



# 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](http://www.ncgrowingtogether.org) | [www.localfoodeconomies.org](http://www.localfoodeconomies.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.*



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# 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.



## 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.

### PRODUCTION

Land use, land protections, the business of farming

Suppliers' suppliers  
Direct suppliers  
Farmers & producers

### STORAGE & PROCESSING

Cold storage, value-added food products, food manufacturing

Food hubs/aggregation  
Cold storage units  
Processing centers  
Commercial kitchens

Local  
Food  
Economy

### DISTRIBUTION & SALES

Wholesale and retail supply chains, transportation channels, warehousing

Trucking companies  
Grocery warehouses  
Sales teams

### CONSUMPTION & ACCESS

Wholesale, retail, direct-to-consumer sales, food security initiatives

Restaurants, specialty markets, institutions, CSAs, farmers' markets, grocery stores, food banks/pantries



# 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 **8<sup>th</sup> 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.

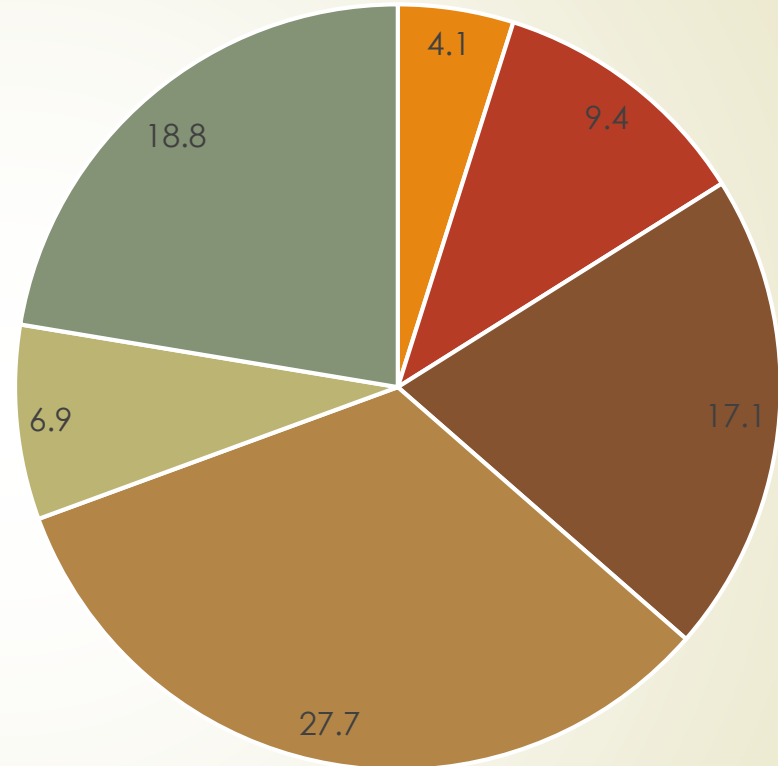
## So, what's local?

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.

*\*Data sources are provided on the final slide.*

# NORTH CAROLINA'S FOOD ECONOMY

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



■ Fiber

■ Forestry

■ Farming & production

■ Food manufacturing

■ Wholesaling

■ 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.*

# 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.

MORE THAN  
**63,500  
Acres**  
OF TRIANGLE FARMLAND HAS BEEN  
LOST SINCE 1997.



