

**Moving the Charlottesville Area Local Food System Forward:
Surveying the needs of producers and consumers &
A look into existing local product support agencies**

Prepared for the Jefferson Area Board for Aging by

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Executive Summary

Support for local food in the Charlottesville region continues to grow. With this growth have come discussions about the need for improved communication and collaboration among producers, organizations and community members that are currently working to strengthen the Charlottesville region's local food system. Many people have expressed that in order for our community food system to move to the next level of sustainability, we need to talk to each other more and share information in an efficient and organized way.

There are many ways this could be accomplished, and one option that has received a lot of attention is the creation of an organization that could, among other things, 1) develop a network to facilitate communication and collaboration among producers, organizations and community members interested in local food system issues; 2) make policy recommendations; 3) identify and assist with fundraising opportunities; and 4) help coordinate and develop programs.

Through the Harvest Now Project JABA has been working with community partners to conduct research, interviews, and meetings around the issue of developing a strong community food system in the Charlottesville area. The Harvest Now 2008 End-of-Year Summary, Evaluation and Assessment Report laid out the next steps to take the Project forward with the research and findings that had been generated from a meeting of a small group of key players in the Charlottesville area local food movement. One of the steps is to work towards the creation of a centralized entity to provide support, collaborative opportunities and increased effectiveness of ongoing and future initiatives in the Charlottesville area local food system.

This September JABA will bring together key constituents involved with local food from the Charlottesville region to further discuss and formulate action steps to strengthen the Charlottesville region's local food system. Before these meetings take place, JABA hired a summer research assistant to conduct surveys with local food producers and consumers to gauge their current needs. Additionally, case studies were completed on two Appalachian local food support organizations to be used for ideas and perhaps guidance for strengthening the Charlottesville region's local food system.

A number of key recommendations emerged based on survey findings:

- Work with existing organizations that are already involved with local food.
- Collaborate and communicate more.
- Access, availability, and affordability continue to be barriers.
- Information on events in the area regarding local food is desired.
- Reliable signage and better advertisement for local food is needed.
- Grant assistance is desired.

Method

This report has been divided into two sections: survey results from participating non producers and producers in the Charlottesville Regional food system, and two case studies of support agencies for local food and goods.

Two separate surveys were compiled for consumers and producers. The list of non producer participants was chosen based on past participation and interest in local food issues. Many of the people who had attended JABA's events regarding local food were contacted. Additionally, grocery stores, distribution centers, catering companies, restaurants, and institutions – whether they were using or selling local food or not - were invited to partake in the survey. 84 different non producers were invited to take the online survey. The survey was active for two weeks and 38 surveys were completed.

The producers' survey was conducted both online and through personal discussions. The list of producers was compiled from the list of vendors at the Charlottesville farmers' markets and contact lists from JABA's events regarding local food. 72 producers were invited to take the online survey. Only two people were able to participate online and three people completed the survey through in person discussions.

Non Producer Survey Findings

The following is a summary of the survey results. See the **Non Producer Survey Results** starting on page 7 for more details for each question.

Questions 1-4 gathered general background information about the participants. Many of the participants were from Charlottesville and Albemarle. Fluvanna, Louisa, and Nelson County were also represented in the survey. There weren't any participants from Greene County. Question 2 asked participants how they define a "local product". The majority of participants define a "local product" as found within the Central Virginia region. About a quarter of the participants define it as within the State of Virginia. Question 3 asked participants what their role in the local food system is. The greatest number of participants identified themselves as a local food consumer and or interested citizens. There was also representation from local food support agencies, local food buyers for large-scale organizations, local food buyers for large-scale distribution, and local food buyers for restaurants. The majority of participants said they get their local food from a farmers market, grocery store, personal garden, or directly from a farmer.

For question 5, participants were asked to rank from 1-6, 1 being the highest and 6 being the lowest, their reasons for buying from local sources. 39.5% of the participants chose "to support local famers" as their primary reason. Next in order was "more nutritious, then "sustainability",

then “promotes community interaction”, then “tastes better”, and finally “environmental concerns”.

Question 6 was an opened ended question that asked participants what they thought was most important for sustaining a local food system. Costs, availability, access, support from the community, education, and infrastructure were among the reasons provided. Collaboration and community involvement, along with having farmers/growers at the decision-making table was also listed. *(See question 6 below for the complete listing.)*

Question 7 asked participants to select from a list the obstacles they saw to using locally grown food products. Affordability, availability, lack of distribution, and convenience were the most commonly selected obstacles.

Question 8 asked participants to comment on what is needed to overcome the obstacles they chose in question 7. Some of the suggestions listed included a permanent farmers’ market; having more local products in one place; farm certification; appropriate regulations; education; and accepting EBT and WIC cards at farmers’ markets. *(See question 8 below for the complete listing.)*

Question 9 asked participants to comment on what needs to happen to improve our region’s current food system in order to meet their individual needs. Suggestions included local government policy, planning and incentives; more seasonal availability of local foods; change in consumer behavior; lower costs; and more farmers.

Question 10 asked participants if they thought a new entity could promote a more robust and dependable local food system. 51% of participants said yes, 11% said no, and 38% said they were undecided.

Question 11 then asked participants if they would encourage the formation of a supporting local food entity to promote and coordinate local food efforts in the five county region. 78% replied yes, 11% no, and 11% were unsure.

Question 12 asked participants to list the organization they collaborate with. A wide range of organizations was listed from publications, to farmers and farmers’ markets, to regional non profits or state agencies. *(See question 12 below for the complete listing.)*

Question 13 was aimed at participants who are a part of an organization that is interested in or involved with local food, and asked them what support they are most in need of. Responses included a local or closer processing plant for beef; refrigeration and storage; a central organization to coordinate efforts and information; and funding. *(See question 13 below for the complete listing.)*

Question 14 was aimed at consumers or interested citizens, and asked what support they are most in need of. Participants most commonly selected information on events in the area regarding local food; better signage for local food; and information on how to get involved with local food. Comments were also taken on this question and participants added credible signage for local food; better advertisements; more availability; a public facility that regularly teaches food preservation methods; how to advocate for better policies; and a certification process.

Question 15 asked participants where they go if they have questions about local food. Piedmont Environmental Council was listed multiple times, as were local farmers and or producers, friends, the Food Hub, and Virginia Cooperative Extension. *(See question 15 below for more information.)*

Question 17 asked participants if they would be willing to pay an annual membership fee for a supporting organization. 30% said they would pay \$25. 19% said they would pay less than \$100, and the same percent said they would pay \$100. 27% said they would not be willing to pay for a membership.

Question 18 asked participants to list what else that would like to know about this issue. Comments included focusing on local and organic; keeping everyone in the loop and coordinating with existing organizations; grant writing help and grant identification; and a forum for schools to understand the issues. Two comments were given regarding a hesitation to a supporting organization. Both comment said there are many organizations and interest groups already working on local food issues and it would be better to coordinate among existing actors rather than to start another organization.

