



**Michigan
Food Policy
Council**

Michigan Food Policy News

December, 2011

About MFPC:

The MFPC was created by executive order 2005-13. It brings diverse, food-related stakeholders together to recommend programs and policies to the Governor. It gives stakeholders a forum to identify policies that harness the potential of Michigan's food system to aid in communities' economic development, provide children and those in need greater access to fresh and healthy foods, and support stewardship of our finite land and water resources.

Vision

Michigan is a state with a thriving food system and industry, well-nourished, healthy people and strong, diverse food economy.

Mission

The Michigan Food Policy Council cultivates a safe, healthy and available food supply for all residents while building on the state's agricultural diversity to enhance economic growth.

Unique purpose

The purpose of the MFPC is to focus on the role of government, at all levels, in supporting and improving Michigan's food system through education, policy change, public engagement, innovative problem solving and private-public sector partnerships.

Food Hub model gaining popularity in Michigan



A unique food hub model is being developed by the Eastern Market in Detroit and in other communities in Michigan

Leaders in Michigan's food system are always on the cutting edge of innovation and finding opportunities for success. An exciting new operational model is emerging in Michigan and across the nation called a Regional Food Hub. The very general term "food hub" refers to a centralized facility designed to aggregate, store, process, distribute, and market locally or regionally produced food **AND SO MUCH MORE!**

Elements that differentiate Hubs from traditional farmers markets, public markets or terminal markets are their ownership structure, management practices and community benefits. Core components are designed to address the identified gaps in on-farm and regional food system infrastructure, and provide community services related to food, nutrition and access to fresh and healthy food.

Aggregation/Distribution at a wholesale level:

-Hubs can provide the infra-

structure and business management systems that most farmers lack, which are key in accessing wholesale markets.

-Hubs can be a drop-off point for multiple farmers, and provide the space and equipment for food to be lightly processed, packed, palletized and sold.

-The Hub can also be a pick up point for distribution firms and customers that want to buy source-verified local food.

Coordination of supply and demand.

-Hub management can work to oversee the local food supply coming into and going out of Hubs in order to maintain an adequate supply of locally produced products. They can also work with farmers to coordinate planting schedules and manage product varieties in order to promote variety in local product supplies, and consistent year-round production while reducing competition among growers.

Permanent Buildings: A primary function of the permanent market location is to serve

as the terminal for wholesale and retail vending of regional foods.

An enclosed structure can accommodate the permitting requirements for wholesale distribution while alleviating weather issues associated with outdoor retail markets. The buildings can also house the storage and processing infrastructure necessary to build new and alternative distribution systems.

Participation in a Hub Network.

Benefits to participating in a Regional Food Hub Network can also be gained such as product reliability, variety and strategic distribution, and shared costs and knowledge. Reliable product supply will be created through capitalizing on product exchange between hubs, variations in crop seasonality across regions, the trade of unique regional products, and strategic points of aggregation and distribution. A network can reduce the cost of individual Hub operations by providing Hub members with established technology (and shared infrastructure (processing equipment, labels and more).

Providing Community Services. The Hub can provide space for the provision of health and social services. Possible services may include community kitchens, incubator kitchens, sites for WIC, community event space, and classrooms and offices for health and human service providers.

Local Food Gathering— Eastern Upper Peninsula Food Summit

Michelle Walk, of Michigan State University Extension in Chippewa County, tells us about the recent Food Summit held in Sault Ste. Marie on November 10, 2011. This food summit is an example of a successful convening of local food system leaders trying to learn from each other, share information and best practices and supporting the work happening in the great north. Michelle provided this information about their local food group.

MFPC Question 1: What were the overall goals of the EUP Food Summit and do you feel that they were met?

MW:

Our first goal was to discuss issues/perceptions regarding sourcing and supplying local food. Secondly, to begin to make connections between farmers, restaurants, institutions and retail and finally, share the initial results of the UP Ag assessment.

We feel the goals were met and we are extremely pleased with the diversity of stakeholders in the room. Some real connections were made and the conversation and written comments will help us determine where the focus of our work should be.

MFPC Question 2: What topics did you discuss at the summit and who were your guests / presenters?

