys as part of CFA's.
- Look at food environment, what is accessible and at what cost—need to change food environment.
- SNAP/WIC at Farmers Markets, farmstands, etc.
- Maximize Federal programs, especially for child nutrition.
- Current study by Partners for a Hunger Free Oregon will create senior and rural food profiles, including use of SNAP and how people access food in different counties/communities.
- Need local stores like Winco, Thriftway and Walmart to sell locally produced products.
- Subsidized CSA, but combine with education about produce and recipes.
- Healthy Retail/Cornerstore initiatives.
- Utilize churches (Corvallis model).
- "Achieve social justice through land management and economic viability"—Adelante Mujeres
- New Seasons offers support to match SNAP $ at farmers markets.
- Classes on how to shop on budget at farmers market.
- Group working on strategies for getting more low-income people and people of color to shop at farmers markets.
- OSU Extension classes (e.g. Feeding your Family on a Budget).
- "It's a cruel irony that farmworkers are not allowed to take food from the field."
- Culturally appropriate food is key in emergency food system and non-emergency system (e.g. tortillas, rice and beans rather than bread for Latino families).
- Farmers need better access to insurance (liability, equipment, home).
- Healthy Food Retail (CHP white paper; Janus "Village Market" project; LCHAY pilot with Dairy Mart in Eugene/Springfield).
- Controversial, but need to know what SNAP $ are supporting (what is being purchased?)
- Need to look at 0-5 for nutrition and also in-utero (impact on obesity, etc.).
- "Need physical changes to environment –balance has been too heavy on programs (educational) and not on shifting environment."
- Do not teach about healthy food and then send people back into toxic environment full of junk food and fast food."
- Breastfeeding promotion important part of "food" movement.
- Good models for working with immigrant population: Adelante Mujeres, Huerta de la Familia and Bienestar.
- Farm to Food Bank Program -- get more fresh, local produce into food banks.
- Use food bank food purchase dollars to buy local products.
- Mobile markets in rural and urban food deserts (e.g. Gorge Grown model—Maupin grocery sourcing product from mobile market).
- Skill-building and leadership development critical—include in garden programs.

- Match SNAP $ at farmers markets (e.g. first $5)—New Seasons funding some of this.
- "What food do we want to be affordable and can we figure out incentives for retailers to offer healthy food?" (interesting government model in Brazil).
- "Fruits and vegetables need to be available everywhere."
- "If we change food environment then habits will follow—we need to make more healthy food available."
- "There are perceived and actual cost barriers at farmers markets for low-income people."
- "Increase ethnic diversity of vendors at farmers markets to reach people of color—people prefer to buy from someone who talks and looks like them."
- Focus on social determinants of health…help people be part of changing the system.
- "Need to see low-income and communities of color as change agents."
- "Need integrity behind intentions of equity."
- "Backyard gardens are great, but how much of needed food can that replace."
- Collaboration between OSU Extension and Boys and Girls Club is providing community gardening training for youth, nutrition education and cooking—making a difference in our community.
- Share our Strength cooking and food budgeting curriculum for low-income households.
- Some challenges with accessing nutritious food at smaller rural grocery stores include: limit of fresh and/or local product, sourcing from big box stores, distributors are not servicing certain areas because of low-volume and cost of fuel.
- "Important to remember that many farmers are low-income too."

FARM-TO-SCHOOL/INSTITUTION

- OR only state with state agency Farm-to-School position (ODE and ODA)—need to support and leverage.
- Grants funded by NWHF for PDX and Gervais Farm-to-School pilot—see Ecotrust testimony for economic benefits.
- A garden in every school! – 36 counties, a Farm-to-School/School Garden Coordinator for each county?
- Could goal be that every 3rd grader in state has an on-farm experience?
- Could schools serve fewer options and make them more nutritious?
- Need to provide training to food service directors to help them figure out local food purchase and how to make #'s pencil out.
- We could also bring more $ into state if middle and upper-income parents had their kids buy more school lunches. That would bring more $ into system to pay for local.
- If Meyer funds regional organizations, should leverage by having state commit to keeping positions at ODA and ODE.
- Could fruits and vegetables be at the beginning of the line to encourage consumption.
- Success with serving fruits and veggies at recess when kids are hungry (see Sweet Home model).
- Need more $ per meal for school food service to purchase more locally grown product
- What support/training do schools need to buy more local product?
- Need to pass state-level legislation to add $.15 to each meal—OR currently does not contribute—only a Federal reimbursement (Clem will reintroduce in 2011).
- Ecotrust is one of 8 regional leads…Western Regional Farm-to-School Coordinator (Kellogg gave $2 million for all coordinators over 2 years and continues to fund).
- Oregon Farm-to-School Network has 60 members—recently 3 years of funding from NWHF ended…housed temporarily at Partners for a Hunger Free Oregon.
- Farm-to-School "can build marketplace for local food."