Producer Survey Findings

The following is a summary of the survey results. Please see **Survey Results on** page 20 for more detail. While the survey response number from producers was quite low, five people, important information call still be gleaned from the survey findings that can be used to guide conversation with a larger group of a participants.

Question 3 asked producers what they believe some of the obstacles to using locally grown products are. Producers responded with the following:

- Availability
- Liability/product insurance
- Facility procurement policy
- Lack of distribution system
- Legal requirements
- County/city inspection/regulations
- Land cost, labor cost, the cost of growing food outweighs the cost that consumers are willing to pay.

Question 7 asked what services producers think the organization could provide. Producers responded with the following:

- Information about organizations to collaborate with
- Information about funding options
- Information on local, state, and federal policy
- Database for agriculture land availability
- New farmer incubation opportunities
- Business development opportunities
- Connecting growers with local business in an easy way
- Training/labor opportunities

The questions that garnered the largest and most detailed responses from producers were regarding obstacles to using locally grown products and services they are in need of. These responses provide a look into how a local food support agency could address the needs of producers. Without larger participation though it is not possible to narrow the focus on how a local food support agency could help producers at this time.

Non Producer Survey Results

1. What is your place of residence?

	38 Participant Responses	
Charlottesville	17	45%
Albemarle County	17	45%
Fluvanna County	2	5%
Louisa County	1	3%
Nelson County	1	3%
Greene County	0	0%

2. I define a "local product" as found within:

	38 Participant Responses	
Central Virginia region	20	53%
State of Virginia	10	26%
Charlottesville and adjacent counties	7	18%
The Southeast & Mid Atlantic	1	3%
East Coast	0	0%

3. What is your role in the local food system? (Select all that apply)

	Participant Responses	
Local food consumer for family or self	29	76%
Interested citizen	24	63%
Local food support agency	13	34%

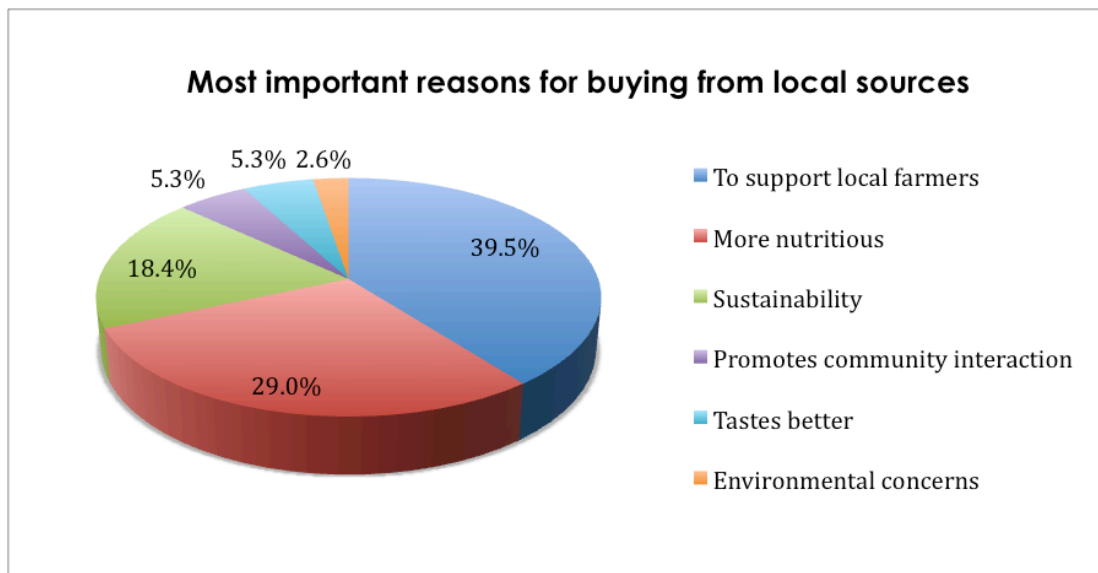
Local food buyer for large-scale organization	5	13%
Local food buyer for large-scale distribution	4	11%
Local Food buyer for a restaurant	2	5%

4. Where do you get your local food (Select all that apply)

	Participant Responses	
Farmers' market	30	79%
Directly from a farmer	26	68%
Grocery store	26	68%
Personal garden	23	61%
Other	8	21%

<i>Other responses</i>
Coops - 2 responses
CSA
Directly from local meat processor
Distributor
Food Hub
Friends
Local Food Hub - 2 responses
Raise beef and vegetables for self and market

5. Rank your reasons for buying from local sources.

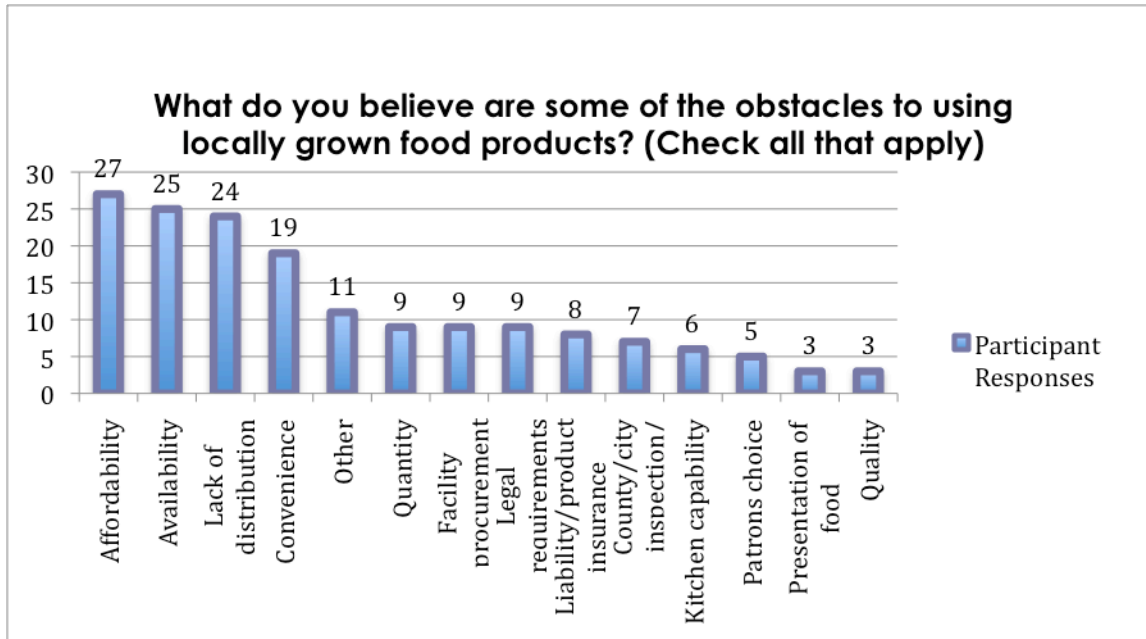


6. What do you think is most important for sustaining a local food system?

Food system revolution with citizens driving advocacy lobbying bigger than the AMA's lobby.
Readily accessible at an affordable cost.
People buying the products.
Enthusiastic buying public, support from the community.
A continuum of services and information that can enable persons from all walks of life to have access to affordable local nutritious food options.
Communication between the public and the growers. Educating the public.
Getting one started. The rest will take care of itself as people learn, try and get hooked.
Making it economically viable for farmers, which means cutting the red tape of regulation (i.e. pasteurization).
Availability
Organizations/individuals with similar agendas working together to accomplish overlapping goals. Detrimental to the whole to have individual groups constantly re-inventing the wheel.
Cooperation and communication between organizations promoting a local food system.
Availability and competitive pricing.
Buy and sell locally.

