Sustainable Farms, Local Foods, Healthy Communities

CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL FARMING SYSTEMS

The Opportunity of Local Food Systems
Today

• About the Center for Environmental Farming Systems
• Local and Regional Food Systems: The need and the opportunity
• What states can do to foster the development of a thriving local food economy
In 1994, there were vocal voices aimed at the Universities to address the environmental impact of agriculture, based on fish kills that were in the news frequently due to runoff from hog farms. In addition, there was growing interest in new markets.
2000 acre NCDA &CS Research Farm

Each unit provides research opportunities for faculty as well as demonstration models and teaching tools for farmers, extension agents and students.
Extension, Education and Outreach

- Farm Apprenticeship Program
- Summer Internship Program
- Seasons of Sustainable Agriculture Workshop Series
- Annual Sustainable Agriculture Lecture
- Farm to Fork Picnic
- Agroecology Education Farm and Program
- Amazing Grazing
Food Systems

Food System Elements

- Produce
- Transport
- Transform
- Package
- Retail
- Compost

Adapted from Cornell’s “Discovering the Food System” curriculum.
CEFS develops and promotes just and equitable food and farming systems that conserve natural resources, strengthen communities, improve health outcomes, and provide economic opportunities in North Carolina and beyond.

Our Mission expands
Our Vision

Through Integration of Research, Education, and Outreach

Vibrant Farms
Resilient Ecosystems
Strong Communities
Healthy People
Thriving Local Economies

http://www.wholecommunities.org/
Our Focus Areas

Research Farm

Food System Initiatives

Education and Outreach

Integrating Research, Education, and Extension
Focus Area: Food System Initiatives

COMMUNITY FOOD STRATEGIES
Local and Regional Food Systems: The Need and the Opportunity
Benefits of Local Food Systems

- Economic Development
- Job Creation
- More Availability and Access
- Better Health Outcomes
- More farmers
- Higher Farm Profitability
- More food businesses
- Environmental sustainability
- More climate resilient and adaptive

We strategically try to achieve the above through more Localized and Sustainable Agriculture: It’s not just happenstance
Local Foods as an Economic Engine

• Each of us eat every day
• **North Carolinians spend $45.1 billion in food each year**
• Recession proof economic development
• **Fills multiple needs at once**
• 70 percent of consumers want to know where their food comes from and say they will pay more if it’s local.
Big Trends in Food

What’s HOT
2015 CULINARY FORECAST

TOP 5 FOOD TRENDS

1. Locally sourced meats and seafood
2. Locally grown produce
3. Environmental sustainability
4. Healthful kids’ meals
5. Natural ingredients/minimally processed food
The Multiplier Impact

The more times a dollar circulates in a given geography and the faster it circulates before leaving, the more income wealth and jobs it creates.

From Local First, Grand Rapids, MI
Job Creation

• On-Farm
• Processing Centers
• Value added Centers
• Distribution networks
• Retail outlets
• Farm to School
• Farm to Institution
The Need: Health and Food Security

Do we Agree?

• The primary purpose of agriculture is providing food for people.
• In such a way that is an asset to our health and well-being or at least not a detriment.
Current Agriculture Systems in the US are Associated with High Food Insecurity and Poor Health Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Insecurity in the US and NC</th>
<th>Diet Related health Outcomes in the US and NC</th>
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<tr>
<td>49 million in US Food Insecure (14.1 percent)</td>
<td>One in 3 children are overweight or obese</td>
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<td>In North Carolina, 17.3 percent Food Insecure</td>
<td>1/3 of the children born in 2000 or later will develop diabetes if trends continue</td>
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<td>North Carolina is the 11th worst state in percentage of Food Insecure Children</td>
<td>27 percent of those who go to military recruiting stations are too heavy to serve</td>
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<td>Food Insecurity higher among black and Hispanics, rural areas, and inner-cities</td>
<td>North Carolina spends $4.6 billion annually on obesity and complications from obesity</td>
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The Need: Growing More Farmers