- 7 Regional Coordinators in Oregon (WFFC, Gorge Grown, Corvallis Environ. Center, Rogue Valley Farm to School, OR Rural Action, Bend, Ecotrust/Growing Gardens).
- USDA recently selected Bethel and 4J districts in Eugene as 2 of 15 for visit as national model
- Barriers: cost of local products; capacity for processing locally grown products.
- Trainings with school district staff and food service in order to scale-up.
- Potential for USDA Farm-to-School--$10 million in child nutrition reauthorization bill.
- Very few Farm-to-School studies re: outcomes at this point.
- ODA working on common templates and reporting forms for schools.
- Need school garden staff + regional coordinators ("benevolent brokers between producers and districts).
- Recent RFP for Pre-K-to-School.
- ODA trying to institutionalize performance measures.
- " Conceptually there is link between economics, obesity and academic achievement."
- Farm-to-School program is "procuring, promoting, school garden + education" (ODA)
- Barriers: 1) school cafeterias lack infrastructure for prep (are used to food that arrives ready-made; 2) limited budgets and local can cost more, and; 3) supply/distribution chain have powerful economies of scale that are hard to compete with.
- Supply chain issues with Farm-to-School/Institution.
- Ecotrust Farm-to-School Regional Lead Agency since 2008 (Kellogg Funded National Farm to School Network and related Regional Leads)—purpose is to transmit national info to informal state leads (ODA, ODE)…will likely get another 3 years of funding.
- Regional coordinators are also needed on coast and in SE Oregon.
- Farm-to-Preschool newer part of movement.
- Mel Rader at Upstream Public Health just received funding for Farm-to-School Health Impact Assessment.
- Meyer helped start Farm-to-School at Oregon Rural Action.
- Equipment, such as refrigerators and freezers, is needed in cafeterias (e.g. storing frozen corn on the cob).
- Farmers can be used as teachers, for farm tours, at tastings.
- 2009 OR Legislature…proposed bill for $26 million that would have added $.15 per school meal for local food purchase…did not pass, but will be reintroduced in 2011 (not a good chance with recession). However ,OR is one of few states that does not contribute to school meal program.
- PDX is now sourcing 32% of their product locally.
- Salem-Keizer and North Powder School Districts piloting Farm-to-School/Garden Projects in 2010-11.
- Ecotrust report for NWHF and Legislative Testimony points to economic benefits of local food purchase associated with Farm-to-School pilots in PDX and Gervais.
- "It can be challenging to afford local in the first place and then processing adds cost"
- Tremendous opportunity with Farm-to-School."
- $ needed for food purchase + regional coordinators + school district staff (food service).
- "There can be huge differences between districts depending upon who they contract with"
- Fund advocacy to get bill passed for local food purchase and get Oregon to contribute to school meal program.
- Farm-to-Childcare project with Head Start—focus on intake of fruits and vegetables (recent application for NIH grant).
- "Need to replicate and scale projects bigger when appropriate."
- Mentoring—pairing food service professionals with Farm-to-School expertise with other newly involved food service staff.

- Mini-grants to allow food-service to test what works and what does not + kitchen renovations (or additional equipment).
- "Farm-to-School is not as useful without education component—kids don't know the difference between a local vs. non-local apple unless there is education component."
- "Farm-to-School network needs one leader."
- "Farmers are tepid about Farm-to-School because of scale of market…not likely that schools would only purchase Oregon grown."
- How much impact is local purchasing going to have on Oregon farms?
- Education is key value of Farm-to-School.
- For big farmers, institutional buying is generally not a lucrative market. USDA bids for products and participation for a big cooperative or farmer depends upon supply (primarily if glut or lose another customer).
- Most momentum is around Farm-to-School
- Refrigeration capacity has declined (since processed meals)
- Need staff training on how to handle fresh product
- Need one person to take the lead on Farm-to-School in our community (Ontario)