Education; participation (from everyone who eats!); celebration of deliciousness.
Having farmers/growers at the decision-making table, not just people who like to eat local food.
Participation by all, no matter to what degree.
Having easy access to the product.
County government support.
Ensuring access to food for all communities, specifically low income communities and balancing that with providing fair markets for local farmers.
Education and awareness, demonstration farms/gardens, apprenticeships, making ag/food systems part of our educational system.
Individual consumer being dedicated to purchasing locally.
Support from all local residence and government.
Pricing
Ways of seeing ourselves in the world: as with, recognition of the mutual benefits for health, economy, ecosystems, and community.
Collaboration and community engagement.
Health.
Education of public to economic value of localizing food production and purchasing.
Educating want-to-be farmers.
Access to land for people who can't afford it but want to farm.
Start up farm funding.
Access (year round) and affordability. Food should be easily accessed and affordable for the general public in order for a local food system to be successful.
Buying local, cutting back on chemicals, pollution & trash.
Local farms like Polyface that provide a good product in an environmentally friendly fashion.
Creating an infrastructure that can support the system - e.g. cultivating knowledgeable distributors and buyers, educating consumers, developing and passing supportive policies...and lastly developing a system to support and grow new farmers.

**7. What do you believe are some of the obstacles to using locally grown food products?
(Check all that apply)**



8. What is needed to overcome the obstacles you chose in question 7?

More local product in one place. It is not easy to shop locally when one can only purchase a few items from one's entire grocery list in one location. Having many pantry staples that are sourced locally available in one location would be tremendous.
Charlottesville needs a permanent farmers market structure that can operate more than one morning per week.
Better distribution, cooperation from big grocery stores, possibly more production by farmers.
A highly visible and creditable source for information and coordination as well as one that can help consumers and producers access necessary resources.
Better means to get product into the hands of consumers. Ability to be able to purchase wide range of product at any time rather than just farmers market; enough production and use to bring down the cost.

A comprehensive strategy. Thinking outside of the box, and since time is of the essence. From the people who met with Tom Perriello at the local food meeting, I suggest we form a local think tank or discussion group for us all to collaborate. The power of the media is, has been, and can continue to be an influential force greater than money. Using the media proactively for the greater good. In interest of all of our, long term success, we need to discover each others strengths and weaknesses in order to collaborate for the greater good. Free Speech TV has created an opportunity for Meet The Farmer TV to reach via satellite the rural areas in Virginia, not served by cable TV and internet. It is an opportunity to serve as communicative tool to the nation as well. Exposing the hidden values and deeper benefits of buying local is a major threat to some. As the producer of MTFTV, I invite our community to collaborate with Meet The Farmer TV, and share, this opportunity. As a team we can collectively and strategically create a roadmap and show the nation a solid footing through the uncertain path ahead. I believe we can create a template applicable to communities everywhere. If we as a community do our best to co-create the reality we want for ourselves, then our example can serve as a model of a natural symbiotic relationships between farmers, people and community organizations. An example that serves our needs and long term interests as well as protecting our rights and guaranteed access of healthy local food.

More volume for better pricing, tomatoes excluded.

If farms had some sort of certification that equates to a GAP inspection it would make using local product much easier.

Outreach to the public.

The Local Food Hub that is up and running.

Food Hub will help. We need the same for beef and a local processing plant will follow (if we can find \$2M).

More local processing facilities, especially for meat.

A tiered regulatory system; large-scale agri-businesses are more susceptible to problems and should be regulated more heavily.

More growers=more availability=lower prices.

Education, distribution system.

Education, EBT and WIC cards accepted in farmers' markets, awareness, policy change, cooperation, city/county support.

Education. Provide information to parents of school age children about the problems with the food supply. The movie FRESH is a good example of how we can address this problem.

Food stamp clearance; affordable prices; cooking lessons, recipes, samples.

Policy work AND locally-focused education and promotion of existing products.

Local, county, and state governance leadership (promoting supportive tax structure; seasonal incentives; distribution support; community visibility); environmental education so that the issue becomes one of sustainable lifestyles and not one of reductive partisan debate (i.e., organic is more healthy v. no, no it isn't v. yes, yes it is).
Less and/or more appropriate regulation. More support for agricultural entrepreneurship.
Availability (seasonality) cannot be overcome. The others can be with flexibility on both sides.
Support from local restaurants, food stores.
Consistent, persistent concerted efforts over time. Producers need to have confidence the market is there, and bureaucrats need to know that their customer - the consumer - wants these products. Consumer demand will need to drive a change in regulatory behavior.
Better programs for the local farmers, so they do not have to charge so much in order to make ends meet.
Volunteers to collect and prepare the food so it can last...refrigeration.
I'm not sure, but things seem to be moving in the right direction, particularly in terms of availability.
Starting somewhere! Choose a goal and go for it - whether you start with schools, or the distribution link, it will all be helpful.

9. What needs to happen to improve our region's current food system in order to meet your needs?

My needs are to provide community service. We need to get out of our own way and learn how to be a team of collaborators.
Someway for large buyers to take surplus produce during the growing season and can/freeze it for later use.
More local food made available.
More variety.
Local government policy, planning and incentives, united public information campaign that reaches people of all ages and socio-economic status.
Better supply in large quantity.
More year round growing like Planet Earth diversified in Greene County.
More seasonal availability of local foods.
Put the local foods in the regular groceries.
A year-round market would help tremendously.
Local food chains should purchase locally grown foods. More frequent and diverse locations for farmers markets throughout area. Perhaps traveling markets to other sites.
A City Market to be proud of (with restrooms, some infrastructure, guarantee of 'producer-only' policy).

