A Guide to Local Food System Planning for Scott County, Minnesota

Prepared for the Scott County Planning Department and
Jordan Area Visioning Alliance (JAVA)

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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

For years planners throughout the United States have paid little direct attention to the concept of food systems. Cultivation, harvesting, transportation, processing, and distribution were all pieces of other systems with a huge variety of stakeholders. In recent years, as concerns over gas prices and public health concerns have risen (especially food-borne illnesses, obesity, and diabetes), planners are turning to the concept of food system for answers. It is unsurprising that such a complex, interconnected system could be analyzed and managed by planners, and yet the movement is only now becoming a priority.

The Scott County Community Development & Planning Department is seeking ways in which the county can better facilitate or aid the cultivation of a locally produced food system. Like many planning bodies throughout the nation, Scott County is concerned with farmland preservation, and understands the connections to local food systems. Outlined within this report are a variety of additional tools that can be used in conjunction with farmland preservation to structure local food systems in Scott County.

As the county aims to retain its rural identity and preserve farmland, the planning of local food production and distribution will be important to a holistic understanding and approach to the agricultural sector in Scott County. Counties can become engaged on an interdisciplinary level with the cooperation of multiple county departments:

- Public Health and Social Service officials care about local food because of its implications for improving the quality of life for communities. Preventing obesity and diabetes, and providing access to healthier foods, are the primary connections for public health and social service providers. These topics were the impetus for the National Association of Counties' 2007 report on local food systems.

- Economic developers are interested in supporting local food systems because of the implications it has for the farm economy, entrepreneurship, and the retention of local dollars. Funds circulating among local producers and consumers can help strengthen the local economy and promote the patronage of small businesses. Additionally, local food systems provide stable mechanisms for supporting farm owners and operators in a more flexible and specialized market.

- Environmental advocates appreciate the shift towards planning local food systems because of the implications for air, water, and soil quality. Promoting local foods also reduces the reliance on interstate transportation (thus reducing the carbon footprint of foods) and promotes the preservation of agricultural lands for food production.

- Finally, community developers are invested in local food systems because of their ability to promote ongoing relationships between producers and

consumers, honor longstanding cultural traditions of rural areas, and provide better access to healthy food choices for all community members.

To best frame and define the concept of a food system, the first section of this paper includes a short literature review of the most recent research conducted on planning for food systems. Following the literature review, the guide focuses on multiple approaches to developing and planning a local food system, offering examples of how each approach could be applied to Scott County. Finally, recommendations are made regarding the top priorities for Scott County as it moves forward in planning its local foods system.

As a proxy for demand for local food, the report also contains the input and perspective of Scott County restaurants and regional cooperative grocery stores.

Section One: Summary of Food Systems Research

The lack of common vocabulary and definition of "food systems" continues to be one of the largest challenges facing practitioners and researchers interested in this topic. Even the concept of "local" is defined differently by people. Although one community member might consider products from the county "local," another might consider the state or even a five-state region to be "local." The American Planning Association defines food systems as:

> The chain of activities and processes related to the production, processing, distribution, disposal, and eating of food. (APA, 2008)

The systematic approach to the food system suggested by this definition mirrors the traditional approach to planning: analyzing systems by way of their connections and linkages to other systems.

Raja et al. (2008) have recently completed a survey of local planning professionals across the nation to learn about their involvement in local food systems planning. The results indicate that many planners think planning for food systems is important, but lack of resources and trained staff keep planning bodies from truly engaging in food planning. The majority of respondents who do work on planning for food systems primarily do so indirectly through farmland preservation.

Although the specific nature of food systems varies among scholars, the model illustrated in Figure 1 provides a thorough representation of how a food system

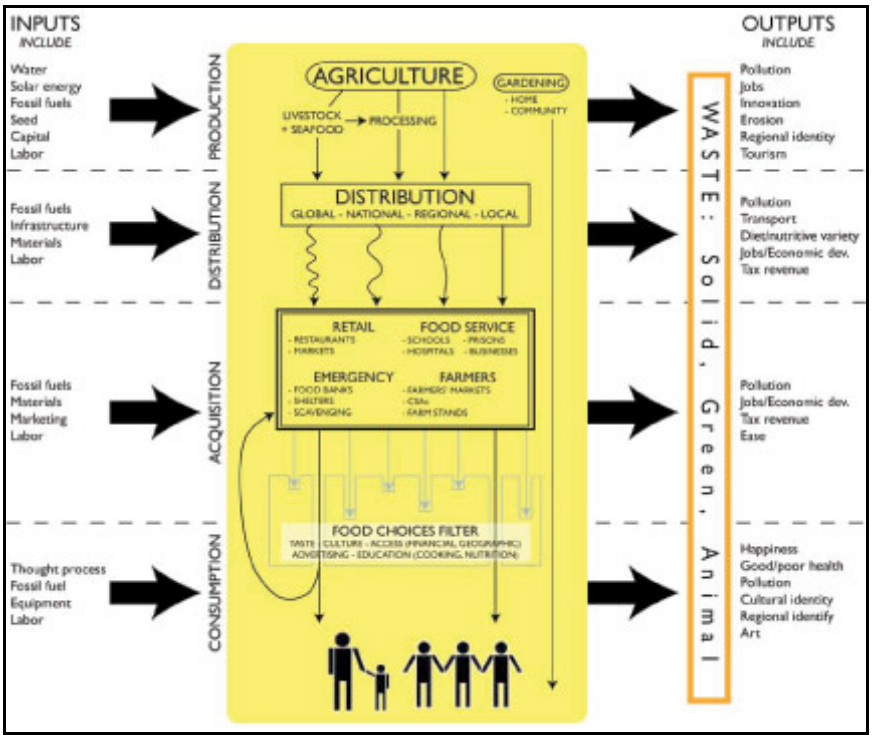

Figure 1: Model of an Urban Food System. From *The Planner's Guide to the Urban Food System* (Cassidy and Patterson, 2008).

functions. Production, processing, distribution, acquisition, consumption, and disposal/waste are the phases by which food travels through a community. Planners can play an important role in many of these phases, from regulations and policies to goal setting and community visioning.

As shown in Table 1, it is possible to inventory Scott County's food system based on

Table 1: Scott County Local Food System.

Phase	Composition
Production *Growing and Raising of Food*	795 Farms with an average farm size of 148 acres and a median of 52 acres. Farms producing both crops and livestock. 9.4% of farms sell products directly to consumers Fewer farmers relying on farming as primary occupation.
Distribution/Processing *Moving and processing of food for sale*	8 wholesalers/distributors of food products 13 transportation companies 11 food processors
Acquisition/Retail *How consumers access food*	4 Farmers Markets operating throughout the county: New Prague, Prior Lake, Savage & Shakopee. 70 Food retailers, 14 branch restaurants, 27 'single location' restaurants and 29 convenience stores. About 38% of the County's population is either under age 19 or over age 65, increasing dependence on other family members or adults for food access.
Consumption[1] *Eating of food*	87 Restaurants in Scott County, 33 single-location restaurants 35.4% of the County's population is overweight 25.9% of County's population is obese. 9.5% of population reported poor or fair health. 2% of Scott County households receive foodstamps. Of those approximately 800 households, median household income was $14,711 (as compared to County-wide median of $80,968). [2]
Disposal/Waste *What happens to the waste*	Scott County has a strong yard-waste program, and initiatives to help promote yard and food waste reduction. The county recycles, processes waste from its own facilities, and transports solid waste to landfills in MN, IA and WI.

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, data accessed through Minnesota Department of Health, 2008 County Health Tables.
[2] American Factfinder. 2007 Community Survey. Table S2201. Food Stamps

this schematic, using data collected by the 2009 Agricultural Inventory for Scott County, the Minnesota Department of Health, and Scott County. A more accurate sense of the food system in Scott County would require a regional perspective on the processing, distribution, and acquisition phases of the food system. Expanding the analysis in this way would indicate the true market demand for local food in the region, and the variety of participants and suppliers interacting within the region.

By analyzing these phases of the food system, policymakers and stakeholders can best identify areas that require additional resources or further regulations. One of the largest challenges to identifying the local food system is to understand the networks and relationships between the phases of the food system. For example, learning which of the 11 food processors will buy local products, process smaller quantities, or pay a higher price for organic products will help local producers find markets in which to sell their products.

Another way of looking at the food system is to analyze the number of players at each phase of the system, estimating what type of influence they have on the market.

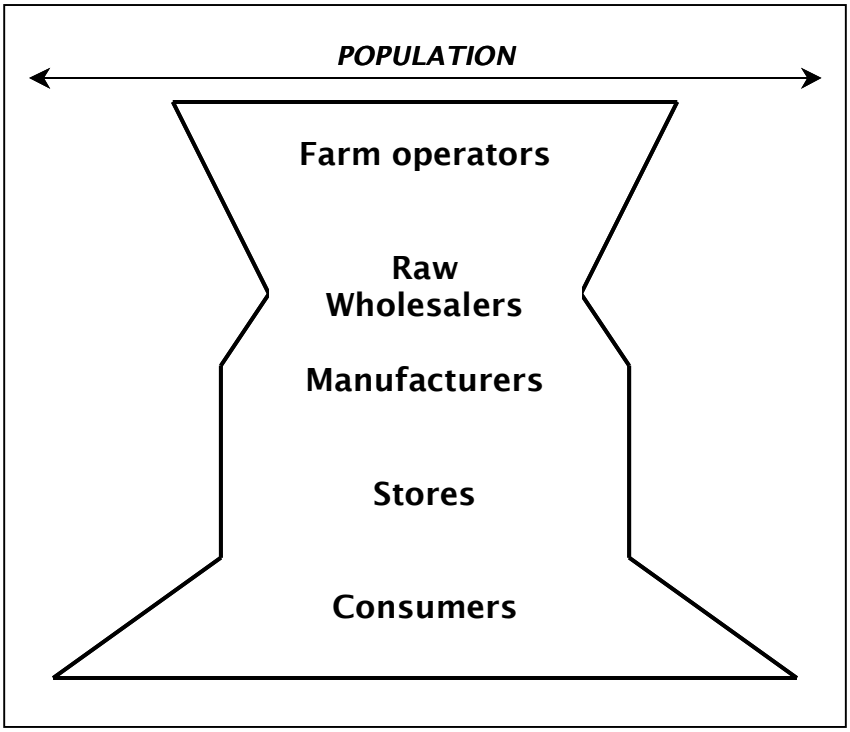

Figure 2: Power and Influence in a Food System (Raja, 2009). Graphic adapted from a presentation by Dr. Samina Raja.

