

LEE, MOORE, & RICHMOND COUNTY, NC



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Needs Addressed:

- Increased market for locally produced farm products
- Increased access to healthy food for consumers
- Increased awareness of the economic benefits of a local food system

Project/Process:

In recent years, Ag Agents with Cooperative Extension in Moore, Richmond and Lee have worked on improving farmers' access to direct markets. Though there have been some successes, farmers still express that consumers do not appreciate their product, and that consumers are unwilling to spend the time and money associated with buying directly from the farmer. One way to increase the consumer market would be to increase awareness of the many benefits associated with buying products locally. To that end, the agents developed partnerships with a number of organizations and individuals who shared a vision for increasing consumer consumption of farm products. These partners included health care, faith communities, those working with food insecure populations, schools, and many others. The goal was to develop a Speakers Bureau of committed partners. Armed with a virtual tool box developed by the agents and supplemented with the specific expertise of the partners in their own fields, a speaker will have the information they need to address in an informed way their own constituency (ie., a PTA group, a Land Trust Board) on the myriad of benefits of supporting locally produced food. This network of speakers has the potential to reach many more consumers than an agent could alone. In addition, in addressing their own constituency, each speaker has greater authority based on a relationship of respect and trust with their audience that will improve the reception of the message.

Partnerships:

- [Sandhills Farm to Table Cooperative](#)
- [Communities in Schools](#)
- [First Health Hospital](#)
- [Richmond County Partnership for Children](#)
- Brighter Futures of Montgomery County
- Moore County Farmers' Market
- Sandhills Farmers' Green Market
- [Chef Warren's Restaurant](#)

Lessons Learned:

Many partners are eager to participate. Getting everyone together in the same place and time is difficult. We have made use of the internet with a Wiki Pb Works.



Results:

- A toolkit for partners has been created with presentations and talking points on the benefits of local foods, specific to Sandhills.
- Eighteen partners have been trained and equipped with toolkit
- Sandhills Farm to Table sold \$276,000 in local produce to 725 households.

Next Steps:

We have scheduled two farm tours to better acquaint members with the concerns of farmers.

