

# CEFS



THE CENTER for ENVIRONMENTAL FARMING SYSTEMS

## Cultivating Thriving Communities & Sustainable Farms

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## Local Foods and Childhood Obesity a National Perspective

# Center for Environmental Farming Systems

**Mission:** *To develop and promote agricultural systems that protect the environment, enhance rural and urban communities, and provide economic opportunities in North Carolina and beyond*

- Partnership initiated in 1994
  - NCSU
  - NCA&T SU
  - NCDA &CS
  - Partner with other organizations

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# Building a Local Food Economy in North Carolina

- What are the compelling reasons to build a local food economy?
- How does this tie-in to childhood obesity?
- National trends and initiatives



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# As we address childhood obesity, what if we could also ...Grow the Economy and Grow Jobs

*Average household spends \$4010 per year per person on food  
(USDA ARS)... half spent in the home.*

*If just 10% of the \$4010 was spent on **Local Foods**  
(\$~1.00/person/day)... With 8,8000,000 people in the state  
(US Census, 2006), local food sales would **total \$~3.5  
billion.***

*And... then there is the multiplier effect (money respent locally)  
University of Wisconsin data: 2.6 for local agriculture*



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# Around the Country

- The Governor of Illinois recently signed a bill that sets a goal of 20% of all food purchased by state-owned facilities (e.g., universities and prisons) and 10% of all food purchased by state-funded facilities (e.g., schools and hospitals) be produced in Illinois.



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# Around the Country

- ISU economist Dave Swenson: If Iowan's ate the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables per day, and Iowa farmers supplied that produce for just three months of the year, the production and marketing of those additional crops would add \$300 million and 4,000 jobs to Iowa's economy.



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# Around the County

- Doubling the sales into local markets could yield 1889 jobs with an investment of \$9.5 million (approx. \$5000/job as compared to national average of \$15000/job)

Eat Fresh Grow Jobs (2006). Michigan Land Use Institute and CS Mott



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# Around the County

- Twenty-four local food enterprises studied nationally, and as reported by Washington Post, “local food enterprises are profitable startups that are key to economic growth and recovery”.
- “Two to four times the income, wealth and jobs than at an equivalent nonlocal business”

Wallace Center and Business Alliance for Local Living (2009)



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# Where does Job Growth Come From?

- Value added agriculture
- Local processing ventures
- Prep work for schools/hospitals/institutions
- Local aggregation of product
- Local distribution channels
- Kitchen incubators



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# Around the Country

- New USDA thrust announced by Secretary Vilsack “**Know your Farmer Know your Food**”
- \$65 million program will "begin a national conversation to help develop local and regional food systems and spur economic opportunity."



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## As we address childhood obesity... what if we could also address farmland preservation

- In North Carolina, we've gone from 100,000 farms to 48,000 farms from 1976-2008.
- Average age of farmers is 57 in NC
- Nationally, there are now more people in prison than farms
- Think about the implications for rural community viability and vitality



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## ...and what if we could also address long-term health care costs

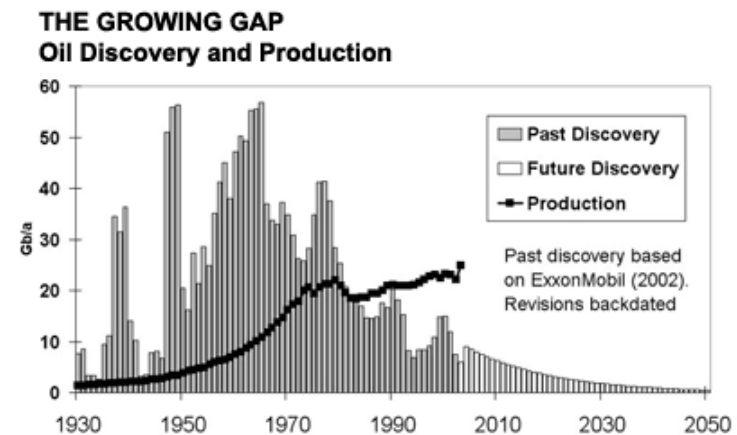
- **\$147 billion** currently spent to treat obesity,
- **\$116 billion to treat diabetes**
- 30 percent of the increase in health care spending over the past 20 years has been attributed to the soaring rate of obesity
- Increasing access to fresh and flavorful fruits and vegetables could significantly influence the long-term North Carolina health care costs.



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# ..and what if we could also address environmental quality and global warming

- *An Iowa study found that the average distance food travels in the US from production-to-consumption is 1546 miles.*
- Currently about 10 to 15 calories of fossil fuel energy are used to create 1 calorie of food.
- Opportunities within production and distribution to impact energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.



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## ...and what if we can also address Food Security for all NC citizens

- 21 percent of children in NC live in poverty.
- Over 13 percent of residents in NC are considered food insecure (36% of children).
- Food Deserts: access to fresh foods is limited in many rural and urban communities in NC.



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# Address Childhood Obesity with Local Food Systems...and we also get..

