

# A VISION FOR HEALTHY & RESILIENT LOCAL FOOD ECONOMIES

Stories from North Carolina

*about Small and Mid-Scale Agriculture, Food  
Entrepreneurship, and Innovative Public Approaches to  
Developing Local Food Economies*

# 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

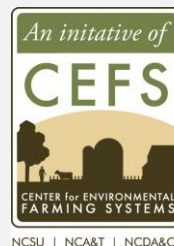
- Resource development for meat, dairy, seafood, produce, and value-added products



## 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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# WHY FOCUS ON LOCAL FOOD ECONOMIES?

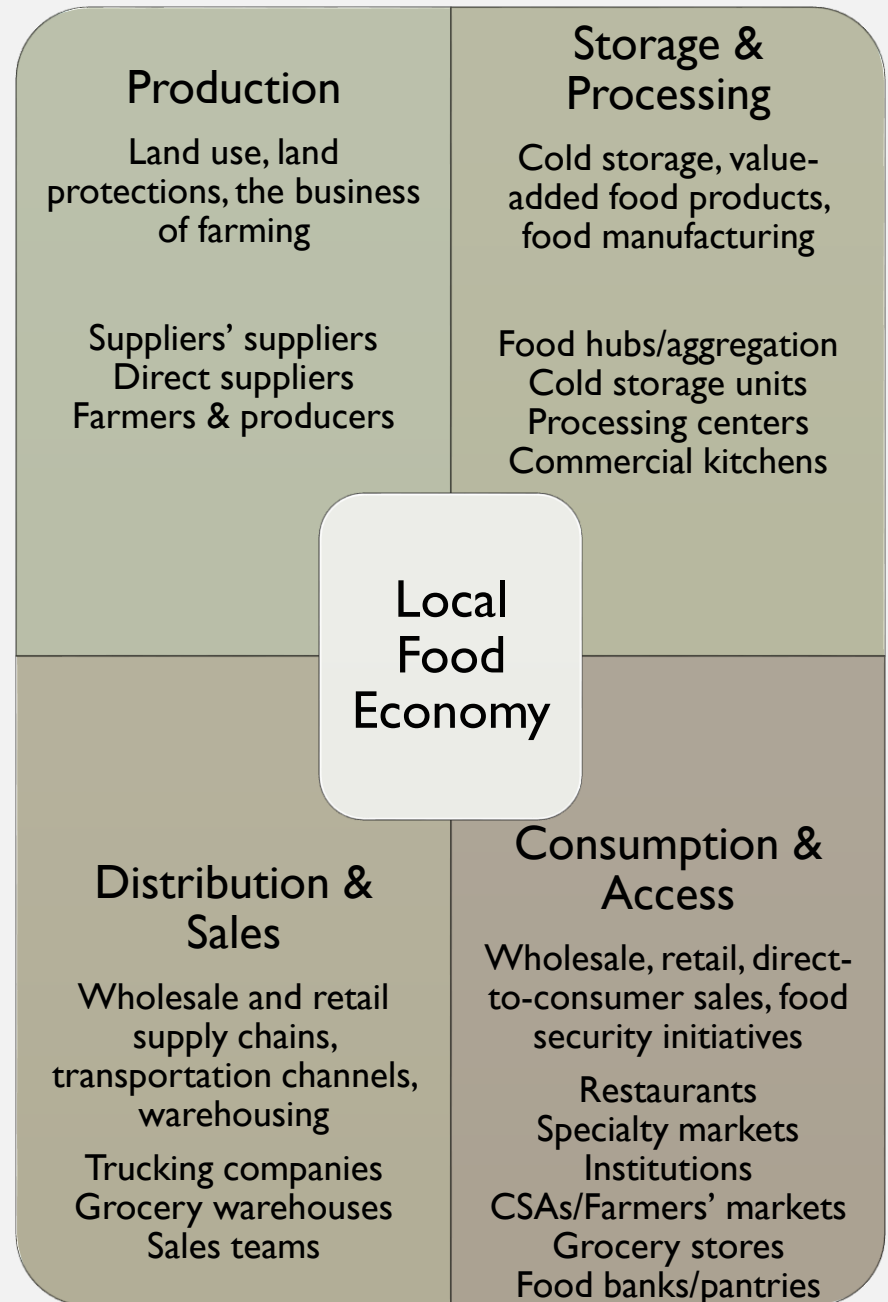


- NCGT focuses on increasing sales of local product to mainstream markets – like grocery stores, military bases, wholesale distributors, and restaurants.
- This approach gives farmers more access to markets, builds farm incomes, and reaches a wider audience of consumers than only focusing on direct-to-consumer sales.
- The data at the national and state level reflect the many significant economic and health impacts of local food system development.
- This presentation will cover the basics of local food system development, examples of unique approaches from across North Carolina, and ideas for advocates working on similar projects in other states.

