Building a Sustainable Local Food Economy in North Carolina

**VISION:** North Carolina has a strong local food economy where all North Carolinians regularly consume fresh, healthy foods that are grown, raised, caught, processed, distributed and marketed sustainably by local producers and businesses.

**CONTEXT (Why?)**
- Loss of farmland, farmers and fisheries
- Obesity, chronic diseases and health care expenditures
- Rising cost of fossil fuels and natural resource degradation
- Job loss and rural community decline

**ASSETS**
- Consumer demand
- Strong and diverse agricultural industry and ideal climate
- Community and institutional engagement
- Superior educational system and flexible labor pool
- Proximity between rural and metropolitan areas

**INPUTS (What?)**
- Structured planning and coordination
- Policy and regulatory changes
- Capital investments
- Research, training and instruction
- Consumer education and marketing

**STRATEGIES (How?)**
- Engage and coordinate agencies and stakeholders at state and local level
- Grow new and transitioning farmers and secure prime farmland
- Expand producers’ access to larger-scale local markets
- Support food systems infrastructure and business development
- Cultivate community gardens
- Address public health and food access disparities
- Coordinate and integrate public education campaigns
- Implement farm-to-school programming and engage youth

**OUTPUTS (Interim Results)**
- State and local food advisory councils
- Coordinated local food system policies and regulations
- Viable business models and public/private partnerships that provide local food infrastructure and market access
- Statewide networks that expand reach and effectiveness of community-based initiatives
- Food system focused training and instruction programs that support teachers, extension agents, farmers and food entrepreneurs

**OUTCOMES (Short-term impacts)**
- More farmers and fisheries
- More fresh, healthy, local food widely sold to institutional, retail and food service markets
- More infrastructure and new businesses and partnerships established
- More supportive regulatory environment
- More demand for sustainably produced foods

**OUTCOMES (Long-term impacts)**
- Increased jobs within food economy
- Healthy North Carolinians and reduced state health care expenditures
- Increased food dollars spent locally supporting rural communities
- Reduced environmental impact and reliance on fossil fuels

Fig. 1. Logic Model for Building a Sustainable Local Food Economy in North Carolina.