- Job Creation
- Economic Development
- Rural revitalization
- Health and Wellness, long-term
- Farmland preservation
- Environmental Quality
- Food Security



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# Asset: Diversity



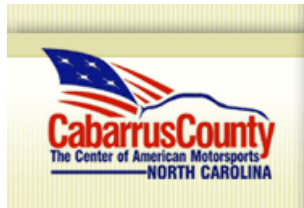
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# Across the State We See: Community Leadership, Business Entrepreneurship, Regional Planning, Public Policy



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# What can **Local** add beyond **Fresh**



- **TASTES GOOD:** at the peak of their flavor and better varieties

- **Fun**

- **More Nutritious**

- **Cool-Novel**



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# Local Foods as part of the Solution for Childhood Obesity

- Impacts can be significant and state-wide (we ***all*** eat every day) and good habits can be lifelong
- Meets multiple NC needs at once



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# Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council

SESSION LAW 2009-530, SENATE BILL 1067

- To address program and policy considerations regarding the development of a sustainable local food economy in North Carolina
- Four focus areas:
  - ✓ **Economic development**
  - ✓ **Health and Wellness**
  - ✓ **Hunger and Food Access**
  - ✓ **Preservation of Farmlands and Water Resources**
- 27 members- 3 year terms



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# Local Foods and Childhood Obesity

- Farm to School (or daycare and pre-school?)
- Community Gardens and Urban Farms
- Farmers Markets
- Increase Local Foods Access



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# Farm-to-School

- Serve healthy meals in school cafeterias
- Hands-on educational opportunities
- Physical activity
- Support for local small farmers



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# Food for Thought: National Focus

## Let's get prepared!

- Ag Secretary Vilsack, Feb, 09. Washington Post.  
“My job is to listen to the president, who is the ultimate vision maker...” **The vision is, he wants more nutritious food in schools.** In a perfect world, everything that was sold, everything that was purchased and consumed, would be local so the economy would receive the benefit of that. One thing we can do is work on strategies to make that happen. It can be **grant programs, local programs, it can be technical assistance**”.



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# Food for Thought: National Focus a little history

- 2004 National Farm to School program is authorized (but not funded)
- 2008 Farm Bill legislation allows “geographic preference”.
- National Child Nutrition Act discussion is currently underway.



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# Let the data speak

- Greater the exposure to farm-fresh fruits and vegetables, the greater likelihood children will eat them (ADA)
- Schools report a 3-16 percent increase in participation in school meals when farm-fresh food is served.
- Riverside County (CA): 25% of children chose the salad bar on any given day.



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# Farm to School Nationally

- 43 States have operational Programs
- 2,051 Farm to School Programs in US
- 8,943 number of schools involved
- 2,065 number of school districts involved
- 19 States have passed legislation

**[www.farmentoschool.org](http://www.farmentoschool.org)**



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# National Examples

Farm to School Legislation: State by State Listing [www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org)  
National Conference of State Legislatures

- New staff in Depts of agriculture and education
- Communicate state's procurement preferences through policy statements
- Changes to bidding practices
- Cost-preferences for in-state products ranging from 5-25%
- Competitive grants programs
- Developed websites and databases



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# Procurement Policy

- **MA:** allows purchasing agents to award contracts to local vendors whose price is not greater than 10% of lowest bidder
- **CO:** awards bid for local products whose quoted price “reasonably exceeds” the lowest bid
- **IL:** allows state purchasing to go over low bid by 10% for local products
- Many other examples
- Although **NC** has preferential treatment of local goods on the books, procurement policies can make this challenging (best value procurement).



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# Oregon Example

- Has new Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Program.
- New positions in both Department of Agriculture and Department of Education: Procurement and Production
- Other states with positions focusing on farm to school: Oklahoma, Kentucky



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# New York example

- Comprehensive legislation in 2002
- Charges Dept of Education and Agriculture to get NY products into schools
- Establishes a Farm to School week: New York harvest for New York kids. Activities include farm-to-cafeteria, classroom tastings, farm visits, health fairs, demonstrations, scavenger hunts at farmers markets, etc...



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# Washington (SB 6483)

- Links school districts and local producers
- Integrates curricula and programs that demonstrate the benefits of local food
- Created Washington Grown Fresh Fruit and Vegetable grant program (*in the office of public instruction*) to encourage nutritious snacks and support farmers



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## Washington cont.

- Requires revision of food procurement and food contract procedures.
- School districts can develop policies to maximize purchase; can operate school gardens and farms
- Creates WA state Farmers Market Technology improvement pilot program for EBT transfer
- Creates farmers to food banks pilot program



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## More this afternoon..

- Current farm to school in-state activities and possible policy initiatives to support
- Integrating gardens in school
- Teacher Training
- Healthy fundraisers



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# Barriers of Farm-to-Institution

- Price
- Distribution and Storage
- Aggregation from several producers
- Processing capacity
- Gap certification and training
- Liability insurance
- Limited numbers of producers



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# Farm Incubator Programs

## Providing Support for New Farmers

- Hands-on production experience
- Classroom instruction
- Business plan development
- Marketing help
- Mentoring from existing farmers
- Access to land and equipment



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# Increasing Food Access

- Community Gardens
- Urban Farms
- Farmers Markets
- Supermarkets and corner stores



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# Community Gardens and Urban Farms

- They offer hands-on, outdoor education about food production and stewardship, and offer physical exercise.
- They provide direct increased access and exposure to foods that can establish positive life-long health habits.