Better relationships with farmers in Shenandoah Valley.
Farmers who can consistently supply a product, in quantity, with liability coverage at a price every close to the current wholesale.
More organized. Easier availability.
Less and/or more appropriate regulation. More support for ag entrepreneurship.
Change in consumer behavior. They need to learn to cook again, and change from convenience-driven to quality-driven and sustainability-driven. Consumer demand will be the engine that drives the change - producer innovation will then be stimulated.
Lower costs.
Storage, volunteers to prepare the food, education on ways to prepare the food, refrigeration system/storage until distribution, region collaboration.
1) Community policies (neighborhoods, homeowners associations, city councils, county commissions, state delegates) that support the value of local foods (as healthy, economical, environmentally health, and productive of community cohesion). 2) Media representations that avoid outdated stereotypes, on the one side, of "granola" or "hippie" or "left-wing" advocates and, on the other, of libertarian, anti-government ideologues.
Better policy. More collaboration. Since question #10 does not allow for elaboration I will say here that there already exists a few nonprofits that could take on a coordination role. Yet another nonprofit is not necessary and would be hard to sustain long term. Look at PEC, Food Hub, or TJPDC (for starters) before starting a new entity.
GAP better defined, and barriers eliminated.
Have more products than just vegetables and meats available. I would love to buy my entire grocery list from local sources, but it is not yet practical, available or affordable.
More farmers. Patricia Kluge was instrumental in getting the local community college to offer courses in the grape growing and wine making. The same needs to be done for farming. We need a distribution system, a food storage facility, a quick freeze or canning operation, etc.
More local fresh produce in rural markets.

10. Do you think a new entity could promote a more robust and dependable local food system?

	37 Participant Response	
Yes	19	51%
No	4	11%
Undecided	14	38%

11. Would you encourage the formation of a supporting local food entity to promote and coordinate local food efforts in the five county region?

	37 Participant Responses	
Yes	29	78%
No	4	11%
Undecided	4	11%

12. Do you collaborate with other organizations?

Albemarle Forever
Batten Institute
Blue Ridge Area Food Bank
C-Ville Weekly
Charlottesville Quality Community Council
Children Youth and Family Services
Comprehensive Health Investment Project
County/City government
Darden
EAT Local - 2 responses
Edible Blue Ridge Magazine
Farm Bureau
Farmers - 3 responses
Farmers markets - 4 responses
Food Banks/ soup kitchens
Food Service Directors of schools
Forever Albemarle
Harvest Moon Catering
Health Department
Jefferson Area Board for Aging - 5 responses
Local Food Hub - 4 responses
Local Notion - 2 responses
Local vendors
Nelson County
Piedmont Environmental Council - 9 responses
Regional non profits
Southern Environmental Law Center
Southern Exposure Seed Exchange
State agencies
University of Virginia - 2 responses
University of Virginia Institute for Environmental Negotiation

Urban Vision
USDA
UVA Hospital
Vintage Virginia Apples/ Albemarle CiderWorks
Virginia Association for Biological Farming
Virginia Cooperative Extension
Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Virginia Independent Consumer and Farmers Association - 2 responses
Virginia Organizing Project
Virginia Outdoors Foundation
Virginia Tech

13. If you are part of an organization interested in or involved with local food, what support are you most in need of? (Select all that apply)

Local (or closer) processing plant for beef (90 mins. one way is too long to be sustainable).
Refrigeration and storage.
A central organization to coordinate efforts and to offer resources to the public.
Community outreach, time.
Volunteer base.
A source of information that is a clearinghouse for all types of questions related to food.
Funding to undertake the research to support the needs of building the food system.

14. If you are a consumer or interested citizen what support are you most in need of? (Select all that apply)

	Participant responses	
Information on events in the area regarding local food	11	29%
Better signage for local food	10	26%
Information on how to get involved with local food	10	26%

Public education events	8	21%
Information on how to volunteer with local food efforts	6	16%
Hotline to call for questions regarding local food	1	3%
Other	7	18%

Other responses
Credible signage of local food.
More availability.
Public facility that regularly teaches food preservation methods. High school education track in agricultural production and small-scale farming methods. Bring back "home economics" courses so all youth learn how to cook real food, not just those who want to become chefs and take culinary arts.
How to advocate for better policies. The food hub is already providing lots of this information on their new blog. In addition a lot of this information is gathered via PEC's website and Buy Fresh/Buy Local program.
Better advertisements (not just signs) as to where to find local foods. Right now it is a goose chase to try to fill my grocery list from local foods.
Where & when to buy.
Some kind of "certification" process like NC's ASAP for "Appalachian Grown" would be appropriate - so that we don't have stores saying Florida oranges are "locally grown". It's important to insist on citing both the location and farm where the food came from.

15. Where do you go now if you have questions about local food?

Conduct personal research
Department of Education
Food Hub - 3 responses
Food service directors
Friends - 5 responses
JABA - 3 responses
Lisa Reeder of Local Notion
Local farmers and/or producers - 6 responses

Michael Clark
Piedmont Environmental Council - 7 responses
Senior citizens
Store clerks
Tanya Denckla Cobb
Virginia Cooperative Extension - 3 responses
Virginia Independent Consumer and Farmers Association

16. If you are an organization how are you funded? (Select all that apply)

	38 Participant responses	
Private	16	42%
Government	14	37%
For-profit	9	24%
Not funded (e.g. consumer)	3	8%

17. Would you be willing to pay an annual membership fee for this supporting organization?

	37 Participant Responses	
Yes - \$25	11	30%
No	10	27%
Yes - Less than \$25	7	19%
Yes - \$100	7	19%
Yes - \$50	2	5%

18. What else to you want us to know about this issue?

Carry on. We will follow.
It needs to be broader - a focus on sustainable food, for which local and organic are both solutions. Too much focus on local invites criticism.
Make sure you keep everyone in the loop, this is not the first time someone tried to do this, see if you can include all the competing organizations, try not to care about who gets credit for the success if have any.
Coordination with Food Bank and other food pantries.

I support the idea of a local-food entity; I would be interested in consulting and/or volunteering to make this happen; I believe a Food Policy Council would be a logical outgrowth of a local food organization.
Moving people away from convenience/processed food is much more important than eating locally. Emphasizing how cooking can be done quickly and easily is an essential piece of changing what people currently choose.
More collaboration and communication among the various organizations working on these issues would be an effective approach toward solutions.
I checked above that I'd support such an organization, but I am skeptical that it is necessary. There are so many organizations and interest groups already afloat, it would seem to require better coordination among existing actors rather than the inception of an entirely new organization. What about a/the local food council? State advisory board?
I fear that while there are good intentions with the creation of this new entity, it is not a good idea to create another nonprofit. This area needs more collaboration and less duplication as stated above there are nonprofits already in existence that could/should take on this role.
Grant writing help and grant identification, funding networking would be most valuable resources for us.
It's important, stick with it.
I would like to see a forum for all the schools that would help them begin to understand the issues. Children's food is very important and neglected in many schools. Secondly, people who run food service need to be pulled into the loop regarding what information is available. They need to be sought out and invited to local food education presentations/classes.