APPROXIMATELY  
**2,500,000**  
PEOPLE LIVE IN THE  
TRIANGLE REGION

LESS THAN  
**0.5%**  
OF TRIANGLE FOOD SPENDING  
IS DIRECT FARM-TO-CONSUMER



# 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

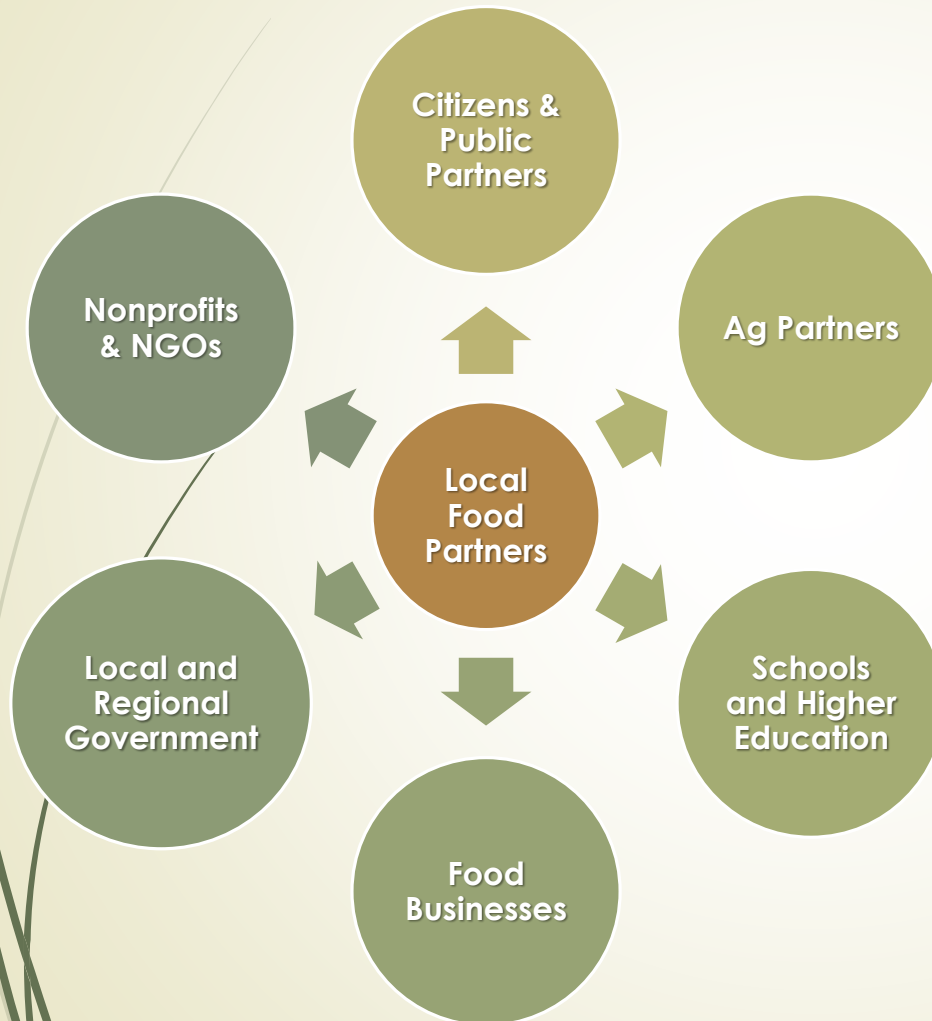
- 2016: 40 acres per hour
- Prime soils & water access

