



Food and Farm Initiative

Community Food Assessment

Food and Farm Economy

Report

Gleaning

www.kickapooovsn.org

Community Food Assessment for Vernon County

Community Food Assessment:

“A collaborative process that examines a broad range of food related issues and resources related in order to improve the local food system.”

Community Food Security
Coalition

Food and Farm Economy Report by Ken Meter:

Monroe, Vernon,
Richland & Crawford
Counties

“ Local Foods May be
the Best Path
Towards Economic
Recovery”

Crossroads Resource
Center

FINDINGS

Food Assessment Needs for Vernon County :

- Farmland Preservation Initiatives
- Food Distribution, Marketing and Storage Facility
- Community Food Processing/Incubator Kitchen
- More Farmer's Markets and More Market Days
- Farm to Institution Purchasing Program
- Community Gleaning Projects
- Improve Cold Storage Capacity

Economy Report:

SW Wisconsin
Farmers &
Ranchers lose
\$33 million / year

SW Wisconsin
Consumers
spend **\$231
million/ year on
Food**

If Consumers spent
**25% on local =
\$33million**

Kickapoo Harvest: Gleaning

- **2,886** pounds of local produce
- **158** boxes
- **40** volunteers
- **42** residents of Park View Manor
- **8** farmers
- **4** months
- **3** chefs
- Able to showcase quality of seconds
- Recipes and cooking demos promoted seasonality
- Harvest exceeded our capacity
- No Cold Storage!
- Kitchen, Processing & Distributing needs

2010 Gleaning Plans

- Building Capacity through Churches & Community Groups
- Education for community on food security, seasons, cooking and storage
- Keeping it simple and manageable
- Tracking of harvest and wash/pack times

DATCAP Buy Local Buy Wisconsin

SW Wisconsin Local Food Initiative

Vernon Economic
Development Association



Local Foods Initiative

Develop a Multi Stakeholder
Cooperative of:
Producers, Processors, Buyers,
Distributors

5 counties: La Crosse, Monroe, Vernon,
Richland and Crawford

Sell vegetables, fruits, meats, dairy
products & value added products to
institutional buyers

Co op Functions

- Aggregate produce from member farmers
- Software to track & maintain inventory
- One person to receive orders and provide customer service to buyers
- Develop consistent packaging, delivery and invoicing to buyers
- Provide training and support to small and medium size farmers
- Provide marketing and educational resources for point of purchase and consumer education on buying and eating locally

NCR Building

- Provide space for cold storage for co op
- Kitchen facilities for value added processing including:
 - ❖ cut, pack and freeze
 - ❖ frozen baked goods
- Hire a Coordinator & staff for on site processing, storage and inventory control
- Possible Delivery service

Resources

- 2 year BLBW grant to pay Coordinator to set up relationships with buyers and farmers
- Margaret Bau USDA Cooperative Specialist
- Bob Haugen Local Food Networks Software Development
- Ken Meter Crossroads Resource Center
- Grant Partners who will become co-op members -generating capital.
- Grants, co op loans and sweat equity

1.5 Months Into the Project!

- Buy Local Coordinator & Project Manger
- Co op Formation Steering Committee:
 - 2-5 producers and producer groups
 - 2 processors
 - 2 distributors
 - 3 institutions
 - retail co op manager
 - community volunteers
 - county extension
 - software developer
 - USDA co op specialist
 - grant writer
 - economist
 - farmer co op manager

Supply Chain Infrastructure

- Multi-stakeholder co op gets the whole chain at the table
- NCR building provides space for missing infrastructure
 - For Kitchen processing of fresh products
 - Also co processing for Value Added Products

Capital

- Co op memberships and transaction fees
- Grants and loans to co ops specific
- Option for producers to contribute to co op operations
- Leveraging existing NCR building
- BLBW grant is initial capital

Capacity Development

- UW Lacrosse
 - has 8 week meal rotations to accommodate seasonality
 - Composts wastes
- Vernon Farm to School
 - 5th Season Harvest Project
 - Training other kitchen personnel with Monique Hooker

Information Flow & Transparency

- Co op will serve as communication link between buyers and farmers
- Co op's goal to provide information sharing opportunities for producers
- Co op works with Institutions to provide point of sale marketing materials

Product Quality and Consistency

- Software developed by Bob Haugen will provide product traceability

Goals

- Co op will require food safety training
- Continued training and certification coordination with farmers

Seasonality

- Co op provides education material for end consumers
- NCR building will provide processing and cold storage capacity
- Making Seasonality and Local Value Added!

Food Origins & Product Differentiation

- Co op membership will include small scale growers and producer groups
- Institutions will have tastings, meet the farmer out reach to end consumers
- Co op will provide marketing materials with stories about all co op members and co op itself including sustainability

Matching Supply & Demand

- Goal for 2011: buyers inform growers of products would like to purchase in February
 - DEMAND DRIVEN
- Software will generate weekly availability to buyers through out 2011
 - SUPPLY DRIVEN
- NCR cold storage for all cooperative farmers and non members
- Co op provides transportation and logistics for all members of co op

It's a work in progress!

To get involved:

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Questions about NCR building

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