As Figure 2 indicates, there is a power differential between key players within the food systems based on the number of players at each level. Although the number of farmers and food consumers is quite large across the United States, some of the key actors in the food processing cycle hold more power in brokering the price of food and the ways in which it is distributed to manufacturers, consumers, and

retailers. This model changes with local food systems, as a new structure of power is realized with more partnerships and horizontal equity shared among players.

In 2007, the National Association of Counties (NACo) responded to the increased demand from their members for assistance in working on local food issues. They published a guide titled *Counties and Local Food Systems* (Dillon and Harris, 2007), which highlights the role counties throughout the United States have had in affecting their local foods system. The report highlighted four methods of supporting food systems: food policy councils, farm to school programs, infrastructure development and agricultural conservation easements. With the exception of agricultural conservation easements, which were described in a previous study by Schweser (2008) completed for Scott County and JAVA, all of these tools will be explained in later sections of this report.

Another key source cited throughout this report is the 2008 American Planning Association's (APA) publication, *A Planners Guide to Community and Regional Food Planning: Transforming Food Environments, Facilitating Healthy Eating*, released in 2008. This report represents the basic foundation for local food systems planning from the planning field. It provides comprehensive case studies of various communities, results of a survey of planners in regards to food planning, and suggestions and examples of how communities can begin planning for food. The APA report helped to structure this report, and provided useful examples of food planning.

Section Two: Tools for Building Local Food Systems

1. Public Participation and Capacity-Building

DEFINITION

Public participation activities seek to involve the general public and local stakeholders in activities aimed at addressing challenges and opportunities with all perspectives recognized. These activities are a cornerstone of contemporary planning practice, and have served to better connect planners and policymakers with the communities most affected by development. These activities have varying structures, players, and outcomes, but seek to build consensus and capacity around issues.

There is general consensus throughout the literature that the use of public participation is vital to beginning work on a food system. The use of advisory boards and public forums has been an important component of gaining support from community members for local food systems.

BACKGROUND

As part of its recently completed *2030 Comprehensive Plan Update,* the Scott County Planning Department recently conducted four participatory processes between 2004 and 2008. These processes focused on growth and development in Scott County.

The county has not undertaken any topic-specific participation activities with direct application to food systems. A local public interest group, the Local Harvest Alliance, is a group of concerned citizens who have been working on issues surrounding farmland preservation, local and organic food production, and the protection of rural character. Further, the planning department, in conjunction with University of Minnesota Extension, is forming a farm advisory task force to help guide the county's planning staff (and potentially policymakers) in prioritizing the needs of the agricultural community.

EXAMPLES

Food Policy Councils/Groups/Committees

The 2007 National Association of Counties (NACo) guide (Dillon and Harris, 2007) highlights the role of food councils as a tool for developing local food systems, and offers Dane County, Wisconsin, as an example. In general, these councils exist to help connect policymakers with community stakeholders and food advocates. This can include people from the agricultural, educational, social service, public health, environmental, or economic development sector. With such a variety of stakeholders, food councils can help to facilitate a productive and organized approach to dealing with these topics. In Dane County, the Food Council is an officially recognized advisory group made up of 12 appointed members who report

to the Environment, Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee of the County Board. The council has four subcommittees that are dedicated to more specific issues.

Another example of public participation comes from Story County, Iowa, where the county took the initiative to seek out opportunities for local food systems in the Des Moines, Iowa, region. A study was undertaken by the county planning and zoning department in 2008, with an overall recommendation to the county board of supervisors to form a local food systems steering committee to discuss issues and opportunities in the region.

These public input bodies—whether councils, committees or advisory boards—can serve to represent the interests of stakeholders to public officials and policymakers. Experts caution against linking the goals and aims of an agricultural advisory board to that of a food systems body, because of the differences in approach to cultivating a stronger local agricultural sector. Although a farm task force may very well support local food production and land preservation, a connection to broader public health and educational aims may be overshadowed by environmental and other concerns. Asking one group to focus on both issues can detract from the goals of the group, and make it less effective. A local food system subcommittee could be formed to better structure the goals and issues the group addresses.

In some cases, these types of public input bodies are funded or staffed by planning departments, universities, or other municipalities. For example, in Dane County, the University of Wisconsin–Madison and the City of Madison contributed $15,000 to support the food council (primarily through funding a part-time staff member).

Researchers have offered many suggested topics for local food councils, committees, or groups to review when they begin their work on their community's food system. Topics for consideration are included in Appendix A.

Visioning/Problem Identification

One of the main issues cited by scholars studying the development of food systems is the lack of a cohesive vision guiding the process. In *The Planner's Guide to the Urban Food System*, Cassidy and Patterson (2008) suggest starting any work with the development of a vision statement. Although vision statements have many connotations, the articulation of what the community sees as *their* food system will be important in guiding future work. *The Planner's Guide* articulates one vision for local food systems:

> A food system in which everyone has financial and physical access to culturally appropriate, affordable, nutritious foods that were grown without degrading the natural environment, and in which the general population understands nutrition and the food system in general. (Cassidy and Patterson, 2008)

A strong, specific vision will help guide plans and tools geared toward specific and achievable goals. For example, one interfaith organization in Florida functions as a food policy council with a mission to "Reduce hunger in Florida by increasing access to food programs through aggressive outreach strategies and public policy advocacy," giving their work a strong focus on public health and food security issues.

Stakeholder Analysis

One way researchers look at food systems involves a macro-approach to the power structures that shape the way food is produced and distributed. Marcia Caton Campbell of the University of Wisconsin–Madison uses a stakeholder analysis to better understand the dynamics that shape local food systems. This approach analyzes stakeholders, or individuals with strong interest in the issue, on the basis of a variety of characteristics. Table 2 shows an example of a stakeholder analysis (Campbell, 2004).

Table 2: Example Stakeholder Analysis Framework

Stakeholders	Values	Time Frame	Unit of Analysis	Sources of Power	Interest or Focus	Goals
Farmers						
Consumers						
Processors						
Wholesalers						
Retailers						
Planners						

Scott County's Farm Advisory Task Force could use this tool to better understand the key players who shape the agricultural and food systems within the county, or to understand the interests and perspectives of stakeholders on a specific issue—for example, agricultural preservation.

RELEVANCE FOR SCOTT COUNTY

For Scott County, structuring participatory activities will be the first step in building social capital by forming a coalition of stakeholders who support local food production in the region. Finding individuals passionate about the issue and knowledgeable of local politics and business will be helpful in directing further research and outreach efforts throughout the county. Establishing a vision for the local food system, along with thorough identification of stakeholder and their values and interests, will serve to guide Scott County through future phases of planning for their local food system.

2. RESEARCH

DEFINE

The ability to identify, quantify, and understand local food systems is still limited, with new research and methodologies appearing frequently. Engaging these new methods and applying them (as able) to Scott County's context will help inform and educate the public and policymakers as they make decisions that impact any phase of the food system.

BACKGROUND

Scott County has an ongoing relationship with the University of Minnesota Extension Service as well as the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA). These units will help provide Scott County with the ability to conduct research around food systems issues without exhausting county staff time or resources. In the fall of 2008, two studies were completed by graduate student researchers at CURA to help inform Scott County officials and planners about farmland preservation and agricultural production techniques used in other areas of the country, as well as the status of the Scott County agricultural base.

Additional quantitative research can continue to inform the Scott County planning department and other leaders involved in understanding local food systems. Two such research tools could be helpful for Scott County to assess production capacity and demand, as well as areas where the food system needs to be strengthened or expanded.

EXAMPLES

Community Food Assessments

Community food assessments provide an inventory of agricultural, demographic, economic, and political data to assess where a food system needs reinforcement or monitoring. Many examples of food assessments exist, and they vary widely in their approach. Assessments often seek to analyze the production capacity of the food system, given the amount of food available and the type of consumers within the same economic or geographic "foodshed." Some research is focused more on locally produced food, whereas others are more concerned with equity issues surrounding hunger and malnutrition. Most take into account the agricultural base, and then analyze other factors such as employment, poverty, wages, food-related businesses, and environmental considerations.

Two examples of food assessments are included in Appendix A to serve as examples of what this type of analysis might include for Scott County. The Economic Research Service, a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has developed a tool for measuring food security within a community. This speaks directly to the provision of healthy foods for community members, and examines

hunger and so-called "food deserts" directly. Information regarding this assessment can also be found in Appendix A.

Capacity Estimating

Researchers from the University of Vermont developed a methodology for quantifying local food consumption and providing people with a sense of how much of their locally consumed food could be produced within the region. Relying on publicly available data, this method uses benchmarks, or proxies, for consumption. This type of analysis could be accomplished in Scott County through work with a university and could provide a sense of local production capacity for consumable goods. This type of analysis would be especially helpful if seasonal fluctuations could be taken into account as well. More details about this approach can be found in Appendix A.

RELEVANCE FOR SCOTT COUNTY

A Community Food Assessment could serve Scott County in expanding their agricultural inventory to larger issues of hunger, food security, and the existence of 'food deserts' within their communities. Work of this nature could take place in conjunction with public health or social service departments, community groups or non-profit organizations. The capacity measurements could also serve the local community well, if certain marketing techniques were going to be used with various products, or certain types of crop or livestock expanded through the country.

3. POLICIES

DEFINE

County and municipal policies and regulations can have a significant impact on local food systems. The most obvious regulatory power is the ability to zone land for specific uses. More broadly, subdivision regulations, economic development policies, and even housing policies that prevent multifamily residential development can create barriers to local producers or retailers. This section considers two types of county policies that could be altered to better support local food systems.