19. Are you interested in volunteering for a follow-up interview?

Frank Melli (434) 953-95272
Kathy Kildea, Market Central, Inc. (434) 244-5624 marketcentral@bnsi.net
Karen Shepard MACAA
Lisa Reeder (434) 293-5835
Brent Beringer
Dawn Story dawn@newmoonnaturals.com (540) 718-3200
Benjamin Cohen brc8x@virginia.edu

Lynda fanning (434) 982 2522

Stephen Jamme St. Anne's Belfield School 2132 Ivy Road Charlottesville, Va 22903 ph: 434-296-5106 ext 1242 email: sjamme@stab.org
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Producer Survey Results

1. Which existing organizations do the best job promoting the work you do?

Local food hub is doing great so far and then the local farmers' markets. We do a lot of self promoting with our website, CSA, and offering on farm tours to customers and the community.
PEC/ Buy Fresh, Buy Local
Virginia Independent Consumer and Farmers Association
Shenandoah Valley Whole Sale Market

2. Where do you go now if you have questions about local food?

Local vendors, particularly at the Harrisonburg Market
Other local vendors

3. What do you believe are some of the obstacles to using locally grown products? (Select all that apply)

Availability
Liability/product insurance
Facility procurement policy
Lack of distribution system
Legal requirements
County/city inspection/regulations

Other Responses

Land cost, labor cost, the cost of growing food outweighs the cost that consumers are willing to pay.

4. What would make your job easier in relation to selling local products to local vendors?

Coordinate harvest for the market and for vendors on the same day

5. Do you think a new entity could promote a more robust and dependable local food system?

Yes
Organization that allows interaction with producers
New farmers are needed in the area and they need grants to get land
Yes, as long as it doesn't compete with the Local Food Hub

6. Would you encourage formation of a supporting local food entity to promote and coordinate local food efforts in the five county region?

Yes – 3 responses

7. What services do you think the organization could provide? (Select all that apply)

Information about organizations to collaborate with (1)
Information about funding options (2)
Information on local, state, and federal policy (2)
Database for agriculture land availability (1)
New farmer incubation opportunities (1)
Business development opportunities (2)
Training/labor opportunities (1)

Other Responses
Connecting growers with local business in an easy way
Funding
Realistic lasting support

8. What do you think is most important for sustaining a local food system?

Getting the food out there at a good price to growers and consumers. The food will taste better and our communities will be healthier and more viable.
Supply
Wholesale is hard
Health benefits

9. What obstacles around the local food system do you face?

Not having time to market our excesses particularly after market or when we have a bumper crop. With a CSA we always grow excess to make sure we have plenty for our members. We most often have too much but not enough time to coordinate selling it at a price that is worth our time. The local food auction in Dayton VA is not worth my time as you do not get much for what you take. What the local food hub has been doing is very helpful. We are also happy to donate excess to local food banks and do this weekly.

10. Would you be willing to pay a small yearly membership fee for this supporting organization?

Yes \$25 (1)

No (2)

11. Are you interested in volunteering for a follow-up interview? If so, please enter your name and contact information below. You would be interviewed in more detail about your thoughts on supporting local food entity.

Megan Weary
info@roundaboutfarm.net

Case study 1: Appalachian Center for Economic Networks - ACEnet

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Case Study 1: Appalachian Center for Economic Networks - ACEnet

Appalachian Center for Economic Networks (ACEnet), a nonprofit incorporated in 1985, was established to promote locally owned businesses, primarily those operated by lower income residents, in southeastern Ohio. Located in Athens, Ohio ACEnet serves Appalachian Ohio's 29 counties. Through primarily grant funding ACEnet works with the art, food, agriculture, and wood sectors. ACEnet operates on the belief that when organizations work together, share resources, and learn from each other they will thrive and bring new economic opportunities into the area. ACEnet fosters such collaborative environments throughout the art, food, agriculture, and wood sectors by making information easily accessible; keeping facilities affordable for leasing; and reaching out to communities and individuals in need [1].

This report will examine how ACEnet supports the development and expansion of small businesses through their support in 6 major areas:

Business Innovation fosters the development of small-scale business development.

ACEnet Food Ventures assists new or existing small food businesses by providing commercial facilities and product development.

Business Facilities and Networking provides competitive leasing rates on business and manufacturing space, and an incubator program for new businesses.

ACEnet Ventures helps small businesses learn about business loan opportunities to expand their business and provide more employment opportunities to people in the area.

ACEnet Institute provides research and policy assistance for small businesses.

Peer Consulting Services helps organizations looking to learn from or replicate ACEnet's models.

Mission

“ACEnet builds the capacity of Appalachian communities to network, work together, and innovate to create a dynamic sustainable regional economy with opportunities for all [1a].”

Vision Statement

“ACEnet will be recognized as the region’s most effective catalyst of entrepreneurial and community creativity. Our activities will identify and develop under-utilized and untapped resources through collaboration, partnerships and innovation. These activities will result in expanded impact and scale of operations, enabling large numbers of people to fully participate in the healthy economy of the future [1b].”

Business Innovation

ACEnet Business Innovation works with adults and youth to foster small-scale business development and build networks in the art, food, agriculture, and wood sectors [2]. One example of a new network ACEnet established is the E-commerce site, *Art of Ohio*, that was established to promote and sell local products both regionally and nationally [2a].

Business Planning

ACEnet offers overall business planning and financial systems training to new and expanding businesses. Workshops are given on bookkeeping and accounting software applications, and also how to prepare and analyze financial systems. The Business Planning site provides a list of resource organizations in the region, which include the Appalachian Regional Entrepreneurship Initiative (AREI), Small Business Development Center (SBDC), and the Enterprise Development Corporation (EDC) [2b].

Student Entrepreneur Training Program (SET)

ACEnet developed a one-year program for high school students called the Student Entrepreneur Training Program (SET). SET is a two-semester curriculum that “provides students with the knowledge and skills to plan, develop and start their own businesses [2c].” In the first semester the SET curriculum focuses on the development of a mock technology business. During the second semester the students choose an existing business and create a business plan for it. The curriculum teaches students to use the latest technology, and therefore gain a competitive edge in the work force. The curriculum is available for purchase by school systems and individuals [2c].

Business Education and Support Training (BEST)

The Business Education and Support Training (BEST) program is for adults who want to start their own business or expand their business. “Topics cover the development of a business idea, market research, basic finances and accounting, marketing strategy, legal issues and human resources. Those essentials are then incorporated into a business plan for the prospective or expanding business [2c].” The training materials may also be purchased from ACEnet [2c].

ACEnet Food Ventures

“Food Ventures offers assistance to start-up or existing small food businesses that can benefit from the use of a commercial kitchen and thermal processing facility [2].” Food Ventures provides a licensed facility with an on hand food scientist for small food businesses to minimize overhead costs. Food Ventures promotes recipe development, product design, marketing assistance, and business counseling [2]. Additionally, Food Ventures provides resources, worksheets, and on-line training to help people think about the issues related to starting or expanding a specialty food business. The resources highlight key points and issues, define food processing and marketing terminology, and provide additional print and web resources [2c].