# 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 CHAIN

## 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 **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?

Localities and regions are encouraged to create definitions of local that account for regional geographic, demographic, and land influences. Custom definitions allow for effective place-based planning & development solutions.

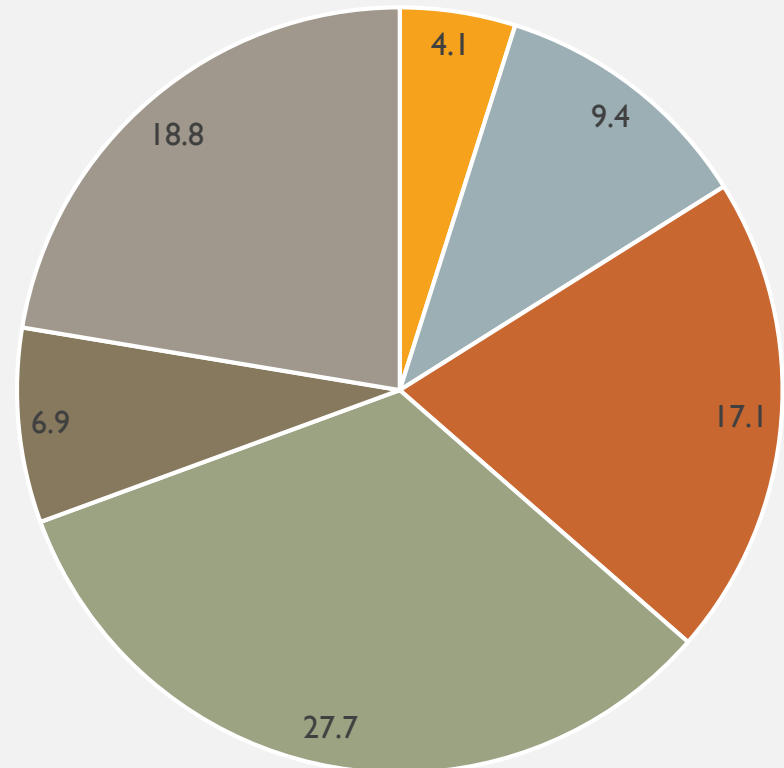
*\*Data sources are provided on the final slide.*

# NORTH CAROLINA'S FOOD ECONOMY

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.*

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



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



# WHY DID NORTH CAROLINA CHOOSE TO WORK WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPERS?



**Local food systems need the unique skills, capacities, and abilities of local and regional governments and small business developers.**

- Skills in 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 to simplify and engage at each step of the planning process
- Firsthand knowledge of needs and barriers in a given community

**Local food systems benefit governments and developers, too:**

Food systems offer solutions to many significant social, cultural, and built environment issues that can help planners better meet the needs of their communities. Food systems offer economic benefits that are place-based, specific to a region's existing natural, built, and human resources.

**Food system placemaking is on the leading edge of innovative, multi-disciplinary approaches to community & economic development.**





# DEVELOPING YOUR OWN APPROACH: LOOK DEEPER

## Motivations & Impacts of Asset-Based Development of Local Food Systems

- Land use & land protection, particularly in conflict smart growth situations on the urban/suburban fringe and for place-based development
  - 1997: 4.8 million acres of farmland lost to development
  - 2012: 24.5 million acres of farmland lost to development
- Rural & urban partnerships: markets & values
- Farmer age gap & transition planning for farmland
  - Average age of North Carolina farmers: 59
  - Average age of US farmers: 55
- Emergency/crisis planning
  - Ensuring access to food is a critical risk management strategy in crisis situations
- Opportunities for rural youth (the “brain drain” problem)
- Health and wellness and increased social capital
- Food insecurity & food access
- Revitalization of downtowns, vacant land, and urban centers
- Economic development recruitment & expansion strategies
  - Economic impact of agriculture & food entrepreneurship
  - Get your “mojo” back!