BACKGROUND

Scott County is in the difficult position of managing the development pressures resulting from high population growth and preserving highly productive agricultural lands. Some of the suggested policy recommendations included in this section may have more application to city-level policies, and could be recommended to other stakeholders in the future.

EXAMPLES

Land-Use Policies

The APA report outlines two methods for reforming zoning/regulatory policies that limit the growth of local food systems. The first is to remove barriers to "a healthful food environment," and the second is through limitations placed on "unhealthful food destinations" within the community (APA, 2008). This type of regulatory strategy could become a recommendation or sub-committee topic for a Food Policy Council, or a normative goal of the planning department. By focusing on increasing access to healthy food, and discouraging fast-food and convenience foods in a community, zoning regulations can help promote more fresh and local food consumption. At a county level, the prevalence of food establishments is low, making access to any type of food difficult outside of the boundaries of Scott County's cities.

Another approach to examining policy barriers is to assess the ability of producers to sell products onsite or at aggregated produce markets. Scott County currently allows temporary use produce stands for in-season sale of products as a permitted accessory use in the Agricultural, Rural Residential, and Urban Expansion zoning districts. Considering this land use for commercial or industrial areas would be the next step in analyzing for food-friendly zoning.

Institutional Purchasing Policies

Another policy-level approach to supporting the local food system is through purchasing policies enacted by the public sector. These types of policies ensure that local food producers have a reliable market for their products. One example of this type of policy can be found in Woodbury County, Iowa, where the county board passed a Local Food Purchase Policy that requires all county facilities to first purchase locally grown organic products, then locally grown non-organic products, before considering other sources of food. This type of policy has reinforced the goals of the county while circulating money within the local community. This policy could be modified to support the Scott County local food community and county food purchasing budgets. Purchasing meat products from local sources, or contracting with a wholesaler who purchases local crops, would directly benefit farmers in Scott County.

RELEVANCE for SCOTT COUNTY

Scott County has the ability to enact various policies in support of local food. An institutional purchasing policy would be a direct way of supporting the system and would act as an example for the community. Modifying land use regulations is a much more political project, as land prices, tax incentives, and varying land uses all factor into the policies that designate what land can be used for.

4. PLANS

DEFINE

Formalizing official plans is one of the main duties of planning generalists in cities and counties. This section outlines the use of plans in supporting local food systems.

BACKGROUND

In early 2009, Scott County completed and submitted its *2030 Comprehensive Plan Update* to the Metropolitan Council. This plan outlines goals for county-wide development, natural resources, and transportation infrastructure, and takes into consideration the values of Scott County residents. The planning department has smaller area-wide plans for specific areas of the county. Other departments also coordinate their system-wide plans for watershed management, sewage treatment, and waste management with the overarching land use plans developed by the planning department.

EXAMPLES

Comprehensive Plans

In a personal conversation with the author, Dr. Samina Raja (2009) suggested that Scott County could look to the experience of Marin County, California, in planning for agriculture, growth, and food. Marin County used their comprehensive planning process to incorporate food system goals into their long-range plans. Although Scott County recently submitted its comprehensive plan to the Metropolitan Council, thinking about mechanisms for incorporating food into planning will be important for the next long-term planning process.

Marin County is located just across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco, between the Pacific Ocean and the San Pablo Bay. Although the area Marin differs greatly from Scott County, Marin County has experienced similar concerns over the loss of farmland, rapid population growth, and the disappearing connection to food. The county has 2,000 farms that bring in approximately $53 million in revenues per year. Their agricultural sector has strong representation from orchards, ranches, value-added products, and the cultivation of organic foods. Beginning in 1998, the county was seeking ways to "preserve its agricultural heritage" and to "ensure people's access to healthy foods." The county took a long-term approach to building capacity and support for planning the food system.

The comprehensive plan has a section titled The Natural Systems and Agriculture element, which is guided by three main goals:

1. **Preservation of agricultural land and resources**: Protect agricultural land by maintaining parcels large enough to sustain agricultural production, preventing conversion to non-agricultural uses, and prohibiting uses that are

incompatible with long term agricultural production. Preserve important soils, agricultural water sources, and forage to allow continued agricultural production on agricultural lands.

2. **Improved agriculture viability**: Enhance the viability of Marin County farms, ranches, and agricultural industries.

3. **Community food security**: Increase the diversity of locally produced foods to give residents greater access to a healthy, nutritionally adequate diet.

One of the most important elements in the Marin County comprehensive plan is an analysis of how these goals will be measured, in addition to who is responsible for monitoring the goals, how monitoring will be funded, and how frequently progress toward these goals should be evaluated. This provides the county with a sense of how progress will be measured, along with which stakeholders would be involved in implementing the plan. These goals and measurement criteria can be found in Appendix A.

Marin County's local Food Policy Council (FPC) played a significant role in creating support and capacity for including these goals, policies, and programs into the comprehensive plan. The FPC drafted the proposed language and submitted it to the planning department for review. This approach raised the issue of food production and consumption within the comprehensive planning process, and ultimately led to inclusion of the food policy element.

Stand-Alone Plans

Another approach to addressing food systems is through a stand-alone plan. These types of plans may stem from a Food Policy Council or similar advisory body and can carry varying levels of political clout. For example, in Minneapolis, the department of Public Health is undertaking a Homegrown Minneapolis initiative to support local food. The initiative includes a large stakeholder group, steering committee, and subcommittees on specific food-related topics. The initiative has support and participation from the mayor's office as well as the city council.

The APA Report outlines the steps a planning department can take to create a stand-alone plan to address food issues. They suggest a participatory process that mirrors the steps taken to create a comprehensive land use plan. The steps and additional information about this approach can be found in Appendix A.

RELEVANCE FOR SCOTT COUNTY

Although Scott County is not in the process of preparing another comprehensive plan, the example of Marin County illustrates a successful long-term planning approach to building support for local food systems. By facilitating public input and capacity-building activities now, the county could garner broad support for local food systems planning in time for the next wave of comprehensive planning in

2018. In the short-term, the county could also consider drafting a stand-along Food Policy Plan to guide agricultural production and local food efforts countywide.

5. PROGRAMS

DEFINE

Programmatic approaches to local food systems are additional options for Scott County and its local stakeholders to examine when considering next steps. They require coordination and evaluation to best assess their effectiveness.

BACKGROUND

Scott County is attempting to "scale up" its local food system beyond farmers markets and vegetable stands to something more substantial. Programming options are typically the next step in integrating local food systems into a community's daily life, and may include partnering with local school districts, hospitals, churches, and community groups.

EXAMPLES

Farm-to-School and Farm-to-Hospital Programs

One of the key ways a planning department can support local food systems is through support for or implementation of programs that connect local food sources directly with consumers. Altough the county planning department likely does not have the resources or power to initiate these types of programs, their support of and assistance to programs could be invaluable.

Farm-to-school programs are prevalent throughout the United States, but they require strong champions and local infrastructure to be successful. These programs encourage schools to create strong connections between local food production and their curriculum, food service, and community. By allowing schools to purchase food directly from local producers, these programs help facilitate the sustainability of local producers and the promotion of healthier diets and food choices.

There are three important factors in determining the appropriateness of a farm-to-school program for a community: the school's size, the school's capacity, and the involvement of local growers. Oftentimes the county's main role is one of coordinator, aligning the right players and champions within the various sectors (Dillon and Harris, 2007). Even higher education institutions can get involved with local foods, as the University of Minnesota Morris has demonstrated through its partnership with local producers.

Farm-to-hospital programs provide healthcare leaders with a concrete way to show their support for nutrition and the local community. These programs start with the connection between producer and the food buyer at the hospital. Like schools, hospitals are often saddled with restrictive food budgets at a per-serving price goal. Sourcing local food can often be a more costly option for these institutions, making it more difficult to forge relationships directly with farmers.

Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) in Minneapolis has taken the first step toward sourcing more local foods, signing a healthy food pledge in March of 2009. This pledge encourages HCMC to purchase more food in-season and from local producers. They will begin integrating more sustainable or organic foods into their pediatric patient menu, as well as become a dropoff location for local community supported agriculture shares. Composting initiatives and fair-trade coffee are also ways HCMC will implement their pledge. More information can be found in Appendix A.

Farmers Markets

Farmers markets are a familiar method to facilitate interactions between local producers and consumers. These seasonal, limited markets can be varied, from the gathering of a handful of vegetable growers to the gathering of diverse producers, local artisans, and restaurants. In Scott County, at least three municipalities have farmers markets: Shakopee, Prior Lake, and Savage. A 2007 Minnesota Department of Agriculture survey of organic producers found that most of them had connected to buyers through word of mouth. A farmers market provides a public marketplace for consumers and producers to exchange goods, but can also serve as a forum for education, marketing, and forging partnerships among local producers. The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, located in Minneapolis, has begun an initiative to start mini-markets to connect producers with underserved or low food-access areas (senior centers, multifamily housing sites, etc). This model could also serve rural, low-density communities as well, requiring fewer resources than a full farmers market. See Appendix A for more information.

Community Gardens

Another tool for local food production is community gardens. Often these types of projects are owned and operated by community organizations, nonprofit, or public entities, and provide local participants with consumable produce. Some organizations, such as Youth Farm and Market (located in Minneapolis), sell the foods produced at their urban gardens at larger farmers markets or through a

family share program to local neighborhood families. Farmers markets can also be an important piece in beginning farm-to-institution programs in the local community by providing a good intermediary platform for food purchasers to interact with local producers.

Within Scott County's zoning jurisdiction, the ability to grow produce for local sales is widespread. With the exception of RR-1 and RR-2 zoning districts (rural residential single family and rural residential suburban single family), agricultural uses are permitted in the county's zoning ordinance. A community garden can function on small parcels, and it is typically a resource-friendly land use. More information on community gardens can be found in Appendix A.

RELEVANCE FOR SCOTT COUNTY

Once the county has established a vision or strategy for approaching food systems, designing and implementing a program can help build support, test resources, and find participants for creating more capacity within the system. The county has existing farmer's markets, but could investigate mini-markets in more far-flung areas of the county, as well as some sort of farm-to-institution program with one of the local healthcare facilities, schools, or prisons. Promoting these types of programs within the cities could also lead to more intracounty networking.