Kitchen Incubator

“The Food Ventures Center is a 12,000 square foot shared-use manufacturing facility providing a commercial kitchen, a thermal processing area, a dry goods packaging room, warehouse space, shipping and receiving docks, and office and conference space [3].” Tenants have access to a wide range of kitchen equipment for catering or commercial food preparation and storage. A licensed food scientist is always on staff to aid in product development. Tenants can also jointly purchase raw materials and supplies to allow for greater economies of scale than working alone. The facility has cold, frozen, and dry storage areas, as well as many shipping and receiving docs. Any thermal processing, cold packing, baked goods, frozen foods, meat processing, and seafood production at the Food Ventures Center are covered under ACEnet’s licenses [3].

Product Development

To assist with the product development of food ACEnet offers workshops and technical assistance on regulatory issues surrounding food labeling and food science, pH and shelf life testing, nutritional analysis, and product labeling. Focus groups and consumer tasting can also be arranged for direct feedback on products [3a].

Value-Added Agriculture and Niche Marketing

ACEnet assists in value-added agriculture activities by helping family farms to diversify and expand income revenues, which in turn helps to create a more sustainable business for them. In 2007 ACEnet published *Harvesting Agricultural Rewards*, which provides information on new income opportunities for family farmers [3b].

Food Security Issues

“ACEnet strives to promote regional food security, helping to make nutritious food available for all people throughout the year while helping to decrease dependence on outside sources for this food supply [3c].” The Appalachian Harvest Gleaning Project prevents field waste and helps get food to those who need it. At the end of a harvest, before the fields are plowed, volunteers go into the fields of participating farmers and pick the remaining produce. “Transportation, facilities, recipes, supplies, equipment, and education are provided to the community volunteers to help convert the raw crops into nutritious, nonperishable food items [3c].” The nonperishable food items are then distributed amongst the volunteers and participating area food pantries. To raise awareness of the gleaning project retail products are also created and sold to the community, which also helps subsidize program funding [3c].”

ACEnet has partnered with the Community Food Initiative (CFI) to fund the Community Gardens & the Edible Schoolyards project. The partnership has facilitated community gardens in neighborhoods and school systems throughout the Athens County area. “Over the past three seasons, CFI Gardening Angels have distributed approximately 500 lbs. of fresh produce annually to five local free meal programs and area families [3d].”

Business Facilities and Networking

ACEnet offers competitive leasing rates on office, light manufacturing, and warehouse space at the Athens’ campus and the Nelsonville Business Center in Nelsonville, Ohio. This sector of ACEnet also provides access to incubator services and a forum for businesses to network together, share ideas, reduce operating expenses, and increase market exposure [2]. “The facility also offers shared services such as reception, mail and package delivery, copier and fax machines, internet access, conference rooms, and training facilities [2].” Businesses using this space benefit from being able to share resources and cut down on the costs that would be incurred if they operated on their own [2].

Facilities

ACEnet owns and manages three buildings on the Athens campus. This includes office and light manufacturing space for rent at competitive leasing rates. The available business incubator services include [4]:

- Entrepreneurship and technology training
- Workshops, papers, books and training materials
- Consulting
- Collaboration with regional art, wood and food businesses
- E-commerce site to promote and sell local and regional products
- Commercial kitchen facilities for small food businesses
- Business counseling
- Recipe and product development assistance
- Product design and labeling
- Supervision and expertise of a food scientist
- Marketing assistance
- Food We Love -- a regional branding marketing and distribution program
- Financing assistance or identification of other sources of capital financing
- Research and policy development
- Speakers bureau services
- Software and toolkits to enable communities and organizations to map social networks

ACEnet Ventures

ACEnet Ventures helps small businesses learn about business loan opportunities. ACEnet Ventures also partners with conventional lending sources to provide joint financing to small businesses at times when other lending sources are not willing to provide financing [2].

Financial

In 2001, the ACEnet Ventures Fund was incorporated. The Fund provides community development financing to small businesses to help them “expand and create quality jobs for low-income residents in specifically targeted areas of Central Appalachia [5].” The site contains downloadable loan application forms and a list of regional loan programs [5].

Techquity Program

In 2007 ACEnet partnered with the eBay Foundation Techquity Program to distribute over \$30,000 in technology grants to small businesses for the purchase of technology software and hardware. The eBay Techquity program is sponsored by the eBay Foundation and managed by the Appalachian Regional Commission. ACEnet and seven other members of the Association for Enterprise Opportunity (AEO) serve as local partners to the program [5a].

“ACEnet also plans to build a mobile computer lab that will travel throughout the region to provide targeted trainings in business technology and e-commerce topics, ultimately reaching a

goal of 50 microbusinesses [5a].” Hocking College and the Ohio Arts Council work with ACEnet to identify potential recipients and to aid in training [5a].

ACEnet Institute

ACEnet Institute provides small businesses with research and policy development. “The Institute authors papers, books, training materials and offers consulting, workshops, and speakers... [2].” The ACEnet Institute is also working to develop “InFlow software and toolkit to help communities map social networks in order to analyze and enhance those networks to create stronger communities [2].” InFlow Inventory Software is used by small businesses to assist in managing customer orders and invoices, track inventory, re-order products, and connect multiple computers together [6].

Peer Consulting Services

ACEnet also provides assistance to individuals and groups looking to learn from the ACEnet model. Tours and on-site consulting are available through the Peer Consulting Services. ACEnet can also help organizations prepare for presentations to stakeholders; provide consulting services; and host trainings and workshops.

ACEnet Website Resources and Publications

The ACEnet website provides a wealth of information for small business, consumers, producers and interested citizens. The Buy Local link provides information on restaurants serving local food; places to buy local beverages, baked goods, and pasta; markets selling local foods; places to buy local herbs and plants; and locally run businesses [7].

“National Foodnet is an electronic mailing list or listserv where over 250 community-based organizations and food industry professionals share information and resources electronically. Past electronic conferences have focused on topics including kitchen incubators, marketing, and working with brokers, and feature key experts in the field.” Local Foodnet is an electronic mailing list or listserv made up of “60 small specialty food businesses participating in ACEnet Food Ventures’ business network share information and resources electronically. Past topics have included sourcing suppliers and accessing distributors [7a].” The ACEnet website also has information regarding trade shows [7b], trade journals and publications [7c], and webinars [7d].

Publications

ACEnet has been authoring publications for the past 15 years. Those publications include *ACEnet Replication Manual*; *An Appalachian Cookbook*, *Collaborative Cause Marketing Handbook for the Specialty Food Industry: Research and Recommendations*, *Harvesting Agricultural Rewards*, and *Opportunities for Agri-Tourism* [7e].

Closing Thoughts

ACEnet works with small, local businesses to help them succeed by utilizing and collaborating with ACEnet's resources throughout the art, food, agriculture, and wood sectors. By sharing resources employers and entrepreneurs have a central place they can go to for new ideas, assistance, facilities, and social networking. ACEnet eliminates many of the barriers that small businesses are constantly faced with, and as a result improves the economic conditions in Appalachian Ohio by enhancing the area's human capital.