MW: We provided an overview of the work that has been going on – presented by Michelle Walk, MSUE. Also an initial summary of the UP Ag Assessment – Natasha Lantz, Marquette Food Co-op.

We had a panel on Sourcing Local Foods with Paula Nelson, Karl's Cuisine; Steve Twardy, Harmony Health Foods; Ray Schebel, Director of Food Services, LSSU. Another panel discussed supplying local

foods with Mark Jones, Beaver Meadow Creek Farms; Susan Kabat, Circle K Buffalo Ranch; John and Cindy Dutcher, Dutcher Farms (poultry and eggs). We also heard from Jane Whitacre, Michigan Food Policy Council and Matt Gougeon, General Manger, Marquette Food Co-op.

In the afternoon we held discussions to explore several topics as a group. Discussion questions included; what is the perception of local food in our region; what needs to happen to change perceptions of local food in our region; what could be done to address barriers in sourcing and supplying local food; what are the barriers or opportunities that you see in the following categories – supply chain, policy, business management, food security .

“The priority issues across the UP food system are aggregation, storage, processing and distribution.”

Michelle Walk, MSUE, Chippewa County

There were 50 participants at the summit, and they represented;

MSU Extension, Michigan Department of Ag and Rural Development, Sault Tribe, Bay Mills Tribe, USDA, Michigan Food Policy Council, Regional Food Solutions, Marquette Food Co-op, local governments, Farmers, Schools, Restaurants, Grocery Stores, Farmers Markets – market masters and Interested citizens. It was a very representative group.

MFPC: Question 3: What do you think are the priority issues in the EUP local food system today? Barriers? Opportunities?

MW: The priority issues across the UP food system (not just the EUP) are

aggregation, storage, processing and distribution.

There are a lot of opportunities for new farmers and for current farmers to expand. We have been able to identify some great resources for support networks as well.

The barriers relate directly to the priority issues. In addition, certifications will continue to be an issue. GAP certification is difficult and expensive for small diversified farms. And as we see increasing requirements put on food processors and their suppliers, it will be challenging again for small diversified farmers.

MFPC Question 4: Is your community considering forming a formal food council of some type?

MW: Through the Community Challenge Grant received by the Sault Tribe we will be forming a regional food council that includes the Tribe's 7 county service area (Marquette, Delta, Alger, Schoolcraft, Mackinac, Chippewa, and Luce). We will continue to expand the planning team working on the east end. What we have now is a loosely formed food network with a few stakeholders sharing communication and logistics. At some point we will need something more formal but we are letting the participants drive that decision.

There were several comments as part of the discussions that indicated an interest in meeting more often or having an advisory council so it is likely we will move in that direction. The diversity of participation in the summit shows how willing our region is to come together to support and grow agriculture in our region. It is exciting to see elected officials recognize the contribution of agriculture to economic development. And lastly, it is wonderful to see the ideas generated from participants about how to support efforts (making unused land available, apprenticeships, agreeing to contracts, microloans).

Food Hubs in Michigan: A conversation with Keith Creagh

A number of communities in Michigan are exploring the food hub model as a way to build systems for local food to be produced, sold and consumed. Is there a way Michigan could optimize this model to meet needs and fulfill goals for wellness and economic growth? We asked Keith Creagh, Director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and Chair of the Michigan Food Policy Council for his insight.

Question:

What do you see as the benefits of having food hubs operating in Michigan?

K.C.: I think the primary benefits are 1) to provide a mechanism for food and agriculture to play a fundamental role in reinventing Michigan, and 2) supporting health and the well-being of people in Michigan.

Question:

How could food hubs help support Governor Snyder's health and wellness goals?

K.C.:

Food hubs could furnish capacity to deliver safe, healthy food that is accessible to all. Food hubs are also a way to meet the goals of the MFPC:

- 20% of all food consumed in Michigan is produced in Michigan

- 80% of Michigan residents have easy access to Michigan produced food
- Michigan farmers supply 20% of the food consumed in Michigan.
- Michigan institutions procure 20% of their food from local sources

Question Where in Michigan could this model work? Are there food hubs in operation now?

