

REGIONAL APPROACHES TO LOCAL FOOD ECONOMIES

Presentation to the

North Carolina Association of Regional Councils

Emily Edmonds | CEFS – NCGT | December 1, 2016

WWW.LOCALFOODECONOMIES.ORG | WWW.NCGROWINGTOGETHER.ORG

NC Growing Together

AT THE CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL FARMING SYSTEMS



Farmer capacity

- Food safety, market channels, production techniques, buyer connections



Supply chain expansion

- Wholesale and institutional partner connections, infrastructure assessment and business feasibility



Producer & processor capacity

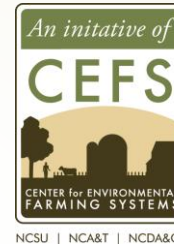
- Resource development for meat, dairy, seafood, produce, and value-added products



Supportive business environments

- Local government integration; small business development and support for food-based entrepreneurs

North Carolina Growing Together is a five-year USDA-funded project aiming to strengthen and expand local and regional food supply chains and to model this work for other geographies in the U.S.



NC GROWING TOGETHER

Connecting Local Foods
to Mainstream Markets

Born and raised in Western North Carolina, I received an MPA from UNC-Chapel Hill's School of Government and worked on a number of economic development & food systems projects across the East Coast.

I grew up on farms, owned a farm-to-table restaurant, ran a regional food policy council, and generally adore food in all its forms. Especially cheeses.

I currently live in the Triangle with my family, where I enjoy reading, traveling, and, of course, pulling for the Tarheels and the Green Bay Packers.



This material is based upon work that is supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture, under award no. 2013-68004-20363. Any opinions, findings, recommendations, or conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Integrating governance with local food systems development



As more local units of government become involved in food system development, regional structures become more necessary and relevant.

Local food systems need the unique skills, capacities, and abilities of regional planners, developers, and leaders:

- ▶ Regional coordination of projects and goal-setting
- ▶ Assistance with spatial and data-based analysis
- ▶ A deep knowledge of the communities served
- ▶ Awareness of the connections between and across communities
- ▶ Partnerships at multiple decision-making levels
- ▶ Knowledge of community input & feasibility processes
- ▶ Access to technologies and innovations
- ▶ Interaction with state and federal agencies

Food systems offer solutions to many significant social, cultural, and built environment issues that can help COGs better meet the needs of their communities. Food economies also offer economic benefits that are place-based, specific to natural, built, and human resources.