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Case study 2: Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project – ASAP

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Case Study 2: Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project - ASAP

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) is a private nonprofit that was established in July of 2002. ASAP was first launched by Mountain Partners in Agriculture in 1999, and gained nonprofit status in 2002. Over the years ASAP has become well known for their education and marketing outreach to farmers with limited resources, and their community outreach programs to make local, fresh food accessible for all [1]. ASAP works to strengthen the local economy and preserve mountain heritage and culture by “creating and expanding a food systems that is locally owned and controlled in Western North Carolina and the Southern Appalachians [1a].”

ASAP has nine major project focus areas, which all have the goal of increasing everyone’s access to fresh, healthy, local food and to expand the local farm market [2].

Appalachian Grown Certification™ ensures the food and agricultural products it’s placed on have been grown or raised in Western North Carolina and the Southern Appalachian Mountains.

Farm to School works with farmers and schools to serve local food in schools, and expand educational opportunities to learn about farming and nutrition.

Farmers’ Markets utilize ASAP’s website and marketing to help promote the Mountain Tailgate Markets and the Asheville City Market.

Family Farm Tour is an opportunity for the public to visit and learn about the farms throughout Western North Carolina.

Farm to Hospital programs bring fresh food to hospital dining areas; farmers’ markets for employees and visitors; and opportunities for employees to join CSAs.

Get Local promotes an ingredient of the month from May to December, and the ASAP site has recipes featuring the ingredient and also restaurants in the area that are featuring the ingredient of the month in their dishes.

Local Food Institute is for individuals and organizations interested in developing local food market initiatives.

Marketing Opportunities for Farmers Conference is an opportunity for farmers who are looking to expand their business by growing for local markets.

Project EMMA Eater better, Move More, Age well is a partnership with the Council on Aging of Buncombe County.

Mission

“Collaboratively create and expand regional community based and integrated food systems that are locally owned and controlled, environmentally sound, economically viable, and health-promoting [2a].”

Vision

“A future food system throughout the mountains of North Carolina and the southern Appalachians that provides a safe and nutritious food supply for all segments of society; that is produced, marketed and distributed in a manner that enhances human and environmental health; and that adds economic and social value to rural and urban communities [2a].”

Appalachian Grown Certification

*“The *Appalachian Grown*[™] Certification certifies food and agricultural products grown or raised in Western North Carolina and the Southern Appalachian mountains”[3].*

The *Appalachian Grown*[™] label is a registered trademark of Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project. In order to use the *Appalachian Grown*[™] label, Appalachian farmers and retailers of local food and farm products must agree to adhere to a set of legal guidelines before using the logo and to maintain their certification. The use of the label is governed by a set of logo-standards and a binding License Agreement. ASAP was able to offer free certification for producers and sellers during the 2009 growing season [3].

A producer can become *Appalachian Grown*[™] certified if they grow or raise food and agricultural products in an Appalachian county. The farm must also be a family farm in which the family holds the financial responsibilities. The producer must confirm their farm is within an Appalachian county and ensure they will only market products as *Appalachian Grown*[™] that have been raised on the certified farm. Nursery plants and trees must have spent “at least 75% of life beyond propagation or at least 1 year on the farm” [3a]. In order for meat to be certified, the animal must have “spent 75% of its life after weaning on the certified farm or on another *Appalachian Grown*[™] farm” [3a]. The producer must renew the certification every 12-18 months [6a]. Once certified, a producer can use stickers with the *Appalachian Grown*[™] label to attach on their products and cases. ASAP has also established a cost-share program for different types of signage to be used on the farm or in retail situations [3].

Certified retailers may only use the label and related food campaign materials with *Appalachian Grown*[™] certified products. Retailers must also allow ASAP to verify and inspect all goods and items the retailer has put the *Appalachian Grown*[™] label with. As with producers, the certification must be renewed each year [6b]. Once certified, the retailer is given a graphic file that may be used for advertising materials such as window or door stickers, posters, or menus [3].

Programs

Farm to School

Growing Minds is ASAP's farm to school program, which is part of the national farm to school initiative. ASAP works with "farmers, educators, and communities to serve local food in schools, while expanding opportunities for farm field trips, experiential nutrition education and school gardens" [4]. The Growing Minds program is primarily grant funded. During the 2008 and 2009 school year, ASAP was the regional lead agency for the National Farm to School Network; led a Chefs in the Classroom program; led a 31 Days of Nutrition program; partnered with the Council on Aging; and provided many additional resources to schools [4].

In 2004, a Farm to School workshop was held to identify some of the issues and challenges faced in developing the Farm to School Program. After obstacles had been identified the group looked for ways to make Farm to School a success in western North Carolina. ASAP hopes "to make this program both profitable for farmers and feasible for local food service" [4a]. Schools are becoming a viable market for farmers in western North Carolina, and the production of local products has not been able to meet the full demand of each school in the program. ASAP is also focusing on increasing awareness of the program and its benefits through use of the media, cooking demonstration, Farmer Profiles [7a], and promotional events. The Growing Minds site also contains resources and helpful links including ASAP's best practices guide for using produce from local school gardens, lesson plans, and a Child Nutrition Director's Tool Kit [4b].

Farmers' Markets

ASAP works with the Mountain Tailgate Farmer's Market Association (MTMA) and the Asheville City Market. MTMA, formed in 2002, has been funded through grants from the Southern Agriculture Research and Education (SARE), ASAP, the Risk Management Agency of the US Department of Agriculture, and the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission. The association manages 12 markets in Buncombe and Madison Counties. MTMA's link on ASAP's site provides downloadable PDF files of resources and lessons from their markets. For example, the bylaws and rules and regulations of the MTMA can be downloaded from the site [5].

Family Farm Tour

"The Family Farm Tour, organized by ASAP, is your invitation to visit 38 farms and gardens throughout six counties in Western North Carolina. The region is home to agriculture of all kinds, ranging from century farms cultivated by the same family for generations, to certified organic farms, to urban gardens. Tour your choice [6]."

For an advanced purchase of \$20 a button people were able to visit any of 38 farms and gardens though six counties in western North Carolina. Buttons were sold at a number of

locations, or could be purchased at the farms on the day of the tour for \$25. ASAP put together a map and list of tips for a successful tour. Each of the farms had a variety of food and crafts for sale and many also offered free samples for visitors [6].

Farm to Hospital

ASAP is currently conducting a pilot Farm to Hospital program with ten farms in western North Carolina. Each hospital is taking part in the program in a different way. Some of the services and projects hospitals are doing include:

- Buying directly from local farmers for their food in the cafeteria
- Identifying local food available through their distributor
- Hosting farmers markets
- Carrying Local Food Guides
- Selling farm shares
- Offering a 10% discount for hospital employees at a local farm stand [7]

Get Local

The Get Local program features a local ingredient of the month from May to December. Local restaurants can participate by sourcing the monthly ingredients locally and planning menu items or specials that focus on that ingredient; receive Get Local promotional materials; and receive additional promotion from ASAP through their media and partner outreach.