K.C.: Currently there are numerous grass root efforts that support the food hub concept. There is no reason to limit the vision. I would encourage each community or region to determine their assets and attributes and work with the MFPC to explore this opportunity.

Question:

Food hub models sound like an obvious opportunity to build Michigan's local food system and economy. Is there a way state government could support food hubs so that we may be able to have successful operations all across the state?

K.C.:

Government and the MFPC can provide the forum for individuals to share best practices and processes so that lesson learned can be shared efficiently and broadly.



Question:

What role is there for the Michigan Food Policy Council with food hub development?

K.C.:

MFPC brings together government agencies and external stakeholders to develop policy. Food hubs may be a vehicle to carry out the Governor's special messages.



FOODIES UNITE!!

Align with the "BIG FOUR" from the Good Food Charter

If everyone was to support the "big four" goals of the Michigan Food Policy Council for 2012, tremendous progress could be made. How can you, your organization or even your family align to help Michigan residents cultivate a safe, healthy accessible food supply while building economic viability for Michigan's agriculture industry (MFPC mission)? The goals are not necessarily in order of importance....

1. Michigan Institutions will source 20% of their food product from Michigan growers, producers, and processors
2. Michigan Farmers will supply 20% of all Michigan institutional, retailer, and consumer food purchases
3. Michigan will generate new agri-food businesses enabling 20% of food purchased in Michigan to come from Michigan
4. 80% of Michigan residents will have easy access to food, 20% of which is from Michigan sources



Michigan Food Policy Council

Our Mission:

Michigan Food Policy Council cultivates a safe, healthy and available food supply for all residents while building on the state's agricultural diversity to enhance economic growth.

Eastern Upper Peninsula Agriculture Facts



- **Chippewa County has over 4000 head of cattle each summer**
- **Luce County is home of the only farm that produces seed potatoes for Frito Lay in the Upper Peninsula**
- **Chippewa County has almost one million acres of farmland**
- **Luce and Mackinac Counties have 5% of the state's elk and deer ranches**
- **Chippewa County ranks #1 in maple sap production in Michigan**
- **Luce County has 137 agricultural soil types**
- **Mackinac County's average farm size is 235 acres**

Upcoming MFPC Meeting dates

Monday, 2/6/12, 10 a.m. until 12 noon
Monday, 6/21/12, 10 a.m. until 12 noon
Monday, 10/8/12, 10 a.m. until 12 noon

Meetings to take place at Greenstone Farm Credit Services Office,
3515 West Rd, East Lansing, MI 48823 (thank you!)

Contact: Jane Whitacre, Director
Phone: 517-243-3987 Email: whitacrej@michigan.gov
WEB: www.michigan.gov/mfpc

Governor Appointed members of the Michigan Food Policy Council

- Auday Arabo of West Bloomfield: president of Associated Food and Petroleum Dealers, Representing Food Retailers
- Eugene H. Barnes of Detroit: board member of Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, Representing Urban Agriculture
- Patricia Cantrell of Beulah: owner of Regional Food Solutions, Representing Sustainable Agriculture
- Edward Deeb of Bloomfield Hills: president Michigan Food & Beverage Assn., Representing Restaurant Sector
- Amanda M. Edmonds of Ypsilanti: executive director of Growing Hope, Representing Community-based Urban Development
- Lydia Gutierrez of Dearborn: owner of Hacienda Mexican Foods, Representing Food Processors
- Michael Hamm of Mason: chair of C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at Michigan State University, Representing Higher Education Institutions
- James Herbert of Lansing: CEO/chair of Neogen, Representing Non-food Manufacturers
- Kenneth Nobis of Saint Johns: president of Michigan Milk Producers Association, Representing Michigan Agricultural Organizations
- Todd Regis of Lansing: vice president of United Food and Commercial Workers 951, Representing Organized Labor
- Michael Rowe of Portage: food service director for Bronson Methodist Hospital, Representing Hospitals, Healthcare Systems, and Public Health Organizations
- Dennis West of Marquette: president of Northern Initiatives, Representing Rural Development
- Wayne Wood of Marlette: president of Michigan Farm Bureau, Representing Michigan Agricultural Organizations

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