- Average age of farmers is 57
- Since 1964, we have lost approximately 1 million farms in the US (USDA ag census)
- In NC, there were 100,000 farms in 1976 and 48,000 farms in 2008
- There are now more people in prison than on farms.
Why Does this Matter?
More Farmers mean:

- Revitalized and vibrant rural communities
- Small business is the backbone of America... Small farms are the backbone of rural America
- More jobs in rural areas
- More access to healthy foods
- A more secure food supply (In CA, 200,000 acres not being planted in 1 county alone due to drought)
- Less reliance on foreign food (just as we don’t want to rely on foreign oil)
The Price Conundrum

- There is a trade-off between improving access of local foods (which infers it needs to be “low-cost”) and insuring the farmer receives adequate compensation.
- We can’t have both affordable healthy food and more farmers (without public investment and/or policy support).
- Farmers alone shouldn’t bear the brunt of keeping food affordable food for all.
Why is Public Action and Engagement Required?

- It is currently **not** a level playing field. Nor is it a “free market”. Nationally, agriculture is heavily subsidized (farm bill, water in California, for example).
- States invest to bring in outside companies. Let’s invest in ourselves, and turn loose some of those economic development dollars in support of job growth in local food systems.
One more Reason...

Because we want the products consumed!
Local Foods as Opportunity

THE CENTER for ENVIRONMENTAL FARMING SYSTEMS
Cultivating Thriving Communities & Sustainable Farms
What you can do
Develop a Statewide Action Plan
Establish a State Food Policy Council

- **Legislate a State Food Policy Council**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2009

SESSION LAW 2009-530
SENATE BILL 1067

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE NORTH CAROLINA SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL TO ADDRESS PROGRAM AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY IN NORTH CAROLINA.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Chapter 106 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new Article to read:

"Article 70.
"North Carolina Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council.
"§ 106-830. Purpose: definitions.
(a) Purpose. -- It is the purpose of the North Carolina Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council to contribute to building a local food economy thereby benefiting North Carolina by
Around 40 NC Counties have established food councils or task force groups working on food council development.
Support Statewide Food Assessment

Feeding Kansas

Statewide Farm & Food System Assessment with a Plan for Public Action
Establish Procurement Goals
Support Local Foods Infrastructure

EXECUTIVE ORDER No. 73: NORTH CAROLINA FOOD MANUFACTURING TASK FORCE

North Carolina Food Manufacturing Task Force Final Report
Support Business Development

• Departments of Commerce offering incentives for local food entrepreneurial efforts
• Food Processing initiatives that can facilitate local foods
• Public-Private partnerships that can meet processing needs, but also fulfill public need (farm-to-school)
• Business Development Funds
Support Farm to School
“I can go and buy every variety of fried chicken imaginable on the west side of Chicago. I can get it in great variety. I can buy cigarettes…. I can get liquor. I can get designer clothes. I can get heroin, I can get crack. I can get a gun, but I can’t get an organic tomato. I can’t get a cup of yogurt. I can’t get romaine lettuce….I can’t get a banana or an apple. But I can get every variety of potato chip there is”.

------La Donna Redmond
Work to Improve Access to Healthy Foods

Eat Fresh, Feel Good

EBT AT YOUR FARMERS MARKET

STRETCH YOUR FOOD DOLLARS

JULY 1 - OCT 31

Get more fruits & vegetables when you use your EBT CARD at farmers markets

YOU SPEND $1

WE MATCH $1
Farmland Preservation

- 10,321 acres of farms and forest lands.
- 90 conservation easements projects awarded.
- 47 agricultural development projects
- Established 15 Voluntary Agricultural Districts programs and 38 Farmland Protection Plans
• Tax Incentives
• Zoning Exceptions
• Healthy Food Financing
• Data Collection
• Policy Reviews and Changes
• Informational Resources
• Infographics
• Marketing Programs