COMMON FOOD SYSTEM TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

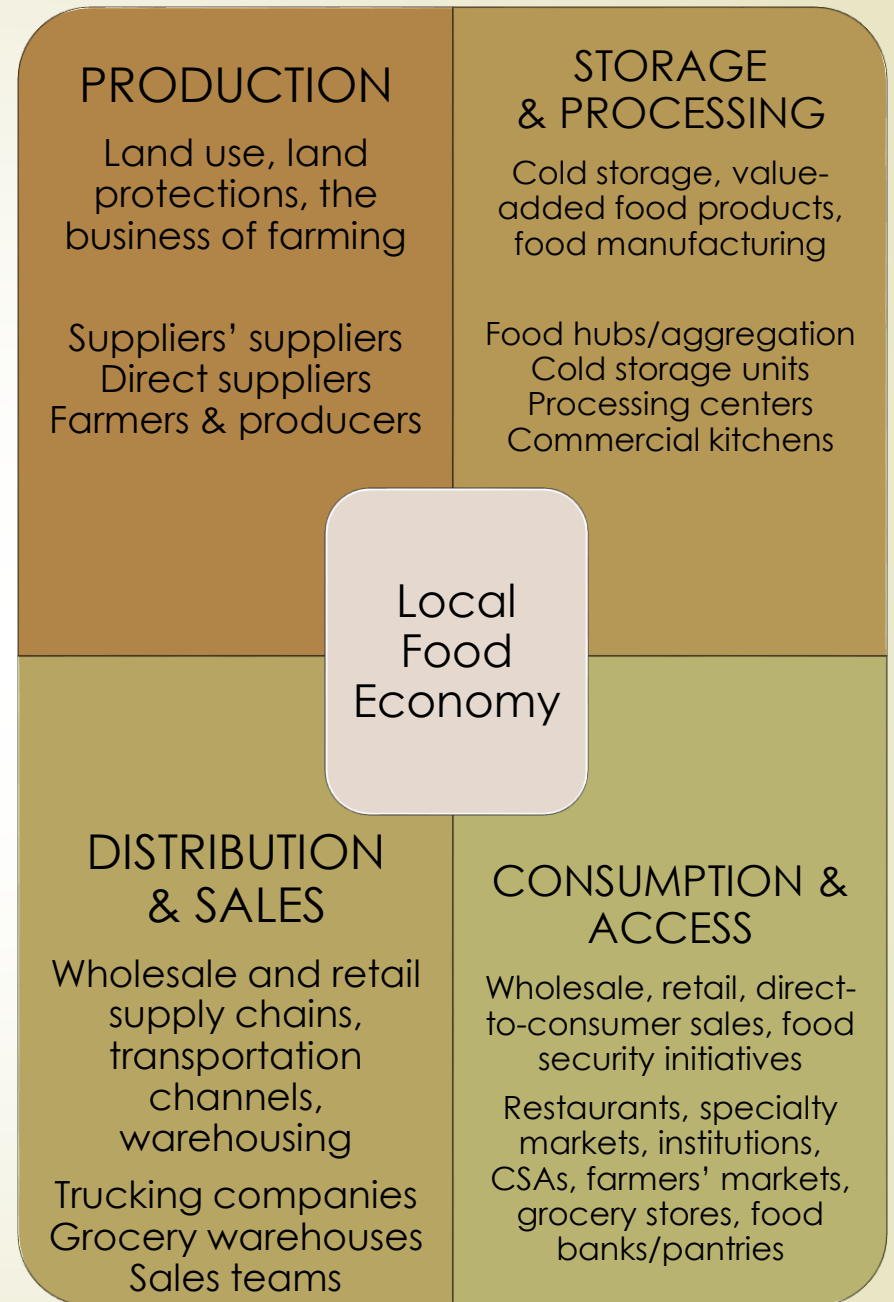


- ▶ Agricultural Economic Development
 - ▶ Encompasses financial and regulatory structures that encourage farm success
 - ▶ Includes policies that impact food processors and other supply chain businesses, including transportation
- ▶ Aggregation
 - ▶ Popular “food hub” and other ag center function, pulling together smaller volumes of agricultural products into larger orders for wholesale markets
 - ▶ Some food hubs serve additional purposes
- ▶ Food Access & Consumption
 - ▶ Covers emergency and non-emergency food access for people at all income levels
 - ▶ Includes front-line food services like pantries and kitchens
 - ▶ Also includes topics like access to healthy foods, food desert prevalence, distance to food sources, and other factors
- ▶ GAP & FSMA
 - ▶ GAP: Good Agricultural Practices, voluntary USDA certification program (req. by some buyers)
 - ▶ GHP: Good Handling Practices (similar, but for food processing facilities)
 - ▶ FSMA: update to ancient food safety regulations; not connected to GAP
- ▶ The Great Variety of Kitchens
 - ▶ Shared-use kitchens, commercial kitchens, co-op kitchens...

LOCAL FOOD ECONOMIES

Local food economies encompass everything that is associated with a local food system.

This includes the entire food supply chain – from production to consumption – as well as affiliated businesses and structures.