Distributors can participate by sourcing the monthly ingredient from either the farmer or through another distributor. Distributors can request materials from ASAP to promote sale of the local ingredient. Farmers can notify ASAP they have a supply of the monthly ingredient and ASAP will help connect the farmers to buyers, share the cost of labeling, and provide their foodservice customer with materials to promote their farm e.g. Farmer Profiles. The Get Local website provides a link of restaurants participating in Get Local and recipes for the ingredient of the month [8].

Local Food Institute

The Local Food Institute is a two and half day program for individuals and organizations interested in developing local food market initiatives. Leaders and practitioners discuss opportunities, strategies, and challenges to building local food economies. The class visits site in Asheville to see and interact first hand with people involved in local food work. The agenda includes visiting many locally owned restaurants that feature seasonal, local ingredients; examining the Farm to School program; touring grocery stores; and looking at direct-to-consumer opportunities. The Local Food Institute received funding from the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission [9].

Marketing Opportunities for Farmers

This year ASAP organized the sixth annual Marketing Opportunities for Farmers conference. The conference is a one-day event for farmers who are looking to expand their business by growing for local markets. Buyers looking to expand into the local market are also encouraged to attend the conference. The conference brings together ASAP staff, local farmers, agriculture professionals, and marketing specialists [10]. ASAP provided ten high school Future Farmers of America (FAA) members scholarships to attend the conference for free [10a]. A variety of sessions are offered throughout the day including topics such as Selling to Wholesale Buyers, Opportunities in Value Added Products, Financing your Farm Enterprise, Quickbooks for farmers, and Regulatory Overview: Food Laws [10b].

Project EMMA

Project EMMA, Eater better, Move More, Age well, is a partnership with the Council on Aging of Buncombe County. Project EMMA is funded through a grant awarded to the Council on Aging by Blue Cross Blue Shield of NC Foundation. ASAP worked with Project EMMA “to facilitate increased access to local food for residents of two downtown apartment buildings and clients of the Council on Aging’s Senior Meal Program, while the YWCA facilitates exercise opportunities for seniors”[1]. Project EMMA projects include making tea and pesto, walking trips to downtown tailgate markets, and farm field trips. Additionally the project is working with the USDA Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program to Buncombe County to provide vouchers to qualifying seniors to purchase fresh, local food at the tailgates markets [11].

Resources

Calendar of events

The ASAP website offers many resources for producers, consumers, distributors, and others interested in local food and local markets. ASAP maintains a calendar of events such as farm tours, permaculture design courses, and rainwater & greywater catchment workshops and anyone can ask to have their event posted [12].

Research

ASAP has been working on a multi-year research project “to determine how food and other farm products move through the production and distribution system in Western North Carolina” [13]. The study, funded by the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program, took place between 2003 and 2007 and is available for download on the site. Sub reports within the report covered marketing analysis of Tailgate Farmers Markets,

results from a Farm-to-College Survey, survey of cooperative extension agents, and case studies regarding local food systems [13].

Publications

The ASAP publications site is divided into four categories: for farmers, for farmers' market organizations, for buyers, and for policy makers. Publications for farmers are then divided into: food safety, marketing, business planning, and government programs. Publications for farmers' market organizations discuss how to organize a market, market the market, establish a food stamps program for the market, and other tools for improving a farmers' market [14].

Press kit

The Press Kit site includes ready to download and use press releases, logos, photos, and background information about ASAP [15]. A list of grants for farmers and producers is included on the Grants site [15a], and the links site provides a list of regional and national organizations. Volunteers and interns can find local opportunities on the Volunteers & Interns link [15b]. Classifieds related to local food and farming can be placed on the Classifieds site [15c].

Local food guide

ASAP's Local Food Guide for Western North Carolina and Southern Appalachian Mountains contains helpful information including how to get in the guide, reasons for buying local, and the Mixing Bowl. The Mixing Bowl site is a trade directory that lists of the products local farms offer to business and a farmer's guide to products wholesale buyers are seeking [16].

Organizational Structure

Staff: [17]

Charmaine Colosimo

Office Manager

Charlie Jackson

Executive Director

Emily Jackson

Program Director

Growing Minds

Peter Marks

Program Director

Local food Campaign

Megan Ray

Farm Outreach

Specialist

Brook Thompson

Program Coordinator

Mike McCreary

Program Coordinator

Ashville City Market

Rose McLarney

Communications and Marketing

Molly Nicholie

Program Coordinator

Growing Minds

Allison Perrett

Research Assistant

Susan Weeks

Bookkeeper

Board of Directors: [18]

Jeanie Martin - *President*

Instructor, Blue Ridge Naturalist

NC Center for Creative Retirement, UNC -

Asheville

Mark Rosenstein -*Vice President*

Owner

The Market Place Restaurant

Beth Trigg -*Secretary*

Consultant

Taproot Consulting

John Swann - *Treasurer*

Co-Owner

Greenlife Grocery

Thomas Beckett

Attorney

Business Law and Consulting

Shirley Browning

Professor of Economics

University of North Carolina - Asheville

Danny McConnell

Owner/Operator

McConnell Farms

Chris Owen

Owner/Operator
Spinning Spider Creamery

Catherine (Kitty) Schaller

Executive Director
MANNA FoodBank

Partners: [19]

Blue Ridge National Heritage Area
Community Food Security Coalition/UPS
The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina
Community Outreach and Assistance Partnership Program
The Conservation Fund's Creating New Economies Fund
The Council on Aging of Buncombe County
Golden LEAP Foundation
Janirve Foundation
North Carolina Agriculture Development and Farmland Preservation Trust
Regional Lead Agency National Farm to School Program
Southern Risk Management Education
Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)
Tobacco Trust Fund
USDA Risk Management Agency – Risk Management Education
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

Program Partners [19]

North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service
North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Henry A. Wallace Center for Agriculture & Environmental Policy
Mountain Tailgate Market Association
MANNA FoodBank
Children First of Buncombe County
Handmade in America

Associated Organizations [19]

North Carolina Alliance
Western North Carolina Alliance
Asheville-Buncombe Affordable Housing Coalition
Mountain Area Information Network (MAIN)
Blue Ridge Web Market
Center for Participatory Change
Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition
Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy
Conservation Trust for North Carolina
Carolina Organic Growers, Inc.
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College

Sponsors [19]

Carolina Farm Credit
Earth Fare
Greenlife Grocery

Closing Thoughts

ASAP works with the entire Western North Carolina and Southern Appalachian Mountain region to improve the local food system and preserve local heritage by working with all constituents throughout the food system. As complex as a local food system is, ASAP works to bring down barriers by providing resources, creating networks, and providing information to enhance the functionality and benefits of the local food system. ASAP's rich and diverse partnerships broaden the scope, reach and capability of Western North Carolina's local food system.

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