REGIONAL APPROACHES TO LOCAL FOOD ECONOMIES

Presentation to the Triangle J Council of Governments Board of Delegates
Emily Edmonds | CEFS – NCGT | November 16, 2016
www.ncgrowingtogether.org | www.localfoodeconomies.org
NC Growing Together
AT THE CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL FARMING SYSTEMS

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.

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

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

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

- Regional and local 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
- Access to funding
- Evaluation & impact analysis

Local food systems offer solutions to many significant social, cultural, and built environment issues.

Local food economies can also encourage place-based benefits that are specific to a community’s natural, built, and human resources.
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.
NATIONAL AG STATISTICS

75% 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 U.S. for U.S. 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.

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.

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.

*Data sources are provided on the final slide.
NORTH CAROLINA’S FOOD ECONOMY

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

- 27.7% Food manufacturing
- 17.1% Retailing
- 18.8% Wholesaling
- 4.1% Agriculture
- 6.9% Forestry
- 9.4% Farming & production
- 4.1% Fiber

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.
The Triangle J Region

- Almost 25% of the Triangle’s existing geographic area is farmland.
- Nearly 4,000 Triangle farms sell $3.65 million in products through direct to consumer sales each year.
- The Triangle food market is a $900 million annual market, representing new opportunities for the growth of small and mid-scale farm and food businesses.
- Every Triangle county now has a Local Food Council.
- Over 237,000 people in the region are food insecure.

Data from Triangle Farms for Food report, Conservation Trust of North Carolina, produced Nov. 2016. See slide 18 for additional details.
INTEGRATING GOVERNANCE AND LOCAL FOODS

Asset-Based Approaches to Local Food System Development

- Rural/urban community dialogue, partnerships, markets and values
  - Opportunities for rural youth (the “brain drain” problem)
- 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

Succession
Who farms next?
- Average age of NC farmer: 59
- Average age of US farmer: 55

Land Loss
Prioritizing farm-conscious growth
- 2016: 40 acres per hour
- Prime soils & water access

Economics
Regional impacts
- Placemaking and authentic asset-based development
- Innovative, location-based strategies
- Resiliency of small- and mid-scale business networks
- Rural-urban market relationships
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
FOOD SYSTEMS PLANNING PROCESS

- ASSESSMENT
- EQUITY
- ECONOMICS
- REGULATIONS
- COMMUNITY
- MAKE IT LAST
NCGT & CEFS: RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Triangle J Council of Governments
LOCAL FARMS AND FOOD PROFILE
DATA FROM 2012 & 2007 USDA CENSUS

- 589,897 ACRES OF FARMS IN TRIANGLE J COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
- 1,211,000 GROSS REVENUE FROM AGRITOURISM & RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY
- 2,472 ANIMAL FARMS IN TRIANGLE J COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
- 129 FARMS WITH AGRITOURISM & RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY
- 451,830,000 VALUE OF ANIMAL PRODUCTS IN TRIANGLE J COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
- 622 FARMS THAT SELL
- 4,431,000 DIRECT TO CONSUMER SALES
- 254 FARM TO TABLE

NC FarmLink
10% BUILDING NORTH CAROLINA'S LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY

10% BUILDING NORTH CAROLINA'S LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY

COMMUNITY FOOD STRATEGIES

WWW.LOCALFOODECONOMIES.ORG
USDA’s Economic Impact of Local Foods Toolkit
USDA’s Farm to Fork Resources
American Planning Association
Southern SAWG
National Institutes of Health
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/
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
The Triangle Farms for Food report, released this month, completes a year-long planning process that used GIS and soils models to determine priority preservation areas; explored best practices for agricultural and food business development; and recommended land use, education, and farmer support programs to encourage the growth and success of Triangle farms and food businesses.

- Conservation Trust of North Carolina
- Community Food Lab
- Triangle Community Foundation
- Sustainable Foods North Carolina
- Carolina Farm Stewardship
- Center for Environmental Farming Systems
- Triangle Land Conservancy
- Eno River Association

### PROPOSED PLACE-BASED STRATEGIES

1. **Southeastern Johnston County Large Farms**
2. **Western Chatham County Large Farms and Livestock**
3. **Northern Orange and Durham Counties: Transitions and New Markets**
4. **Urban Agriculture Focus in Durham and Wake Counties**
5. **County Line: Wake and Johnston County Small Farm Networks**
6. **Siler City Farm Ring**

Place-based recommendations from the GIS models developed in the Triangle Farms for Food report, released by the Conservation Trust for North Carolina, in November 2016.
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS
FOR COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENT

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.

- Encourage partnerships between regional councils and local governments.
- Create pilot programs and communities of practice for governments involved in this work – to see what works and what doesn’t, and to examine and create data collection systems.
- Maximize supply chain development by gathering accurate information.
- Encourage training for staff, managers, and elected officials 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.
- Promote the NC 10% Local Food Marketing Campaign and support governments in reviewing procurement policies.
- Convene meetings of extension agents with city/county managers, planners, tourism managers, and economic developers to discuss issues and explore initial topics for prioritization.
- Support governments starting or joining a food policy council. Regional COGs can provide structural support for councils that work directly with local groups in each county or metro area.
- Help governments learn from other successful projects to add Agricultural Economic Development Plans to their comprehensive economic development strategies. Examine ways that existing staff or proposed new hires could serve as agribusiness managers or agricultural economic developers in future years.
QUESTIONS?

www.localfoodeconomies.org
www.ncgrowingtogether.org

Data sources used in this presentation include:

- 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.

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

Samuel Johnson

Emily Edmonds, MPA
NCGT Extension & Outreach Program Manager
828.399.0297 mobile | emily_edmonds@ncsu.edu