6. INFRASTRUCTURE

DEFINE

One of the largest challenges for local food producers is lack of access to the facilities that help them bring their products from the farm to the table. The NACo report elaborates this point from the perspective of a farmer:

> We can increase our supply, and we know that there is a demand for our products, but where do we process our foods and how do we transport and store them? (Dillon and Harris, 2007)

Infrastructure refers to the land, roads, facilities, and financing required to provide producers with the means to market and distribute their product. Storage, processing, and packaging facilities are often dominated by corporations with large-scale production and minimum goods requirements for food suppliers.

BACKGROUND

Scott County has an agricultural sector characterized by smaller farms, with lower sales values and fewer full-time farmers. Given this smaller scale of production, the infrastructure needs of local food producers differ from those of conventional food producers.

EXAMPLES

Examples of infrastructure projects for local food systems are hard to find, especially when looking for initiatives aimed at smaller-scale farms.

Facilities and Programs

Problems processing, packaging, storing, and distributing local food products have plagued many communities. To "scale up" operations, the infrastructure needs to be in place to help farmers successfully market and sell their product.

Figure 3: Local Food Exchange, Bellingham, WA
Photo credit: Growing Washington

Woodbury County, Iowa, took on the challenge of helping their local producers by partnering on numerous infrastructure projects. Efforts to reinforce the local farm economy and organic production were led by the local Economic Development director, Robert Marqusee, and are strongly supported by the rest of the county staff and policymakers.

Working within strong partnerships in the community, the county helped promote the development of an organic soy processing facility, Green Planet Farms; the 'Sioux City Sue' branding and labeling campaign; and a local food network program aimed at supplying local institutions with organic foods. Additional efforts have gone into supporting the creation of retail outlets for local foods, cold storage facilities, and commercial kitchen facilities.

Growing Washington is a nonprofit operation in Washington state working on promoting local farmers. Their local food exchange operates like a small cooperative market, bringing together locally produced goods for sale. They have cold storage facilities and partner with local farms to store CSA shares.

Financing

One of the main challenges in providing or sustaining the infrastructure needed for local foods systems is locating the capital needed to make (or maintain) the infrastructure investment. The NACo guide (Dillon and Harris 2007) offers several suggestions for county-led efforts to support these systems through financing mechanisms: offering mini-grants to developers of food processing, distributing, and packaging facilities; providing financial or tax incentives to existing facilities to encourage them to stay in the region or transition into more sustainable food processing; and direct funding for local producers. One of the examples outlined in the NACo guide focuses on Woodbury County, Iowa, where the county enacted a local tax rebate for farmers switching to organic production methods. The Organics Conversion Policy generated additional policies and programs that created a niche for organic food production in the region.

RELEVANCE FOR SCOTT COUNTY

As Scott County continues to develop a vision and plan for addressing their local food system, an inventory of the agricultural infrastructure and networks in place will be needed to better understand the gaps in the system. Infrastructure projects are extremely expensive, and require creative funding mechanisms and partnerships to implement. A partner in the Woodbury County projects, March Schuett of American Natural Soy, identifies infrastructure as a key to developing local food systems, as it "creates a preferred spot to have processing done and draws significant investment to the area" (Dillon and Harris, 2007, p. 16).

7. MARKETING AND EDUCATION

DEFINE

One of the final steps in the process of getting food from the farm to consumers is through the marketing of and public education about locally produced foods. These tools help organizations, producers, and community leaders in streamlining the food system and promoting their local farm economy.

BACKGROUND

Another secondary way of addressing the creation of local foods in Scott County comes from further learning about how the current local system works, what its strengths and weaknesses are, and how they can be improved. Events that continue to make local communities aware of the rich agricultural heritage and culture that surrounds them will also serve to build capacity, social capital, and public support for a local food system. Educational initiatives can support many of the other implementation tools outlined in this guide. Technology is playing a more important role in the marketing of local foods. Websites can help to broker relationships between producers and wholesalers, retailers, and individual

consumers at relatively low cost, and can facilitate transportation of goods to market.

EXAMPLES

Marketing

Many communities throughout the United States are attempting to organize and mobilize local food stakeholders to "scale up" their production systems. Nonprofit organizations or community groups often spearhead the efforts to spread the message about the benefits of local food by increasing the marketing and visibility of existing programs and participants. Some examples of marketing initiatives that have proved successful are listed below.

- Lanesboro Local is a project started in southeastern Minnesota that provides an online catalog of local producers, commercial partners, and events that promote the local food system. Their definition of "local" includes the southeastern Minnesota region, northeastern Iowa, and southwestern Wisconsin. Other examples of online directories and catalogs can be found in Schweser's (2008) precedent study report.

- Farmer-Buyer Speed-Dating is an initiative brought to Minnesota by Larry Lev, an endowed chair at the University of Minnesota. The concept originally began in Seattle as a way to connect institutional food buyers with local producers. The program works by facilitating short, five-minute networking sessions with interested parties, who can choose to follow-up after the event to collaborate. Given the multitude of restaurants in the Twin Cities (especially Minneapolis) that aim to purchase locally grown food, this type of event could be a helpful entry point for Scott County producers to find additional businesses to partner with. Renewing the Countryside is a local organization that facilitates these types of events locally. More information can be found in Appendix A.

- Many regional food systems use branding or labeling to help distinguish their products from conventionally produced food items. There are many examples of these types of labels, including Woodbury County's Sioux City Sue brand (Figure 4). Additionally, the St. Peter Food Co-op uses labeling (Figure 5) to help its buyers identify products grown in the five-state area.

Education

While education was already discussed briefly in the farm-to-school section, additional efforts can be made to engage adult consumers in the county. Overall, the local food system will not flourish if consumer choices favor the conventional food system. Providing people with information about why the food is different, how it can be used, and the benefits of buying local will help increase consumers' willingness to pay a higher price for a local product. Each of these tools can

Figure 4: Sioux City Sue logo
From: www.woodburyorganics.org

Figure 5: Local food label, St. Peter Food Co-op

incorporate education in small ways to promote a comprehensive understanding of the food system. Nutrition education can be promoted within emergency food banks, institutional settings that use local products, schools, and government.

Additional resources

In February 2009, the Sustainable Regional Development Partnerships held a conference to review the results of research on local food systems. Researchers from the University of Minnesota identified the top funders and grantees for local food research and programming. They also identified top priorities for foundations in both rural and urban settings, and determined that food banks/hunger/fresh produce and education–farmer/grower/children were categories shared across the state. Overall, very few grants were distributed for infrastructure projects or animal-related agriculture. These are both crucial pieces to a local food system, and identifying the gap in funding is an important step toward understanding the challenge of expanding local food production and consumption. Additional information on the sources of foundational and private support can be found in Appendix A.

RELEVANCE FOR SCOTT COUNTY

Education will be an important piece in moving Scott County toward a more sustainable food system. Terminology such as local food systems, organic, and sustainable are inconsistently used and may be confusing to people unfamiliar with this topic. Engaging communities in urbanized areas of Scott County and finding mechanisms to connect them to the farming community in greater Scott County will be valuable for building knowledge and social capital across the county.

Section Three: Other Perspectives

COOPERATIVE GROCERY STORES

Cooperative markets or grocery stores, also known as co-ops, are highly concentrated within the Twin Cities metropolitan area. This strong concentration has cultivated a local food culture that supports local producers, grocers, and restaurants. Co-ops operate on a customer-owner model where members buy and own a share of the store, often in exchange for annual dividends and added discounts. Co-ops typically buy from local farmers or wholesale distributors, and value sustainably and locally grown products. A short questionnaire or phone interview was conducted with some of the local co-ops regarding their perspective on local food systems. Their responses have been summarized below. For complete responses, please see Appendix B.

- The five co-ops that responded to the questionnaire agreed that for their purposes of supplying fresh foods to customers, the definition of "local" encompasses the five-state area of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and the Dakotas. Preference is given to Minnesota products. A few of the co-ops purchase Scott County products from the Cedar Summit dairy, and sell Firehouse Salsa in their stores. They buy from farms with a variety of sizes, specialties, and ownership-models (private, LLC, co-op).

- The majority of products are distributed to the co-op through a wholesale distributor such as Co-op Warehouse Partners (a partner organization of the Wedge), UNFI, or Alberts. Some of their products come directly from farmers, who bring it to the store ready for sale. Some of the distributors of local foods are occasionally willing to "cross-dock" or "piggy back" smaller quantities of local foods into their shipments to co-ops.

- The co-ops have not seen any products truly phase out of their market. One interviewee noted the limitations associated with the high cost of organic meat, but otherwise most noted that demand has increased. The co-ops saw high demand for certified organic products, grass-fed beef, value-added products (dried fruit, snack products, soda), lunch meat, and access to year-round vegetables. One co-op noted that they ran out of locally grown carrots in mid-winter and had to purchase them from California, and noted a lack of supply of locally grown organic parsnips. One co-op reflected that some of these products store very well, but are not supplied year round to the co-ops. The respondents said that berries, organic grass-fed beef, and greenhouse vegetables could be good products for small- or medium-sized farms to produce for retail sale.

- The co-ops agreed that each store has its own expectations of the farms they buy products from. Meetings are usually arranged between the farmers and department manager (produce, meat, etc.) to discuss quantity, variety, and scheduling. The co-ops have to "roll with the punches" given the uncertainty of weather, and its impact on crops and the supply of products to the stores.

One respondent noted that risk is minimized best by selling products to and buying products from a distributor.

- When asked about the role of their home counties in supporting the local food system, few co-ops could identify anything directly associated with the county in which they were located. One respondent felt the counties could help bolster the local food system by subsidizing organic farming and supporting farmers through policy changes.

RESTAURANTS

In general, few restaurants exist in the unincorporated parts of Scott County. Within the cities in Scott County, 62% of the 87 restaurants are branch stores, belonging to a larger corporation with less independent discretion over their purchasing choices. Using information from the ReferenceUSA database, a handful of local Scott County restaurants were contacted to learn about their interest in local food. Single-location (non-branch) restaurants with listed websites or email addresses were contacted and asked if they purchased any local foods, were open to purchasing Scott County products, and had customers asking for locally grown food. Only four restaurants responded to the email.