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# Community Gardens

- Producing nutritious food
- Reducing family food budgets
- Providing a catalyst for neighborhood development
- Stimulating social interaction, especially for youth
- Encouraging self-reliance
- Creating opportunities for recreation, exercise, and education.



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# Community Garden policy

- Primarily local policy vs statewide
- Zoning ordinances



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# Community Gardens: the Status in North Carolina

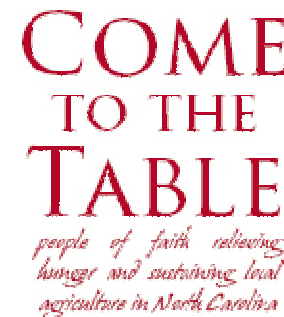


## Networking efforts

- The Community Garden Partners Initiative established through the NC Division of Public Health, NC Agricultural Extension, and others
- The Piedmont Interfaith Network of Gardens (PING)
- The Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI)'s *Come to the Table*



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Working for a healthier and safer North Carolina  
Everywhere. Everyday. Everybody.



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# State Level Ideas:

## Community gardens

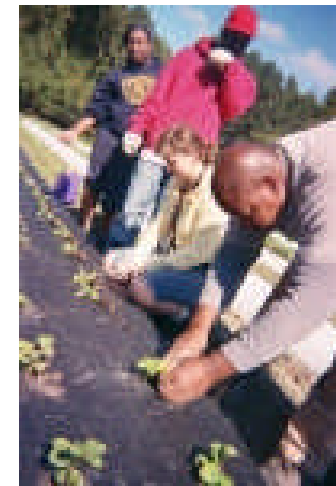
- **Goal: A Community Garden in every community across North Carolina**
- Statewide coordinator for community gardens
- Development of community garden hubs in support of this goal.
- Mapping NC community gardens, tour- capable farms, and school gardening programs
- Educational resources available
- Information for local governments



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# Urban Farms

- Larger scale economically viable enterprises, often with public support (for example, land), and also public payback and benefit (improving access or donation programs).



**Wayne County, NC**



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# Will Allen: Growing Power

- **2008 MacArthur Genius Grant award winner**
- **Featured in NYT as leader in urban farming**
- **CEFS lecturer in 2009 (700 attended in Raleigh, and 500 attended in Goldsboro)**



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# Will Allen: Growing Power

- 2 acres in downtown Milwaukee
- 159 varieties of fresh fruits and vegetables
- Community involvement of youth, elderly, government, etc.
- Grows \$250,000 worth of food and feeds 10,000 urbanites
- “Chicago has 77,000 vacant lots”
- Compost and waste recycling



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# Farmers' Markets



About 2800 farmers' markets and 20,000 farmers were operating in the United States in 2000; a 63% increase from 1994. And in 2008...

**4,385 farmers markets in the US**

**Benefits to Farmers and Consumers**



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# Electronic Benefit Transfer at Farmers Markets

- Currently, 12 counties are equipped, and program is run through a partnership of NCDA &CS and Leaflight.
- WIC coupons for fresh vegetables are taken at some farmers markets- statewide?
- New York : WIC checks allowed at all farmers markets (Healthy Food/Healthy Communities



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# Farmer FoodShare

- Carrboro farmers market
- 9,810 lbs of food in 19 weeks donated to food banks, treatment centers, etc
- Volunteers collect and distribute food



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# Grocery Stores and Corner Stores

- Grocery stores are generally 2.5 times smaller in areas of higher poverty.
- Groceries are more expensive in smaller stores
- Ratio of fast food/convenience stores to grocery and produce markets (4:1)



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# Pennsylvania Example

## Fresh Food Financing Initiative

- Created in 2004 to address lack of access to fresh fruits and vegetable in urban and rural areas.
- Public-private partnership
- Investment of \$30 million in seed money (through loans, etc.)



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# Pennsylvania successes

- 68 new or improved grocery stores in underserved communities
- 400,000 residents with increased access to healthy food
- 3,700 jobs created or retained
- \$540,000 increase in local tax revenue from a single store in Philadelphia
- \$165 million in private investment leveraged



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# New York

## Healthy Food/Healthy Communities

- \$10 million revolving loan fund to build food markets in underserved communities
- Funding preference in New York's All-Affordable Housing Program
- Low-Cost Project Insurance
- Matching Grants program for permanent Farmers Market Infrastructure.
- Food Trust Supermarket Campaign



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# In North Carolina

- Incentive programs for corner store offerings of fresh fruits and vegetables?  
Distribution networks to corner stores?



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# I'm happy to help

- Research
- Develop
- Brainstorm
- Discuss
- Write
- Advocate for

**Any creative policy initiative to help us develop local food system approaches that help to reduce child obesity.**

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