Local Food Supply Chains

Producer Inputs

seeds, equipment, stock, land, water

Production

land, water, the business of farming, technique, methods, labor, certifications

Storage & Processing

harvest, cooling & storage, packing, processing, food manufacturing, aggregation

Distribution & Sales

wholesale/retail, institutional buyers, chefs, trucking, warehousing, sales teams

Consumption & Access

grocery & retail outlets, foodservice, food banks/pantries, farmers markets

NATIONAL AG STATISTICS



of American consumers **prefer food grown in the U.S.** from regional sources



13 million acres of farmland

needed to produce the minimum daily requirement of fruits and veggies in the US for US consumers by 2020



US Farmers' markets have increased

350% since 1994



APA has included food systems in its planning policy guide since 2007; USDA has maintained farm-to-fork initiatives since 2000

N.C. AG STATISTICS



Agriculture & agribusiness account for **1/6 of NC's income and employees.**



Total income in Agriculture and Food industries in NC is **\$84.5 billion (a 14.6% share of NC income).**



NC ranks **8th in the nation** for agricultural production. More than **17% of gross state product** is contributed by food, forest and fiber industries.



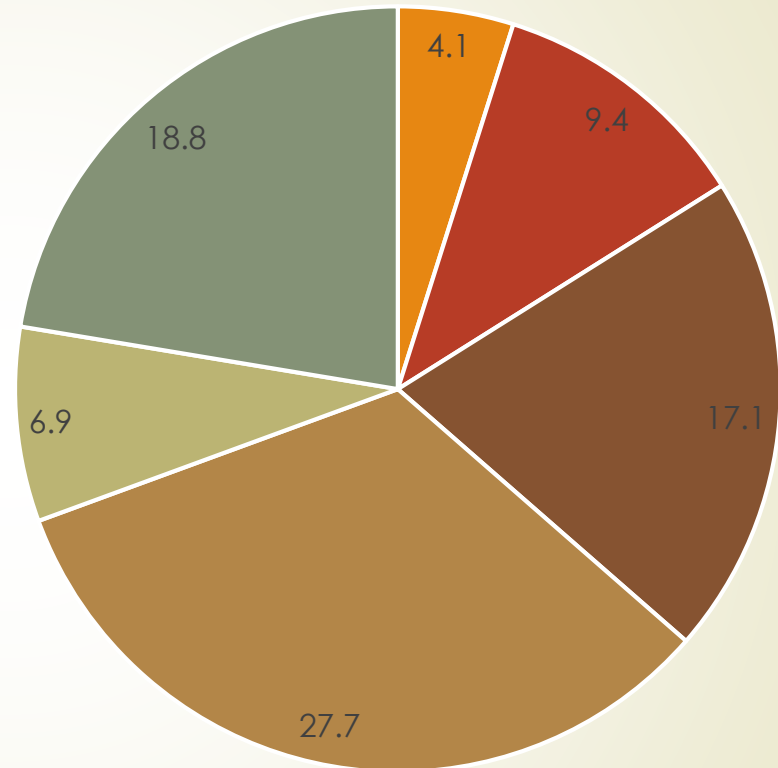
Of all NC farms, almost 75% are family-owned small to medium-sized businesses reporting less than \$100,000 in farm revenue per year.

So, what's local?

Food systems are unique to the geographic, cultural, and market attributes of their regions. Local and regional governments are encouraged to create their own definitions of "local" foods for use in branding and marketing efforts.

NORTH CAROLINA'S FOOD ECONOMY

\$84 billion in Agriculture, Food, and Forestry Industries
(Sept. 2016)



- Fiber
- Farming & production
- Wholesaling
- Forestry
- Food manufacturing
- Retailing

Data provided by Mike Walden, Reynolds Distinguished Professor and Extension Economist, N.C. State University, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Data sources are provided on the final slide.

COMMON ISSUES IN DEVELOPING FARM AND FOOD BUSINESSES

Succession

Who farms next?