Most of the restaurants purchased their food products locally, from places like Cub Foods and Von Hansen's Meat, but only one respondent cited directly buying Scott County products (apples from an orchard) for the restaurant. Although only a few responses were received, the restaurants were all interested in purchasing local foods, if prices were reasonable. The respondents said the most important factors in their decision to buy local foods would be ease of ordering, high quality, and cost-effectiveness. One respondent said he would be interested in "stimulating the local economy" through the purchase of local foods for his restaurant. Complete responses are available in Appendix B.

This short email survey was easy to complete, and provided valuable feedback and comments. It could easily be expanded to other restaurants using a more formal survey method.

Section Four: Recommendations

Fostering a local food system can best be accomplished by engaging dedicated stakeholders. The county is in the process of forming a Farm Task Force, with the aim of helping to bridge the priorities of the agricultural community and the goals of development and planning. If local food is something the county is ready to support, creating a local food subcommittee of the farm task force would be beneficial to making true progress on this issue. This small group of individuals dedicated to working on local food system development could take these initial steps towards addressing this issue:

1. Creating a vision for local foods
2. Completing a basic stakeholder analysis
3. Mapping existing assets with respect to local foods
4. Identifying gaps in the system, and prioritizing the needs of local food producers to address these gaps

Political support will come from continuing to foster relationships with the University of Minnesota and other educational institutions, the local nonprofits dedicated to these topics (Local Harvest Alliance, the Minnesota Project, the Land Stewardship Project), and the economic development agencies within the county. Bridging these issues with those of the Farm Task Force will help establish continuity between the two interrelated topics of farmland preservation and local food systems development.

Continuing to use technology to identify spatial patterns and opportunities within the food system will be important in providing a concrete basis for future programming, policy, or infrastructure projects. For example, Figure 6, developed for *The Future of our Farmland: An Agricultural Inventory for Scott County, MN* (Aitchison, 2009), highlights existing local and organic farm operations within the county. The usefulness of this map would be improved by adding the locations of processing and distribution facilities, storage facilities, staging or loading spaces, and known retailers or buyers of local foods (especially Farmers Markets). The regional market is also important, as many of the co-op markets and restaurants within the Twin Cities purchase locally produced foods. Identifying regional retailers and purchasers of this food could help farmers in Scott County identify the larger market for their foods in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

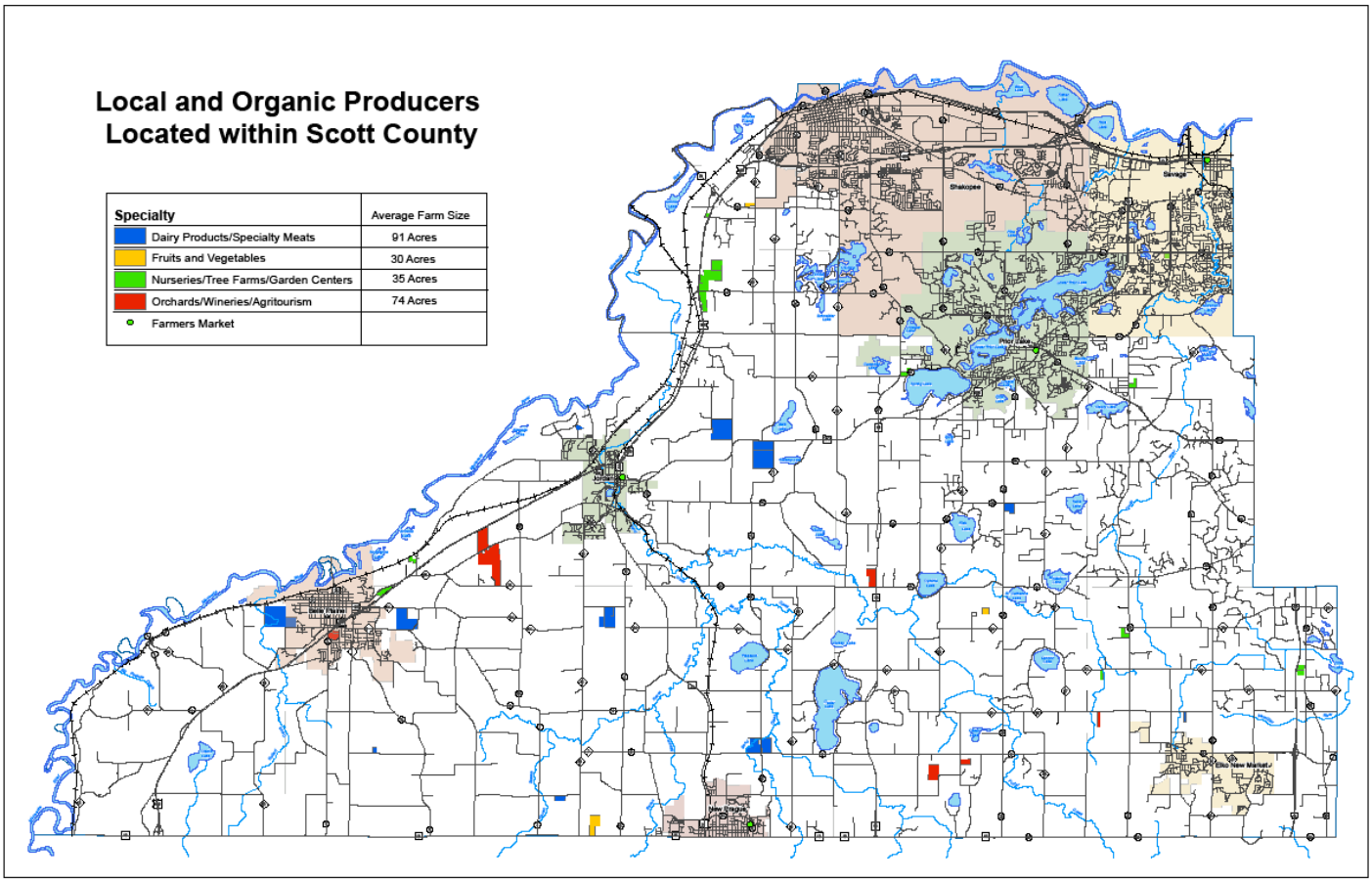

Figure 6: Local and Organic Producers Located in Scott County, Minnesota
Source: Aitchison, 2009

Section Five: Conclusion

The local food movement continues to grow throughout Minnesota and the Upper Midwest. The popularity of farmers markets, the shift toward healthier lifestyles, and the increased development pressures on farmland have all brought food production back into the public forum. The definitions of 'food systems,' 'local' and 'sustainable' vary between communities. The networks and systems for getting locally produced food from farm to table varies, as do the programs and policies at the local level that impact agricultural operations, both large and small.

Scott County has the power to envision and create its own local food system. Capitalizing on the small- and medium-sized farms that characterize the county, the proximity to urban markets for locally grown agricultural products, and the desire of stakeholders to make change, the county is ready to move forward. Establishing means of producing quality food, identifying local and regional buyers, and cultivating a healthy food culture will reinforce the local farm economy and help to maintain the rural character that many Scott County residents prize.

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APPENDIX A: Food Systems Tools

I. Public Participation and Capacity Building

A. Food Policy Councils/Groups/Committees

i. *How Food Policy Councils are Organized and Operate.* From Chapter 4 of *Food Security Begins at Home,* providing information on forming and implementing a Food Policy Council. Developed by the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group. Accessed at: http://www.ssawg.org/cfs-handbook.html#Food_Security_Begins_at_Home

ii. *Getting Food on the Table: A Guide to Local Food Policy*. A 1999 Guide created by the California Sustainable Agriculture Working Group. Accessed at: http://www.foodsecurity.org/FPC/resources.html

iii. Suggested Topics for Policy Group Consideration (Taken from noted articles. Full citations available in Works Cited section of paper).

- Institutional purchasing of local foods
- Regional collaboration on food system issues and policies
- Recruiting and retaining more local food growers
- Niche farming opportunities
- Feasibility for a regional food processing facility
- Allowing for small acreage farming
- Fostering more equitable access to healthy foods *(The Story County Local Food System: Issues and Opportunities)*
- Farmland preservation
- Fostering sustainable agriculture practices
- Farmers and Public Markets development and administration
- Linking farms with school and institutional cafeterias (hospitals, public agencies, prisons, institutions of higher education, etc.), including through transportation and logistics
- Transportation planning for increased food access within neighborhoods
- Food enterprise/processor and food retail development, and related activities that link food systems with economic development
- Buy-Local food programs
- Urban agriculture (development and support of vegetable gardens)
- Linking farms and gardens with food assistance programs

- Food assistance and community nutrition program development and enhancement (including linking to federal programs)
- Community food assessments, including mapping food resources
- Planning and development for local food reserves
- Regenerating subsistence and heritage food practices in Native American communities
- Education and outreach for increased community participation in food planning – nutrition, food shopping, gardening, preparation *(APA White Paper)*
- Analyzing the impact of the private food industry on low-income communities
- Improving the access of low-income residents to food stores by improving transportation or influencing grocery store location decisions
- Establishing community gardens for affordable and fresh produce; facilitating food related employment and entrepreneurship
- Strengthening urban-rural links by connecting local farmers with local consumers; and devising innovative hunger-prevention programs *(Placing the Food System on the Urban Agenda: The Role of Municipal Institutions in Food Systems Planning)*

B. Stakeholder Analysis

i. *Building a Common Table: The Role for Planning in Community Food Systems.* A 2004 article that outlines the tensions that exist in a local food system and provides suggestions for further action. Also outlines the benefits of stakeholder analysis. See attached.

ii. *Applying Large Group Interaction Methods in the Planning and Implementation of Major Change.* This article outlines the use of stakeholder analysis and other participation techniques in planning situations. By John Bryson and Sharon Anderson. See attached.