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- Hospitals as community partners, especially in rural areas.
- Utilize Community Colleges for training, skill building.
- Public Health Movement "has $ and power right now."
- FEAST (Food, Education, Agriculture, Solutions, Together) model needs to be formalized—great tool—need to train-the-trainer…have more capacity through more facilitators.
- Need 2nd position similar to Sharon Thornberry at OFB (Eastside and Westside community resources developer)—could be housed at OFB, CFSC, Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon.
- "Sharon (Thornberry) has helped birth so many organizations" "she's seen as the linchpin" "she has so much knowledge" "she has a good pulse on the issues and understands rural communities"—people are concerned that so much capacity is in one person…need to spread this knowledge and skills, especially since thought is that Sharon will eventually retire.
- RARE participants working on community food systems ($19,000 match per year), especially CFA's (list specific locations needed in report)—limiting factor is how many slots RARE receives from Americorps.
- Funding needed for two years for RARE—first year community food assessment and community organizing, second year implementation (3 years was great for Gorge Grown; John Day excited to have 2nd year).
- "When budget cuts need to be made, not judged on what kids eat and health" Dr. Larry Horton (Sweet Home model).
- Rural Leadership Training: Ford Institute for Community Building (Leadership, Effective Organizations, and Collaboration)—Approximately 250 ambassadors statewide now.
- Gorge Grown Community Food System Leadership Program (grassroots, locally facilitated).
- Ford contracts primarily with Rural Development Initiatives (RDI) for Leadership Institute.
- RDI interested in expanding work in community food system arena—has many technical skills.
- Statewide Farm-to-School network—60 members
- OR Grows (Friends of Family Farmers)—giving a voice to family farmers
- Small Farms Conference important conference in Oregon—approximately 600 attended in 2010.
- "Focus on movement building and institutionalization (e.g. formalize food systems into comprehensive plans, etc.)"
- Could Meyer fund community food system person at each regional food bank?

- FEAST most successful when community is "ready"—need to be engaged and involved with event steering committee. Effort before and after FEAST event is critical.
- Developing "communities of practice"/working groups (see valuechains.org in Iowa)
- Could Ford Leadership Institute allow local trainers?
- Empower residents to lead programs, see neighborhoods as change agents.
- Youth leadership important…need more funding for youth to attend meetings and conferences.

STATEWIDE LEADERSHIP/CONVENING

- Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon spent 9 months full-time going statewide to develop the Call to Action—needs to be fully implemented.
- Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon can share good models/access state-level change agents.
- USDA Hunger Free Communities—great model of partners coming together.
- OSU Small Farms Program (could add food systems day to conference in February).
- "Need to enhance connections, reduce silo activity, and build social capital."
- OSU Extension (+ag. experiment stations).
- Food for Oregon website could be improved and expanded upon.
- RIPPLE website (Sarah Hackney/Gorge Grown blogs).
- Oregon Food Bank/Community Resources/FEAST/RARE Supervision (Sharon Thornberry)
- State Food Systems Council—"venue for best practices, elevate work of local areas" (PWW) (Clem will reintroduce in 2011).
- "State too big for a statewide group."
- "Need to scale-up, coordinate, bring together."
- Funding to share models/technical assistance (Community Food Security Coalition model)
- USDA and ODA could work together more.
- Statewide report to Legislature re: community food assessments (CFAs), compile.
- "Statewide Food Systems Council at its worst would be appointed people who don't have buy-in…a talking head group."
- "If Statewide Food Systems Council was more of a resource hub and a place for networking that would have more benefit."
- For Statewide Council…focus should be on policies that need to change and working on them.
- For Statewide Council…need to ensure that diverse groups participate.
- "I don't see a need for statewide networking; more investment is needed to support local/regional efforts."
- "We need a statewide group like Friends of Family Farmers to focus on legislative issues—advocate for small farmers who have not had a voice at the state level."
- "We do not need another organization."
- "State focused food system council should not be too government centric."
- "It's a struggle to figure out how best to work with the Oregon Department of Agriculture."
- "We need Federal policy changes—small growers cannot compete with subsidized commodities."
- Meyer could bring funded groups together to share work and knowledge.
- "Enough of the summits—let's focus on action and getting things done."
- A divide exists between Portland and the rest of the state.
- "Important to think about who should be at the table of state-level group."
- "Be sure to engage people who are experiencing food insecurity—low-income, food insecure representation needed."
- Need regional face-to-face meetings and better online structure (website, newsletter, etc.).

- Friends of Family Farmers as of 7/30/10 has 650 members and 2300 on e-mail list—70-250 are attending "in-farmation" meetings on regular basis. "people are reconnecting with something that is vital and sustains us." "people are starved for community."
- 17 community meetings led to Agricultural Reclamation Act—proactive polices to support family farms.
- Community should help identify problems and solutions (e.g. possible soda tax—where will $ raised go?).
- "Listservs can be better than websites because people do not always go to websites and use them."