- Average age of NC farmer: 59
- Average age of US farmer: 55
- Opportunities for rural youth (countering the “brain drain” problem)

Land Loss

Prioritizing farm-conscious growth

- 2016: 40 acres per hour
- Prime soils & water access

Economics

Regional impacts

- Economic impact of agriculture & food entrepreneurship
- Entrepreneurship & the resiliency of small- and mid-scale business networks
- Rural-urban market relationships
- Revitalization of downtowns, vacant land, and urban centers
- Systems approach: private-sector opportunities across multiple industries
- Agritourism

ASSET-BASED FOOD SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

Asset-Based Approaches to Local Food System Development

- ▶ **Rural/urban community dialogue, partnerships, markets and values**
 - ▶ Opportunities for rural youth (the “brain drain” problem)
 - ▶ Building co-dependencies between rural & urban places
- ▶ **Land preservation and land use strategies**
- ▶ **Emergency/crisis planning**
- ▶ **Regional economic development strategies**
 - ▶ Economic impact of agriculture & food entrepreneurship
 - ▶ Revitalization of downtowns, vacant land, and urban centers
 - ▶ Agritourism
 - ▶ Systems approach: private sector opportunities across multiple industries

COLLABORATIVE OPPORTUNITIES IN LOCAL FOOD ECONOMIES

Leveraging Collaboration for Successful Projects

The development of local food economies relies on nontraditional partners and a regional approach to infrastructure, transportation and land use.



PARTNERS

- ▶ Traditional partners (other local government staff, councils of government)
- ▶ Ag partners (Extension Service, NCDA)
- ▶ Nontraditional partners (public health, transportation & infrastructure, small business centers & workforce development, SWCDs)
- ▶ Community partners (food councils, nonprofits, faith-based groups)
- ▶ Higher education partners (universities and community colleges)
- ▶ Nonprofits & NGOs
- ▶ Social networks

COMMON STRATEGIES IN FOOD SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

Land-Use & Zoning

- Training and support for planning efforts that recognize agriculture
- Zoning, setbacks, infrastructure allowances, signage, bona fide farm exemption, land preservation incentives
- Community gardens, urban agriculture, and farmers' markets

Asset-Based Development Strategies

- Regional approach to agricultural economic development
- Market and supply analysis to determine transport and distribution routes, production centers, consumption channels, etc.
- Regional goals for farmland protection plans & programs

Strategic & Long-Range Planning

- Whole-systems approach to food & supply chains
- Infrastructure planning for supply chain expansion (particularly transportation, market development, regional branding, and storage)