II. Research Strategies

A. Food Assessments

i. *Placer County Foodshed Report.* A 2001 report conducted by the University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program, the Placer County Foodshed report analyzes the county in light of data indicators and benchmarks, and

interviews with stakeholders and key players. Available at: http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/CDPP/Report/placerreport.pdf

ii. *Food Matters: Farm Viability and Food Consumption in Missoula County.* Completed at the University of Montana, this study uses existing data along with stakeholder interviews to assess the strength and political feasibility of their local food system. Available at: http://www.umt.edu/cfa/research.htm

iii. *ERS Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit*. This tool kit is a set of guides that can help a community structure its assessment based on secondary data sources, focus groups and food store inventories. Available at: http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/efan02013/

B. Estimating Capacity

i. *Local Foods: Estimating Capacity*. Outlines a methodology for assessing how much locally consumed food could be cultivated locally. Using national statistics as benchmarks for consumption, the model relies on market value as the primary unit of analysis. Available at: http://www.joe.org/joe/2008october/a7.php

III. Policies

A. Land Use Policies

i. *A Planner's Guide to the Urban Food System*. Provides some insightful examples of creative land use policies that can support agricultural land uses in unconventional places. Available at: http://postcarboncities.net/files/PlannersGuidetotheFoodSystem.pdf

ii. *Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning.* This guide outlines a series of policies approved and recommended by the APA. It provides general and specific policies and outlines steps planners can take to best implement them. Available at: http://www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/food.htm .

B. Institutional Purchasing Policies

i. Woodbury County, Iowa, "Local Food Purchase Policy". Policy designed to enhance rural economic development through municipal purchasing of local, organic food products. Available at:

http://www.woodburyorganics.com/Woodbury_Organics/Policies_files/WC%20LFPP%20v3.pdf .

IV. Plans

A. Comprehensive Plans

i. Comprehensive Plan Example from Marin County, CA. The tables below illustrate how the county is able to establish within their comprehensive plan, steps and actions needed to support their agricultural and food sectors.

How Will Success Be Measured?

Indicator Monitoring

Nonbinding indicators, benchmarks, and targets[1] will help to measure and evaluate progress. This process will also provide a context in which to consider the need for new or revised implementation measures.

Indicators	Benchmarks	Targets
Acres preserved with agricultural easements.	28,377 acres preserved in 2000.	Increase by 25,000 acres by 2010 and by 12,500 additional acres by 2015.
Acres of land farmed organically.	357 acres in 2000.	Increase by 1,500% by 2010 and 1,700% by 2015.
Annual sales of identified Marin farmers' markets: Civic Center, Downtown San Rafael, Novato, and Fairfax.	$9,860,000 in 2005.	Increase annual sales 10% by 2010 and 15% by 2015.

These tables are used throughout the comprehensive plan, and help outline targeted goals, how they will be measured, along with the responsibilities of all parties involved in implementing the plan.

Marin County Comprehensive Plan example, continued:

Program Implementation

The following table summarizes responsibilities, potential funding priorities, and estimated time frames for proposed implementation programs. Program implementation within the estimated time frame[1] will be dependent upon the availability of adequate funding and staff resources.

AG-3.a - Encourage Community Gardens.	CDA, Agricultural Commissioner, UCCE-FA, DPW, MCOSD	Existing budget	Low	Ongoing
AG-3.b - Provide Community Education.	UCCE-FA, Agricultural Commissioner, CBO's	Existing budget and may require additional grants or revenue[3]	Medium	Ongoing
AG-3.c - Promote Edible Landscaping.	CDA, Agricultural Commissioner, UCCE-FA, MCOSD	Existing budget	Low	Ongoing
AG-3.d - Use Locally Grown and/or Organic Foods in County Services.	Cultural Services, Agricultural Commissioner, UCCE-FA	Existing budget and may require additional grants or revenues, as well as Incentive Payments to Growers	High	Ongoing
AG-3.e - Promote Organic Food in Schools.	UCCE-FA, Agricultural Commissioner, Marin Food Policy Council, CBO's	Existing budget and may require additional grants or revenue[3]	Medium	Ongoing
AG-3.f - Support Local Groups.	Agricultural Commissioner, CBO's UCCE-FA	Existing budget and may require additional grants or revenue[3]	Medium	Ongoing

The full 2007 Marin County Comprehensive Plan can be found at: http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/CD/main/fm/TOC.cfm .

B. 'Stand Alone' Plans

i. A local example of a stand alone food plan is the current work of *Homegrown Minneapolis*. While an official food plan has not been created, this project is working independently of other planning initiatives. More information available at: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/homegrown-home.asp

ii. The APA Planning Advisory Service Report, *A Planner's Guide to Community and Regional Food Planning* offers a step-by-step process for creating a 'stand alone' plan. It offers a 7-phase method for creating a plan, which essentially mirrors the steps taken during a comprehensive planning process. The phases are as follows:

1. Identify partners to participate in the planning process
2. Devise a planning approach that fits the community's need
3. [Implement a] visioning process
4. Gather and analyze relevant data
5. Prepare preliminary recommendations and establish benchmarks for measuring progress
6. Review findings and recommendations with interested stakeholders
7. Implement the recommendation and measure progress.

A Planner's Guide to Community and Regional Food Planning can be found and purchased at: http://myapa.planning.org/APAStore/Search/Default.aspx?p=3886 .

V. Programs

A. Farm to School/Hospital Programs

i. Farm to School

1. The *Minnesota Farm to School Toolkit* is a resource developed by the University of Minnesota, to walk schools in the state through the process of starting to source portions of their food from local sources. Available at: http://www.mn-farmtoschool.umn.edu/
2. *Distribution Models for Farm to School* briefly outlines three mechanisms for getting local foods into schools. Available at: http://www.foodsecurity.org/f2s_distribution_method.pdf
3. *Making the Farm/School Connection: Opportunities and Barriers to Greater Use of Locally-grown produce in Public Schools.* This report was written by a researcher from Minnesota and provides insight into the concerns of foodservice directors. Available at: http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/research/marketing_files/Minnesota.pdf.

ii. Farm to Hospital

1. In the spring of 2009, Hennepin County Medical Center agreed to sign the Healthy Food in Healthcare Pledge, with a commitment to try and

source more local and organic products in their hospital. Press release available at: http://www.hcmc.org/pr/pr2.asp?nrID=188 .

2. A general overview of the Farm to Hospital model, from the Food Security Coalition and Center for Food & Justice. *Farm to Hospital: Supporting Local Agriculture and Improving Healthcare.* Available at: http://departments.oxy.edu/uepi/cfj/f2h.htm
3. *Healthcare Without Harm* is an international organization dedicated to making healthcare more sustainable. Their website has many resources on this topic, and is available at: http://www.noharm.org/us/food/issue .

B. Farmers Markets

i. The institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy has begun an initiative aimed at providing farmers' markets to local, underserved populations. Their mini-market project and additional resources are available at: http://www.iatp.org/localFoods/project_miniMarkets.cfm

ii. The United States Department of Agriculture has a guide to help understand the function and operation of farmers markets. Produced by the Farmer Market Consortium. Available at: http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELDEV3100937&acct=frmrdirmkt .

C. Community Gardens

i. Seattle is a national leader for community gardens, providing municipal support and management of its 68 neighborhood gardens. More information available at: http://www.seattle.gov/Neighborhoods/ppatch/ .

ii. The APA Planning Advisory Service Report, *A Planner's Guide to Community and Regional Food Planning,* also outlines the use of community gardens as a tool to promote local food systems. The guide can be purchased at: http://myapa.planning.org/APAStore/Search/Default.aspx?p=3886 .

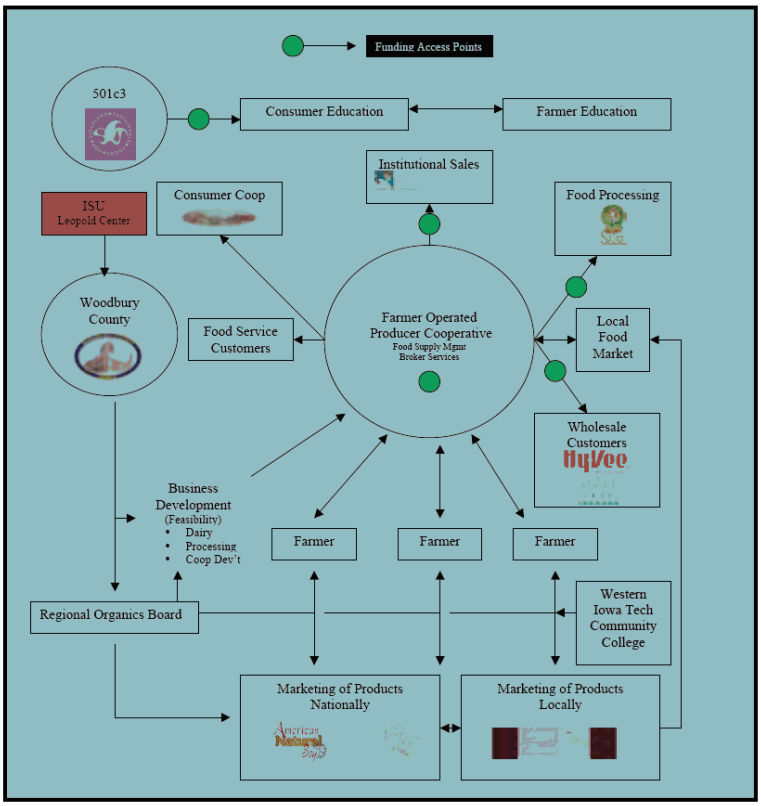
VI. Infrastructure

A. Woodbury County

i. The National Association of Counties produced the *Counties and Local Food Systems* report that was discussed in the paper. A section on infrastructure outlines the role

Woodbury County has played in promoting a local, organic food system in their region. Full report available at: http://www.naco.org/Template.cfm?Section=New_Technical_Assistance&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=24784

ii. Below is an illustration of their local food system, with players identified. Additional information on Woodbury County and their programs can be found on their website, http://www.woodburyorganics.com/.