### 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

# 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

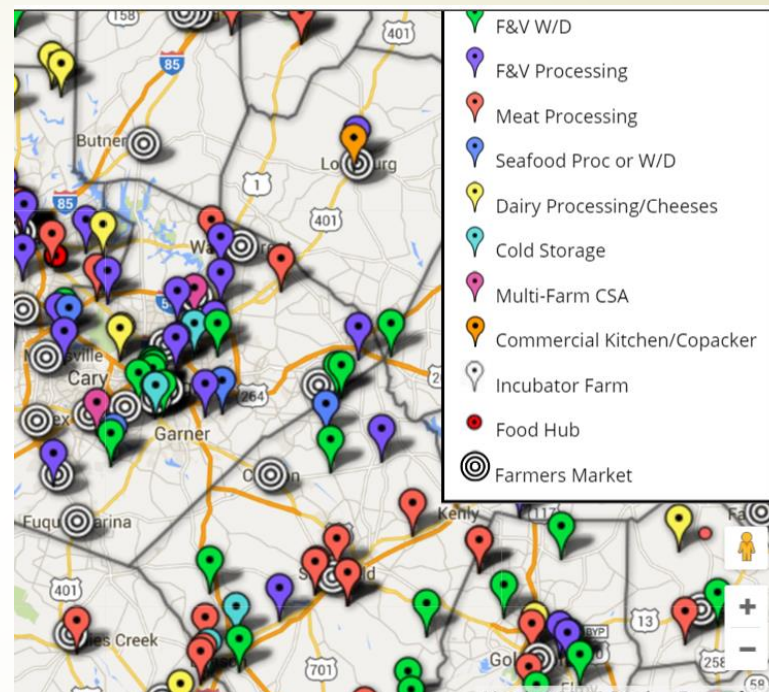
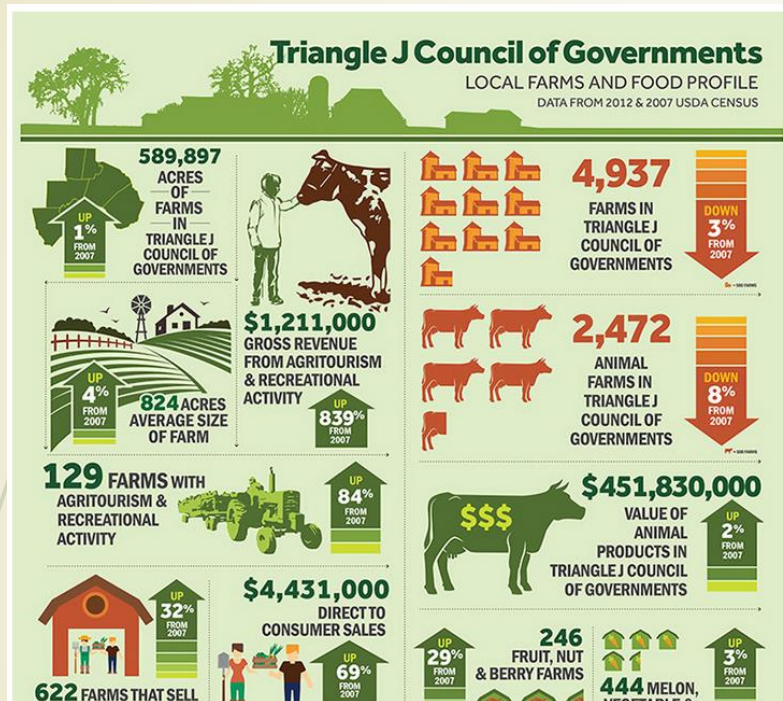
- Local food economies as a recruitment tool
- Local food economies as a creation, retention, and expansion tool
- Partnerships with educational institutions: business & entrepreneurship development

# 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](http://www.localfoodeconomics.com)

NC Department of Agriculture

[www.ncagr.gov](http://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](#)

# TRIANGLE FARMS FOR FOOD RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ 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

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>1</b> SOUTHEASTERN JOHNSTON COUNTY LARGE FARMS                         | <b>4</b> URBAN AGRICULTURE FOCUS IN DURHAM AND WAKE COUNTIES       |
| <b>2</b> WESTERN CHATHAM COUNTY LARGE FARMS AND LIVESTOCK                 | <b>5</b> COUNTY LINE: WAKE AND JOHNSTON COUNTY SMALL FARM NETWORKS |
| <b>3</b> NORTHERN ORANGE AND DURHAM COUNTIES: TRANSITIONS AND NEW MARKETS | <b>6</b> SILER CITY FARM RING                                      |

# 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](http://www.localfoodeconomies.org)  
[www.ncgrowingtogether.org](http://www.ncgrowingtogether.org)

Emily Edmonds, MPA  
NCGT Extension & Outreach Program Manager

828.399.0297 mobile |  
[emily\\_edmonds@ncsu.edu](mailto:emily_edmonds@ncsu.edu)

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

*Samuel Johnson*

## 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](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>

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