Regional Economic Planning

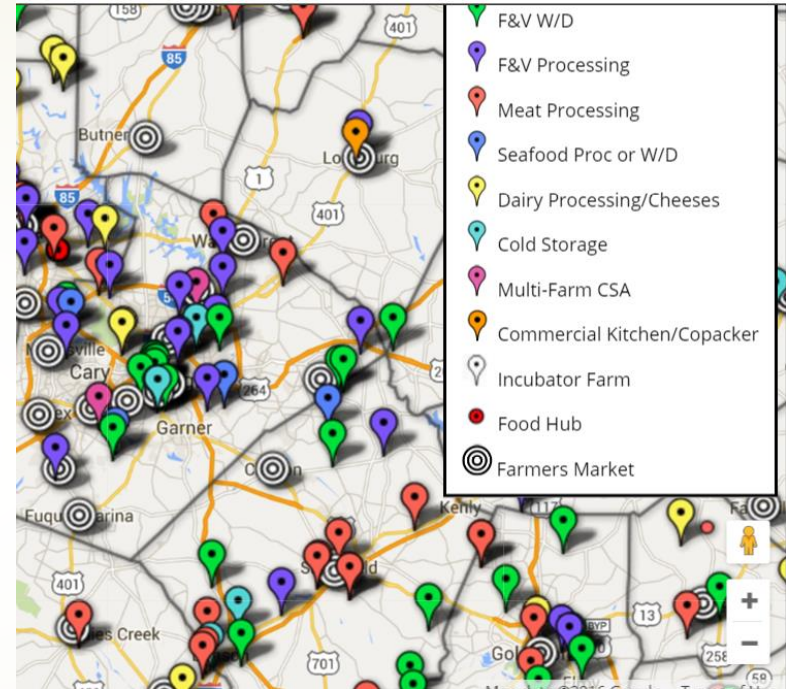
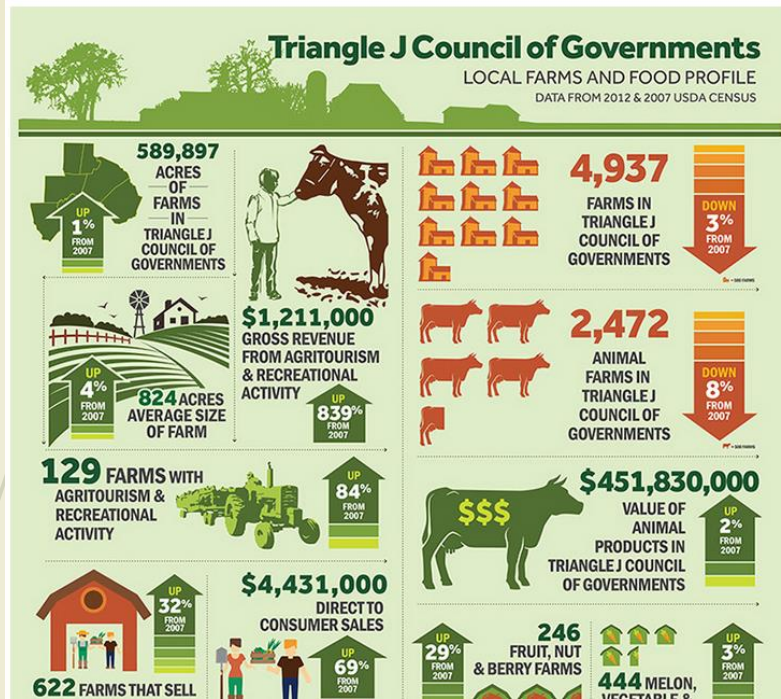
- Local food economies as a recruitment tool
- Local food economies as a creation, retention, and expansion tool
- Partnerships with educational institutions: business & entrepreneurship development

CHECK OUT THE [GUIDE FOR GOVERNMENTS ON BUILDING LOCAL FOOD ECONOMIES!](#)

FOOD SYSTEMS PLANNING PROCESS



NCGT & CEFS: RESOURCES AND TOOLS



COMMUNITY FOOD STRATEGIES

NATIONAL & STATE RESOURCES

USDA's [Economic Impact of Local Foods Toolkit](#)

USDA's [Farm to Fork](#) Resources

[American Planning Association](#)

[Southern SAWG](#)

[National Institutes of Health](#)

Food Environment Database
(resources by county):

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-environment-atlas.aspx>

USDA Economic Impact of Local Foods Toolkit:

www.localfoodeconomics.com

NC Department of Agriculture

www.ncagr.gov

NC Cooperative Extension

<https://www.ces.ncsu.edu/local-county-center/>

NORTH CAROLINA SUCCESS STORIES

Comprehensive & Strategic Planning:
Agricultural Economic Development Plans

Example: [Henderson County](#), [Durham County](#)

Community Food System Assessments

Example: [Cape Fear COG](#)

Infrastructure/supply chain mapping analysis

Example: [LFI Map](#); [Piedmont Triad Regional Council](#)

Regional agricultural economic development directors

Examples: [Durham](#), Henderson, Polk, [Orange](#)

Regional support & coordination for food policy councils and/or food collaboratives

See [Community Food Strategies](#)' work with councils of government

Business development & entrepreneurship

Examples: [Appalachian Farm School](#), [Vance-Granville Ag Entrepreneurship Program](#), [Piedmont Food & Ag Processing Center](#)

Zoning and land use strategies & policies

Examples: [Town of Matthews](#), [City of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County](#)

TAKING THE NEXT STEPS

Key Initial Actions

- ❑ Identify key food and agriculture issues that are of high priority for the region
- ❑ Collect baseline data that informs these prioritized issues
- ❑ Utilize data to identify strategies to address priority issues
- ❑ Act as a Community of Practice (CoP) to share knowledge with one another and to identify national, state, and local resources that can be leveraged to benefit regions & state