VII. Education and Marketing

A. Marketing

i. A 2008 precendent studies report was completed for Scott County with case studies to illustrate many different strategies taken to promote local food production and agricultural preservation. The report provides multiple examples of marketing and branding for local food promotion. Full report is available at: http://www.cura.umn.edu/Programs/CGO/Reports/JAVA-Ag_Precedent_Report.pdf .

ii. A new trend in local food promotion is the idea of a 'Farmer-Buyer Speed dating' event. These events are facilitated in Minnesota by Renewing the Countryside, a

local non-profit. More information available at: http://renewingthecountryside.org/content/view/42/0/ .

B. Education

i. *A Planner's Guide to the Urban Food System*. Also identifies education as one of the biggest steps needed to implement a local food system. Available at: http://postcarboncities.net/files/PlannersGuidetotheFoodSystem.pdf

ii. Many of the resources on local food and healthy eating education are scattered throughout the other sources cited in this appendix. The Institute for Agriculture and Trade policy (http://www.iatp.org/) has both a ' Food and Health' and 'Local Foods' program dedicated to educating people and changing habits. Additionally, the Community Food Security Coalition (http://www.foodsecurity.org/) also has many helpful resources in connecting people with local food.

C. Additional Resources

i. A presentation entitled: *Who Will Fund the Local Foods Movement? How MN's Foundations Helped Build our Local Food System and What the Future May Hold* was given in February of 2009 by Margaret Adamek if the University of Minnesota's Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships. The following results were presented:

Top funders for Local Foods work

1. Bush Foundation
2. McKnight Foundation
3. Sustainable Agriculture Research
4. USDA Rural Development
5. Otto Bremer Foundation
6. W.K. Kellogg Foundation
7. Minneapolis Foundation
8. Saint Paul Foundation
9. Rockefeller Foundation
10. Carolyn Foundation

Top 10 Grantees of Local Foods

1. Land Stewardship Project
2. Minnesota Project
3. University of Minnesota
4. Youth Farm and Market Project
5. White Earth Land Recovery Project

6. Second Harvest Heartland
7. Sustainable Farming Assoc. of MN.
8. PastureLand Cooperative
9. Peta Wakan Tipi
10. Renewing the Countryside

Research conducted by the University of Minnesota regional sustainable development partnerships identified the top funders and grantees for local food research and programming. Researchers identified top priorities for both foundations in both rural and urban settings, and determined that 'food banks/hunger/fresh produce' and 'education – farmer/grower/children' were categories shared across the state. Few grants were distributed for infrastructure projects or animal-related agriculture (outside of the U of M). These are both crucial pieces to a local food system, and identifying the gap in funding is an important step towards understanding the challenges of local foods.

APPENDIX B: Regional Demand for Local Food

I. Cooperative Grocery Store Responses to Questionnaire

The following individuals and their organizations completed a short questionnaire in the spring of 2009. Their responses were aggregated to protect anonymity.

Just Foods, Northfield, MN
Joey Robison, Marketing and Member Services Manager
Strider, Produce Manager

Linden Hills Co-op, Minneapolis, MN
Marshall Wright, Produce Manager

Mississippi Market, St. Paul, MN
Liz McMann, Education and Special Projects

St. Peter Co-op, St. Peter, MN
Jennifer Luhmann, Brand Development Manager

Seward Co-op, Minneapolis, MN
Travis Lusk, Produce Manager

Seward Co-op, Minneapolis, MN
Chris Dick, Meat Manager

The Wedge Co-op, Minneapolis, MN
Elizabeth Archerd Member Services Manager

Question	Co-op Response
1. What does your co-op consider 'local'?	Storewide, the five-state area. Closest is the best, then they look elsewhere. Some products are more regional (ex: Dakotas and wheat products) Anything from the five-state area. We consider a product to be local if it was produced or significantly processed within MN, WI, IA, ND or SD. The majority of our local products are from MN or WI. Products are considered local if they are grown/produced within the 5 state area; Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, North and South Dakota. The ultimate decision of what is deemed local is at the discretion of Management of St. Peter Food Co-op. At the St. Peter Food Co-op items such as coffee,

	despite the fact that it is roasted and distributed within this definition (Example: Peace Coffee) does not qualify as a local product. Exceptions can be made for small local producers such as Simply Homemade as the economic intent qualifies and is truly in our backyard. [The] Five state area Anything within the five-state area, with preference on MN Anything produced within the five-state area – MN, IA, WI, SD, ND.
2. What sort of products do you get from the 7-county area? Do you get any products from Scott County producers?	Cedar Summit, Firehouse Salsa. Produce comes from all over – 90% from 5-state area. Big producers in Wisconsin to really small local producers. Work with smaller farms, people with only one product – can sometimes supplement their quantity – or bundle it with someone else. Within the 5-state area, 19% of their revenues went to local food products. I am not sure about Scott county; we do get a lot of our vegetables locally in the summer. I am not sure as to what the counties are. I don't know the name of the counties my farmers are in. I think Gardens of Eagan is the closest and they are near Lakeville. Chicken We receive a wide variety of seasonal produce offerings from several producers in the 7-county area. We also receive hydroponic, non-seasonal lettuce, year-round from a producer in Faribault. None that I'm aware of (Scott County products). Not sure what the 7-county area consists of, but our local products include meat, cheese, produce, milk, eggs, honey, rice, tortillas, tortilla chips, cereal, soap, lotion, cleaning products, just to name some. I have attached a list of all of our local producers and their locations to date for your reference. Dairy products from Cedar Summit dairy. See answers from CPW for more info.
3. What is your	We get some direct deliveries from farms and we also

distribution system like – how does the food get from the farms to you?	buy through Co-op Partners Warehouse, our wholesale distribution department, which sources as much local produce, meat and dairy as possible for distribution in five states. Most is delivered directly by the farmers or one of their employees. Some of it is brought through a distributor willing to "cross-dock" for a farmer and some of the local produce warehouses purchase local produce directly that we buy from them. Most of the local food comes directly from the farm to us on a delivery truck or van. Sometimes produce is dropped off at one of our warehouses (Co-op Partners) and then they deliver it to us (Cross docking.) Other products come to us indirectly from a warehouse, they buy the product and then we buy it from them We receive direct deliveries via truck and we receive product, throughout the year, from two St. Paul distributors and one national distributor. Usually all meat is "piggy backed" on vegetable or dairy trucks. Others are delivered via Co-op Partners or Ron-Mar. The Produce Manager meets with farmers in the winter/spring to talk about how much they are growing, what they are growing, etc. Some farmers only work thru vendors (co-op partners, Albert's). We receive our non-local produce, very little local produce, and other products through a cooperative distribution service (UNFI) that many, if not all, of the other MN co-ops use. Most of our local produce is delivered by the farmers themselves, as is some of our meat, eggs, and a few other products.
4. Are any products seeing a drop in demand? Which ones? Why/why not?	Possibly organic meat. Once the story of a good natural or grass-fed farm is told, the organic certification stamp looses some of its weight. The cost is so expensive, it often doesn't pay in the long run. It depends. The press likes "local" and its population. Increased participation (eat local challenge), more questions, etc. Hard to keep locally processed/packaged foods in stock. Health-wise, organic is very popular.

	Overall store sales are down about 2.5% over the previous year. Because the economy and the fact that produce prices are considerably lower than last year, so even though we are moving as much or more produce, $s are down. I cannot think of any major drops in demand. While our customers seem locally driven, I can't discern any noticeable trends. Bananas, import apples, pears and other commodities still witness steady sales. There is no drop in demand for local produce at our co-op, in fact its just the opposite. I think if it were available year round our customers would always want local produce. We are not seeing a drop in demand in any products. In fact, the interest in local foods in only growing and we are constantly looking to bring in more local products.
5. What are some products that you cannot keep in stocked?	Some chicken, beef (grass-fed) and lunch meat. Lunch meat needs to be "clean" of all nitrates and contain only natural ingredients. There's a large void in the local market for all of these. Local Fruits, vegetables are in pretty decent supply overall. Local carrots do sell really well. Our needs are mostly filled by the farms we work with now. During certain years, usually due to weather conditions or a pest issue, one farm may have less or none of an item available. It surprised me that some of the crops that store well are not available year round (however our farms seem to be moving in on these) like apples, cabbages, root veggies. Value added items like cut fruit seem to retail well. When we can get the product, amounts are occasionally insufficient. Diet-coke type product that is affordable (there aren't any). Packaged/Processed local foods – esp. snacks (Ex: Local Tortilla Chips), harder to find root vegetables in the winter. Jan-Feb, ran out of Mn. Carrots. Soda pop (without high fructose) is often requested from consumers who have to go to the other

	store to get their sodas. Gap: local snack products/bread products (like chips). Also a gap in organic parsnips – had to buy them from California in the winter. I am not aware of any products we cannot keep in stock. There may be opening for anyone who could get their act together on local grass-fed, certified organic beef. We have been through three producers and dropped them because they cannot meet the needs of retailers. (1000 Hills Cattle Company, which features grass-fed beef, is a great example of a company that understands the needs of retailers, but not all their producers are certified, so we cannot sell the product as organic.)
6. What, as a supplier, do you tell farmers that want to start selling to co-ops? How does he/she break into the market? Do you have your own, co-op specific requirements, or are they standard across the region?	Every co-op is different, we can work with a broad range of people. That's why they set up meetings with individual farmers. For our store it's tough to get in because we have been working with the same farmers for many years and have established relationships with them. They do a very good job of filling out needs. I think there needs to be more community demand. Neighborhoods that have coops are buying what they can from local farms. I think it's up to the neighborhoods without coops to start their own food coops. That would be the best way to increase the need for more local farmer's and their produce. Our store has a lot of established relationships with our farmers so it is tough to find a gap in our supply. Overall I would recommend that the farmer get to what the store they want to sell to. Find out what they have lined up for supply. Try to grow products that compliment or do not overlap with what are grown for the store. Do not try to undercut established growers, this is not a good way to make friends. Many of our growers have started with us as a secondary supplier for one product then, they have moved to primary after a few years. Bottom line: Find a niche, have excellent quality, be patient. It's difficult to break into the market. Many products have been grown and contracted by the same providers for years. I recommend providers focus on specific, heirloom varieties or develop programs to