FOOD SYSTEM FUNDERS AND FUNDING GAPS

Funders:

- Ford has funded match for RARE volunteers/could fund more.
- Technical assistance with Federal grants like USDA value-added…they can be a "bear to write" especially for producers without expertise.
- Kellogg Foundation has provided start-up funding (3 years for OR Environmental Council Healthy Food and Farms, Ecotrust as Regional Lead Agency for Farm-to-School).
- Meyer Responsive and Grassroots grants have played a significant role in building community food system work to date.
- EDA grant at UO—partially food system related.
- Primary grant sources:

  Public Sector:
  Federal Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG)
  Federal Rural Business Opportunity Grants (RBOG)
  Federal HUFED—Healthy, Urban Food Enterprise Development
  Federal Farmers Market Promotion Program
  USDA Value-added Agriculture
  USDA Rural Development (various funding streams)
  USDA Farm Services Agency (various, including loans to Beginning Farmers and Ranchers)
  USDA Community Food Program (CFP)
  USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA)
  USDA Western Sustainable Agriculture Research Education (SARE)
  Federal Center for Disease Control; Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW)
  Federal National Institute for Health (NIH)—research grants
  Federal Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)-research grants
  Food Corps
  State Specialty Crop Grant Program (Oregon Dept. of Agriculture)
  Private Foundations:
  Oregon: Meyer Memorial Trust, Northwest Health Foundation (primarily Kaiser Permanente Community Fund), The Collins Foundation, Oregon Community Foundation, McKenzie River Gathering Foundation; United Way; Providence Health Foundation
  Outside Oregon or National: Surdna Foundation (just moving into food security); W.K. Kellogg Foundation; Heal Convergence (Healthy Eating/Active Living); Kresge Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson,; Sustainable Ag. Food System Funders; Schmidt Foundation (recent interest); Socially Responsible Agriculture Project, Idaho; Western Conservation Foundation; Farm Aid; Jessie Smith Noyes; Heifer.

- NWHF has seen a dramatic increase in the number of applications and applicants understanding of the social determinants of health (KPCF program).
- "Is it too prescriptive to limit funding to communities of color?
- Align with USDA's new progressive direction to leverage community food system work in Oregon.
- "Funding drives the focus on low-income populations which can be a barrier to comprehensive food system work."
- Need multi-year funding for systemic work.
- Americorps/VISTAs (incl. RARE) have been critical to movement.
- Organizations are largely trying for super competitive Federal grants…need more local funding streams specifically for community food systems work—similar to Kaiser Permanente Community Fund.
- Model of NWHF and Meyer working together to support LCHAY.
- Could mission related investing (MRI) be used by Meyer for infrastructure (e.g. local food processing).
- Convene foundations interested in food system work (touches on economic development/health/environment).
- Potential to leverage $1.7 million for Specialty Crop Grant Program.

Funding Gaps:

- Resources are available, but very difficult to find, especially for a farmer with a great idea
- Need a central place to get information about potential funding if you have a good concept/idea
- NWHF/Kaiser Permanente Community Fund only funds from Longview, WA to Corvallis—rest of the state is a gap. Tremendous interest in this funding program for small geographic area.
- Funding needed for general operating support.
- Funding needed for networking, collaboration and travel to conferences.
- Funding needed for market development/feasibility studies (e.g. developing producer cooperatives, value-added labels).
- Need micro-loans for farms for equipment, as well as loans for farm purchase.
- Need small amounts of money more quickly to take action on opportunities and/or more flexibility with timing of funding.
- Need funding for networking, facilitating and travel to conferences.
- Need a mechanism for investing in community food systems to help people scale-up to be profitable (e.g. endowment).
- Difficult to get funding for policy work.
- Need support with matches for Federal grants (help from private foundations to leverage Federal $ for Oregon).
- Funding Healthy Retail challenging because cutting edge.
- Need specific resources that support low-income and communities of color.
- USDA Rural Development (Jeff Diess) is a great resource, but still tough for a person to understand different pots of federal money and the process for applying.
- Need funding for EBT machines at farmers markets (or better information on how to access funding if available).

TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- We need "technical assistance to speed up innovation"

- Model of Food Entrepreneurs Workshop—Food Biz Bootcamp (from Jan/Feb. 2010)—"have you always harbored a dream of starting your own food business—a niche grain mill, specialty jam or relish, or locally made pasta." (OR Tilth, OSU, Linn-Benton Comm. College).
- Training for smaller grocery store owners, especially rural, on rules and regulations governing purchasing local food products.
- Work with distributors to include more local food products and include smaller stores/businesses on routes (example Dayville Mercantile).
- Training for farmers transitioning from commodity crops and/or crop like grass seed…how to re-tool equipment and access new markets.
- Farmers working together to rotate crops/establish cooperatives.
- Need to fund small farm agents with OSU Extension in each county.
- Funding for professional development/networking of community-based organizations.
- Consistency of product critical for retailers—work to educate farmers.
- TACS/Nonprofit Assoc. of Oregon a good resource for building capacity/skills of nonprofit organizations.
- Technical assistance with farmers market applications, especially if English is second language or struggling with literacy.
- Need mentoring for young farmers…Gales Creek area "School for Young Farmers" and Rogue Farm Corps program provide good models.
- Farm-to-School/Institution training so producers and buyers know what is needed…capacity of farmers to meet demand.
- Farmers could use a "tool-box" for institutional selling—similar to Western US Ag Trade Association for export advice/support.
- Education programs (earn GED, etc.) beneficial for food sector workers, especially immigrants. Literacy is an issue.
- It is challenging to figure out insurance for farmers markets, especially on city property.

RESEARCH AREAS AND NEEDS*

- Aging food producing farmers and their plans for their land. How to keep in food production?
- Economic analysis for Oregon re: potential impact of community food systems on economic development (see Ken Meter's work with the Crossroads Resource Center and Vivid Picture).
- OSU Research project re: low-income access to local food.
- "Evaluation is critical; need to evaluate what is being accomplished."
- PSU/Ecotrust looking at barriers to Food Hub/direct marketing for non-native English speakers and those without internet skills.
- "Need research that shows multiple benefits of Farm-to-School."
- Producer survey in Eastern Oregon through Oregon Rural Action—one goal to see how many producers would use meat processing facility.
- Need research on how to enhance profitability for existing farmers.
- Larry Lev doing research into capacity for local food consumption.
- OSU Team has proposal into Agriculture Food Research Initiative for tri-state study focused on low-income barriers to accessing local food.
- Need to measure outcomes for leadership development and community building.
- EWEB grant for McKenzie River farmers—focused on creating model for Healthy Farms/Clean Water.
- OSU developing "Food and Culture Initiative"—linking several departments through research and curriculum and offering a major and minor.

- Average grocery store has 30,000 sku's (products)…New Seasons home-grown label (N. CA to Washington) is 10,000 of 30,000 skus for New Seasons. Analyze other 20,000 products and what could be produced in Oregon. Could launch specific products to create jobs.
- It was helpful to have Ken Meter research in our community. He provides the next step in terms of gaps in opportunity…seeing local food as economic development…he shows how food purchase dollars are going out of community and how they might be kept back in (example of onions in Harney County—most travel out of county and then shipped in from other places).

THE FUTURE OF FARMING: FARM TRANSITION

- Average age of farmer is 58 and rising each year.
- Need better transfer mechanisms for old to young farmers (people interested in farming often do not have capital).
- Could there be tax incentives for providing land to young farmers.
- USDA Farm Services Agency Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Loan Program.
- Rogue Farm Corps (excellent model).
- IFARM with Friends of Family Farmers to connect retiring farmers with young farmers.
- Southern Oregon (Thrive and other partners) working on Southern Oregon Farmer Incubator program—includes business training and market access…builds on OSU Small Farms Program.
- ODA working on barriers to entrance for new farmers—"Cultivating Agripreneurs" program with OSU Small Farms.
- Farm Bureau has done workshops on intergenerational transition, but family dynamics sensitive.

KEY COMMUNITY PARTNERS*

- Farmers, local Processors, OSU Extension, Regional Food Banks, Grocery Stores, Farmers Markets, Hospitals, School Districts, Community Colleges, Colleges, Foundations, Public Sector agencies (DHS, ODA, USDA), Oregon Farmers Market Association, Local/Regional Organizations working on community food system issues.
- Do not overlook the potential of community colleges to be resources, especially for distance learning, webinars, etc.

CURRENT FOOD-SYSTEM RELATED STATEWIDE INITIATIVES*

- Oregon Housing and Community Services—Farmworker Housing Facilitation Workgroup
- Statewide Farm-to-School Network
- Oregon Nutrition Policy Alliance
- SNAP and Health Roundtable (18-month project; *completed*)
- Oregon Health Improvement Plan
- Healthy Cornerstore Initiative (Community Food Security Coalition)
- Oregon Pediatric Society (Sugar sweet beverage and disease)
- Oregon Health Improvement Plan (26 people—mentioned as good model for effective dialogue/planning/policy work)
- Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility--Healthy Food and Health Care Project (national campaign)—OHSU model—seeing "food as health tool"
- Oregon Farmers Market Association (special workgroup looking at getting more low-income and diverse populations to farmers markets)

*Not comprehensive, collected only from interviews.

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