## 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)
- Community partners (food councils, nonprofits, faith-based groups)
- Higher education partners (universities and community colleges)
- Nonprofits & NGOs
- Social networks

# NC STRATEGIES FOR FOOD SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

## Zoning & Regulations

- Ag-supportive zoning: setbacks, infrastructure
- Working with the bona fide farm exemption
- Community gardens, urban agriculture, and farmers' markets

Town of Matthews  
City of Winston-Salem  
Catawba Food & Farm Collaborative (SC)

## Development Strategies

- Conservation development
- Incentives for farmland conservation
- Farmland protection plans & programs

Durham County  
Wetrock Farms  
State of Rhode Island

## Strategic & Long-Range Planning

- Whole-systems approach to food & supply chains
- Infrastructure planning for supply chain expansion

City of Greensboro  
Cape Fear COG  
Piedmont Triad COG

## Economic Development

- Local food economies as a recruitment tool
- Local food economies as a creation, retention, and expansion tool

NC Association of Regional Councils of Government

# FOOD SYSTEMS PLANNING PROCESS



## MAKE IT LAST

- Comprehensive plans are just the start
- Adopted policies and programs
- Committed funds



## COMMUNITY

- Food policy councils
- Community partners
- Bridging social capital



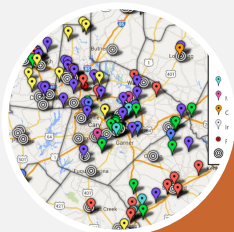
## REGULATIONS

- Zoning updates
- Farmland preservation plan
- Bona fide farms



## ECONOMICS

- Local gov purchasing
- Market analysis & support
- Agricultural economic development
- Business & entrepreneurship development



## ASSESSMENT

- Data, GIS
- Food System Assessments
- Farmland inventory
- EQUITY

# COMMON FIRST STEPS: FOOD SYSTEM ASSESSMENTS

- Understand relationship between food and public health within a defined study area
- Inventory farms/roadside stands, farmers' markets, and food assistance resources
- Establish baseline data for local food economy
- Understand strengths, weaknesses, and areas for further study
- Tell the story of the way our food system impacts our health and economy

## SENC Regional Food Systems Assessment:

*Local Food, Food Insecurity, and Healthy Eating & Nutrition*



Southeastern North Carolina  
Regional Health Collaborative



In North Carolina, Community Food Strategies coordinates food policy council development & relationships across the state. They're releasing a toolkit for food system assessment from a community-based approach: [www.communityfoodstrategies.com](http://www.communityfoodstrategies.com).

# BASIC COMPONENTS OF AN FSA

- Can be driven by particular local emphasis, such as public health, food security, or agricultural economic development
- Must identify a study area, establish baseline data
- Local factors and influences should determine the components of your community's Food System Assessment
- Public input from diverse stakeholders with an advisory committee

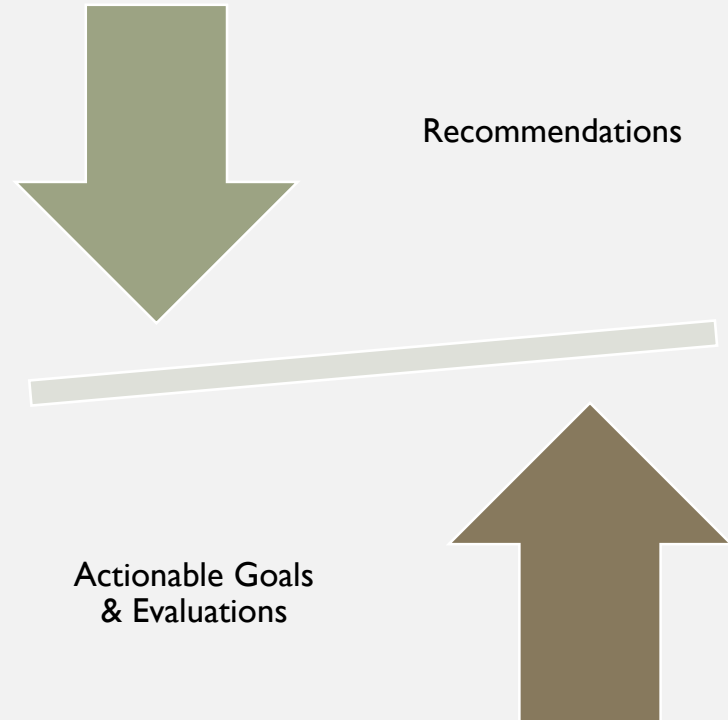
## SENC Selected Three Focus Areas:

1. Local Food Component
2. Food Security Component
3. Healthy Eating & Nutrition Component

- Current Population and Projected Growth/decline
- Poverty Rate
- Diabetic Rate
- Obesity Rate
- Leisure time Physical Activity
- Food Insecure Population
- Food Waste (annual tons)
- Health Priorities (from local Community Health Assessment)
- Full-service Grocery Stores Per Capita
- Fast Food Restaurants Per Capita
- Number/Acres/Size of Farms
- Number of Farms by Agricultural Product
- Value of Agricultural Products sold Per Farm
- Livestock Inventory
- Local Farms & Roadside Stands
- Farmers' Markets
- Food Assistance Resources
- Prime Farmland Soils

# SETTING GOALS & STRATEGIES

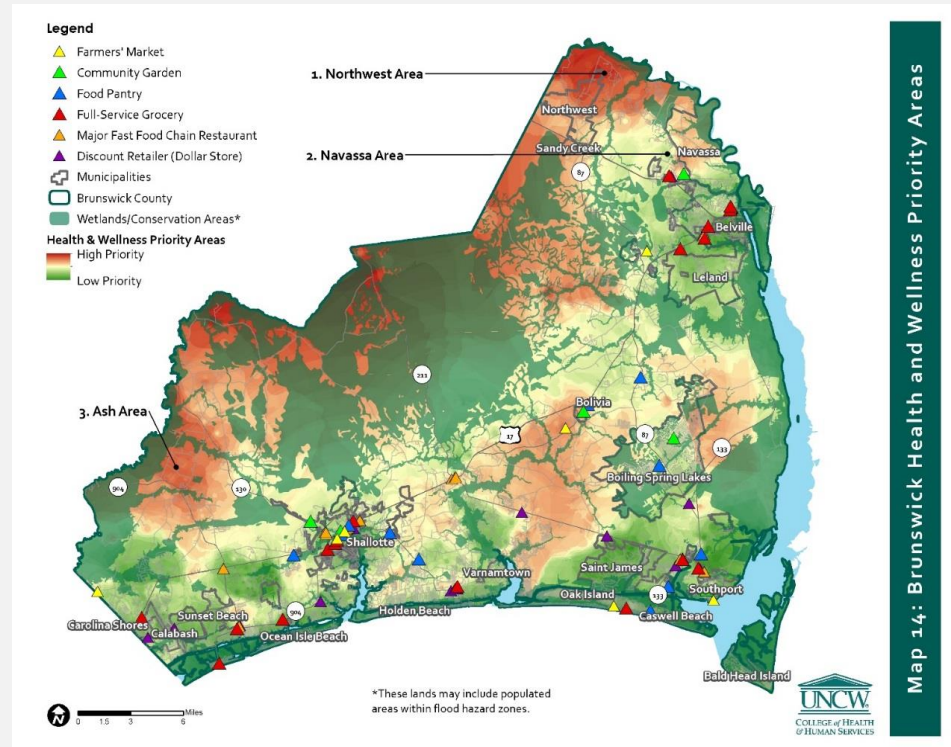
1. Establish an overarching goal for each component of the Food System Assessment
2. Identify Evidence-Based Strategies  
Optional: Identify geographic priority areas



*Evidence-Based Strategy: Evidence-based public health is the practice of incorporating scientific evidence about what works into management decisions, program implementation, clinical services, and policy development.*