	either stretch the end of the season or utilize greenhouses and hoop-houses to spur the beginning of the season. We prefer sustainable growers (i.e., growing with practices that support and nurture healthy soil building coupled with transparent and equitable labor practices). Many of our growers retain organic certification. Others provide us with information detailing their operation. I believe co-ops have varying requirements. They have to have an organized supply and transportation system. Our volume is very large, and they need to be able to fulfill the requirements we have. This is clearly communicated up front, and as a co-op, we need to forecast our needs realistically. I believe that each co-op has their own process and standards. Our Produce Manager, Erik Larson, sits down with previous and perspective (those who have contacted him regarding selling to the co-op) farmer vendors every January or so to discuss what they will have available and how much, what he needs and wants, and ultimately fills out a contract that they are expected to adhere to. Please see Erik Larson's answers for a better explanation. There are no standards. All the co-ops are different. Generally a grower/producer approaches us and meets with the relevant department manager or buyer. We meet producers where they are and work with them on developing the relationship. Same story at our warehouse, CPW. Our buyers at CPW and our produce manager have at times schooled young farmers on how to price products. Our interest is the survival of the farm, not bottom level pricing. This is not an experience producers will likely have with conventional stores and chains.
7. Do you require a certain supply of products, and how far in advance do you need to know if a producer can make it?	We prefer that an item is available for 3-4 weeks. With obvious exceptions for some things. Provide farmers with an intro to the program, ideal box sizes and expectations (standards from California). Then cultivate relationships – and help decide what to grow, use list and try to figure out what they want to/can grow. It's best for farmers to sell to distributors because it minimizes risk for the farmer and the co-op.

	On average, our product turns over every day and a half. The primary determinants of our overstock are what we can sell in conjunction with when our providers deliver. It is to the produce department's benefit (and the providers) that we manage inventory appropriately. We cannot operate in advance with much certainty; the weather often determines our capabilities. Currently, most needs are met, however, if opportunities arise, the more lead time we have, the better. This allows us to change arrangements with current suppliers. Please see answer to #6. We're accustomed to working with local suppliers and so we know how weather and other factors can interfere with promised supply. We just roll with the punches as best we can. Our price list comes out twice weekly (Mon and Fri) so if we know Sun and Thurs about any product that isn't going to make it in to us, we are in better shape to give customers accurate information about inventory. We meet with our growers in the winter to plan out our following year. We do try to have a primary supplier and a secondary supplier lined up for most products. Our biggest requirement is quality and consistency. Our produce manager contracts in the fall with growers for crops the following year. That is best for the growers, as they negotiate their price and know the number of acres to plant for us.
8. Are there any specific products you would think were good crops for small/medium-sized farms to grow if they wanted to break into the local food market?	Organic Berries—strawberries, raspberries, blackberries—most CSA's that grow these crops don't raise enough to sell them in the wholesale market. The biggest problem is that they have a very short shelf life unless a farm has sophisticated pre-cooling equipment, so they're difficult to raise for retail sale. But if a farm could raise good quality berries with a reasonable shelf life (4-5 days), we could sell tons of them. I can't speak to the needs of the larger local food market. As I mentioned before, most of the needs of our coop are met by farms we work with now. Wait!...greenhouse grown veggies during the winter

	months. Blueberries. If someone could grow, package and deliver organic blueberries, they could run the Twin Cities market on blueberries. Carrots, Berries, fruits other than apples. Extended season products, either earlier or later than the peak season is where gaps in our supply usually occur. Interesting varieties of any vegetable, heirloom, free of chemicals, certified organic Lamb, goat, chicken, hogs and beef are all in demand, and I believe the demand for locally raised, natural meat will soon be too great for the current system. Grass-fed beef is probably in the greatest demand.
9. What types of farms sell to you (acreage, ownership, product diversity, etc.)? Are most of them organic?	Most of our farms are family owned. Some are LLC's. Many of them specialize in certain crops while most of them offer a variety of seasonal products. Some farms are in one location and others rent property on a variety of sites. Acreage is elusive, but I could get accurate information on that if it's helpful. Yes, most are organic farms. Most are less than 2 acres, except for the Gardens of Eagan and an Amish farm (Wisconsin Growers). They buy both organic and conventional products. Priorities: 1) Certified organic and local, 2) Local – small grower, 3) Local w/ Integrated Pest Management affidavit (USDA organic, farms with < $1000 in profit, can avoid cert. fees but still label things "organic"). 4) Local conventional 5) Conventional (bad experience with regular parsnips from Anoka… sent them back). All are either certified organic or grow with clean and sustainable practices. Pretty much all are organic. Generally the farms are small size, 100-400 acres. One of the orchards we buy from in Washington is only 5 acres. I'm not too sure of the sizes, a large variety, small, medium and larger. We have one grower who only supplies us with gourmet variety basil and others who have acres and acres of sweet corn. The majority of them are Certified Organic. Most are family owned. A

	few farms that we buy from will also sell as group or co-op of farms. None [of the farms who we purchase meat from] are organic, and they range in size from 100 to 400 acres. All are family owned, some part of a group of family farms (such as a co-op of single company). Their product diversity usually consists of two to three species of animals or eggs. Privately-owned farms, some only an acre or two, some with hundreds of acres. Some are certified organic, some are not. All of them are natural and do not use chemicals, etc. Product diversity varies. Our produce farmers provide a wide variety of vegetables and our local chicken vendor also sells eggs, for example.
10. Does the county you're located within do anything in particular to help you cultivate a local food system? Is there anything you think they could do to help?	Subsidize organic farming, guarantee equitable labor practices, lobby to change the farm bill to allow organic growers more freedom to grow the crops that will benefit the local food economy. I am not aware of anything that Ramsey or Hennepin County do to cultivate or support a local food system. Not that I'm aware of. Seward Co-op was the first recipient of a City of Minneapolis Great Streets loan, which assists businesses seen as potential financial and community anchors in urban areas. Along with Seward Redesign, we also received Hennepin County's Environmental Response Fund and the Metropolitan Council's Tax Base Revitalization Account funding. All of this helped with financing the new store. Not especially. The Homegrown Minneapolis program has been a big disappointment and waste of time, from our perspective. The community is supportive. The city was going to annex some property that covered farmers' land. The community rallied, and although it got passed, there was a more protective sense of community and farmers after. New mayor, city council are very into sustainability.

	Here at our co-op in Nicollet County, we have been selling and promoting local food for years and years. There are Farmers Markets in both St. Peter and Mankato (Blue Earth County). There are also Community Gardens in both St. Peter in Mankato (Blue Earth County). Although "local" has become the new buzzword in the grocery industry, we have definitely are and have been the main, go-to source for local food and build personal relationships with the local farmers and vendors we buy from. We label all of our local products on the shelves with the icon below. We just had a "Meet Your Farmers Day" last month where over 20 of our local farmers and producers were in the store talking to our Member-Owners and customers, sampling their products, and discussing the benefits of buying locally produced food. We are used to being the "pioneers", if you will, of local food in this area and continue to work closely with other co-ops in the Twin Cities (TCNFC – Twin Cities Natural Food Co-ops) and NCGA (National Cooperative Grocers Association) to bring more awareness and acceptance to local food. We have participated in the "Eat Local, America!" challenge for years, which now has branched out to a national level. Any sort of partnership the county would be interested in to increase awareness of local food and its benefits would be great.
11. Do you sell to any restaurants in the area? If so – which ones, and what sort of quantity do you sell?	No. However, there is a large untapped market for this. It would be nice to have a one-stop shop for all local and natural products to make it easier and more cost effective for restaurants. Not directly, the bakery will buy bulk goods (flour, etc). Both colleges use Bon Appetit, which is a food service provider that uses local foods. The coffee shop buys milk there. Some restaurants in the neighborhood buy a few incidentals from the coop but it's not economical for them. I think they just do it when their buyer forgot to order something. We sell to independent, chef-owned or chef-driven restaurants such as Lucia's, the Heartland and the Craftsman. Quantities are small—their primary local food sourcing is still direct with farmers, for the most part.

	We don't have a formal, regular relationship with any restaurants. On occasion, True Thai will purchase jalapeno peppers and our buyers have purchased items from distributors for St. Martins Table. Restaurant will come in and buy off the shelf when they are short of product but, nothing formal. We have a coffee shop (River Rock Coffee) and a couple of restaurants (Richard's Restaurant and Pub, Christy's Café) that are Member-Owners and purchase at least part of their ingredients here at our co-op.

II. Local Restaurants Response to Short Survey

Responses were received from the following restaurants:

- D. Fong's Chinese, Savage
- Ridges at Sand Creek, Jordan
- Spice Thai Cuisine, Savage
- Turtles Bar and Grill, Shakopee

Reponses were aggregated to protect the anonymity of respondents.

Question	Answer
1. Do you buy any products locally from Scott County producers, if so - what type of products (dairy, meat, produce), and from where?	We buy most of our baked goods from the Shakopee Bakery. We also buy a Shakopee produced BBQ sauce and some meat from Von Hanson's. We also carry Summit beer as well as Brau Brothers, which is a small local brewery located Southwest of Belle Plain. Not sure whether any of our products were produced locally. We have main suppliers i.e. Asian Foods, Anderson Meat. We also pick up some products from Cub as well as other Asian Grocery stores in the area on a case by case basis. No. Yes, we have purchased apples from local orchards
2. Do you buy any local	No, most of the items we buy come from

products from surrounding communities in the Twin Cities or from local or organic wholesalers (if so, what and from where)?	US Foodservice. Some times during summer month, we get supplies from Farmer Market in Minneapolis. No No
3. Would you interested in purchasing locally grown food from your community, if available and reasonably priced?	Yes, I would think that locally produced food would be fresher and I am also interested in stimulating the local economy. It would need to be somewhat of a price based decision though. Yes Possibly. There would have to be a high level of quality control, a dependable supply, and reasonable costs. The draw of such products may be worth some extra cost. Yes and if were as easy as our ordering from our current suppliers.
4. Do your customers ask for local or organic food products?	I have not been made aware of many instances where customers specifically requested home grown or organic products. Not that I know of. No. Yes, especially when produce is in season