- **Download and verify the accuracy of the Local Food Supply Chain Infrastructure Map.** Use this data to identify food supply chain gaps and potential opportunities. Share those opportunities through economic development agencies, local investors and funding organizations, Cooperative Extension, and chambers of commerce.
- **Survey managers and planners of constituent governments to determine training needs** for topics such as links between food access and health; zoning and development issues for agriculture; entrepreneurship development for food businesses; and other topics. Implement trainings in partnership with state universities and other agencies.
- **Join the NC 10% Local Food Marketing Campaign** and review procurement policies to determine whether local purchasing is feasible within existing foodservice or catering budgets.
- **Convene meetings of area and local extension agents with their city/county managers, planners, tourism managers, and economic developers** to discuss issues, hear ideas, and explore initial topics for prioritization.
- **Start or join a food policy council.** Regional COGs can provide structural support for councils that work directly with local groups in each county or metro area.
- **Explore adding an Agricultural Economic Development Plan to the CEDS** or other comprehensive plan. Examine ways that existing staff

POTENTIAL CEFS-ARCOG PARTNERSHIPS

CEFS & NCGT can support pilot programs that capitalize on existing COG interest and activities, especially by helping councils to access existing data and knowledge as they get started.

We are also open to future partnerships that help streamline planning across the state, leverage state and federal funding, and centralize approaches to agricultural and food entrepreneurship development.

► Key Initial Actions

- Identify key food and agriculture issues that are of high priority for the region
- Collect baseline data that informs these prioritized issues
- Utilize data to identify strategies to address priority issues (working with USDA Economic Impact of Local Foods Toolkit)
- Act as a Community of Practice (CoP) to share knowledge with one another and to identify national, state, and local resources that can be leveraged to benefit regions & state

► Community Food Strategies

- Working with PTRC on regional “backbone” structure for food councils
- Open to other partnerships; can provide TA

Food system placemaking is on the leading edge of innovative, multi-disciplinary governance strategies.

North Carolina has a chance to be a national leader in addressing agricultural & food-based economic development through regional planning and coordinated statewide efforts.

Agriculture not only gives riches to a nation – but the only ones she can call her own.

Samuel Johnson

QUESTIONS?

www.localfoodeconomies.org

www.ncgrowingtogether.org

Emily Edmonds, MPA
NCGT Extension & Outreach
Program Manager

828.399.0297 mobile |
emily_edmonds@ncsu.edu

Data sources used in this presentation include:

- NC Agriculture & Agribusiness Statistics, NCSU, 2016: https://www.cals.ncsu.edu/agcomm/news-center/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/2015_083-WaldenAgBusinessReport-051116.pdf
- USDA ERS & AMS, 2011-2016, citations from Community & Local Government Guide to Developing Local Food Systems, CEFS, NCSU: <https://cefs.ncsu.edu/resources/a-community-and-local-government-guide-to-developing-local-food-systems-in-north-carolina-2013/>
- Growing Food Connections Policy Database, SUNY-Buffalo, 2016: <http://growingfoodconnections.org/tools-resources/policy-database/general-search-policy-database/>
- UNC School of Government Local Food Resources: <https://www.sog.unc.edu/search/#!/search/local%20food>
- Farmland Information Center, 2016: <http://www.farmlandinfo.org/statistics>
- APA Food Systems Planning Working Group: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/3930672/profile>
- National Farmland Trust, 2016: <https://www.farmland.org/our-work/areas-of-focus/farmland>

Special thanks to Donald Belk, AICP, [N-Focus Planning](#); Erin Sullivan White, [Community Food Lab](#);; Debbie Hamrick, [NC Farm Bureau](#); and Jonathan Q. Morgan, Associate Professor of Public Administration and Government, [UNC School of Government](#), for their time and expertise in assisting the Resilient Local Food Economies initiative.