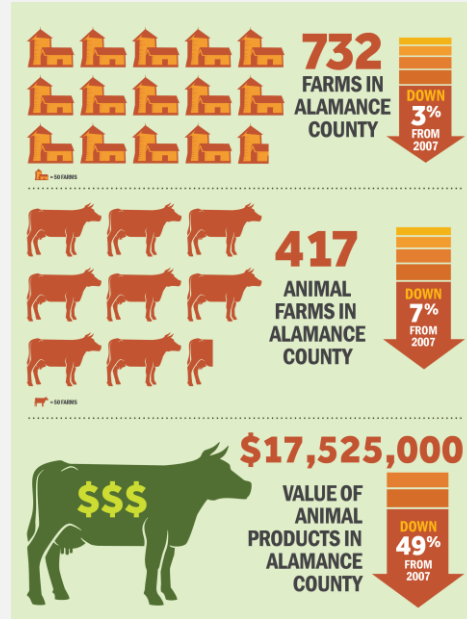
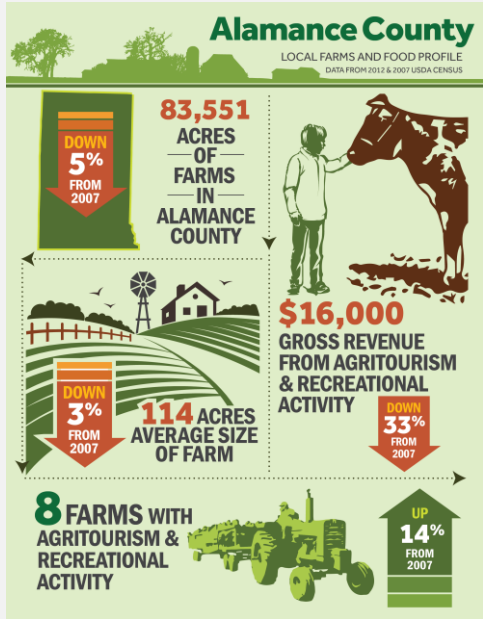
# UTILIZING THE FOOD SYSTEM ASSESSMENT IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- Support agricultural land uses in a growing county or town
- Identify strategies and goals for Food Policy Councils
- Involve stakeholders in collaborative goal-setting processes
- Provide groundwork for a needs assessment for Cooperative Extension staff
- Help determine priorities for Health Departments
- Reinforce agricultural economic development goals





# RESOURCES AND TOOLS

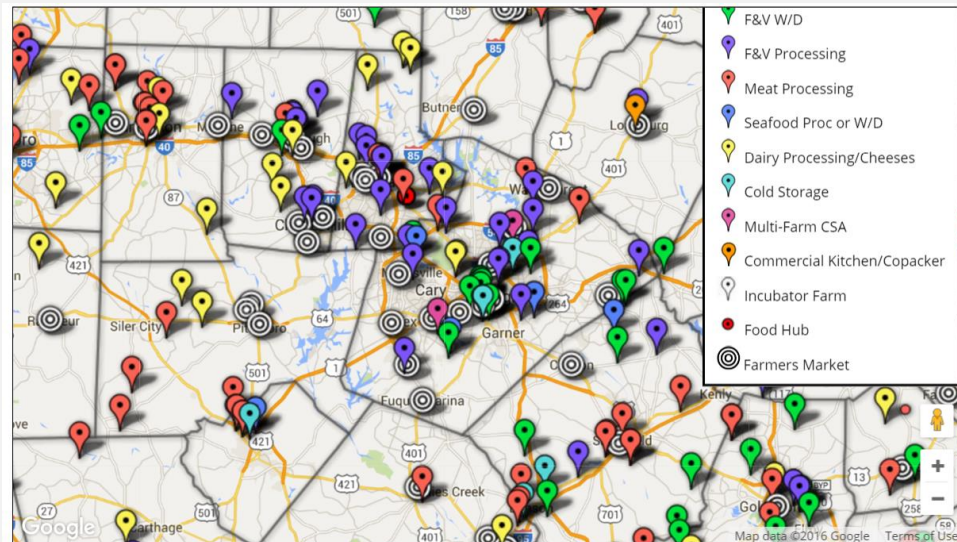


## National Resources

- USDA’s [Economic Impact of Local Foods Toolkit](#)
- USDA’s [Farm to Fork](#) Resources
- [American Planning Association](#)
- [Southern SAWG](#)
- [National Institutes of Health](#)

## North Carolina Resources

- NCGT has infographics for each county and COG with easy-to-understand data points about local agriculture.
- NCGT maintains the Local Food Supply Chain Infrastructure Map.
- The Local Gov, Local Food Toolkit, with specific ordinances, planning strategies, and economic development tools, will be available August 1, 2016.
- NCGT has case studies on successful projects in North Carolina.
- NCDA & NC Cooperative Extension provide regional and statewide assistance.
- NC DHHS and other statewide health partners offer data and strategy coordination.



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

*Samuel Johnson*

THANK YOU!

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

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

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**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)
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<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>

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