

# Better Choices Through Local Foods

## Tri-County Community Food Connections



Prepared By: Holly Tiret

Contact: Michigan State University  
Extension  
One Tuscola, Suite 100  
Saginaw, MI 48607

# Preface

This community food guide is intended to give readers a better sense of how producing, processing, distributing, retailing, preparing and eating food influence and interconnect a community's economic, ecological and social wellbeing.

We hope this guide will stimulate to consider your relationship to food and how your food purchases affect your community. Use the guide to better understand how agriculture and food fit into your work. When we base our food choices and food-related activities in our community, multiple benefits are possible.

Allow the stories in this guide to suggest new - and perhaps unexpected - partners as you continue to make your community a better place to work and live. This guide focuses on the Saginaw area. However, it is our hope that it becomes a model and inspiration to develop similar food system guides for communities across Michigan.

*“A human community, too, must collect leaves and stories, and turn them to account. It must build soil, and build that memory of itself - in lore and story and song - that will be its culture. These two kinds of accumulation, of local soil and local culture, are intimately related.”*

Wendell Berry

Sponsored By:  
C.S. Mott Chair of Sustainable Agriculture  
Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station  
Michigan State University Extension



MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity institution. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status or family status.

The C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at Michigan State University works to support people and communities as they develop sustainable, community-based food systems. As public scholars, we serve as a resource for the development of knowledge, programs and policy.

# Circle of Connections



The Community Food Guide uses the “Circle of Connections” diagram to focus attention on the connections between food and farming in the Saginaw Valley. Let the diagram be your lens to see new opportunities and partners - new connections - that will make your community a better place to work and live.

<b>Legend</b>	
<b>Inner ring</b>	food system components
<b>Outer ring</b>	community-based food system outcomes

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	1	Local Food Processing .....	9
Land Use and Farming .....	3	Food Security .....	11
Farmers’ Markets .....	5	What Does it Look Like? .....	15
Family Farm Markets .....	8	Strengthening Connections.....	16



# Where Does Your Food Come From?

**Everyone in our community has connections to food.** Food is essential to our health and well being. It plays a central role in the social networks

and cultural traditions that help define community. Agriculture is an important industry in Michigan and in the Saginaw Area consisting of Saginaw, Bay and Midland counties.

However, communities rarely see opportunities for development in the food and farming connections that make up their local food system. We see a globalized and industrialized food system, often leaving farmers and consumers separated by distance and understanding. Fresh produce eaten in the Midwest travels an average of more than 1,500 miles, and the typical consumer doesn't imagine his steak as "livestock", let alone appreciate the resources used in its production.

*A Food System includes the: who, when, why and how of our food - from farm to plate.*

Yet we can address current pressing issues and diverse as obesity, urban sprawl and economic development in part by paying closer attention to our food - what we eat; where it comes from; how it was produced, processed and distributed. Evaluating our collective food habits can open a host of new opportunities.

This guide maps some of the food and farming connections in the Saginaw Area through stories, maps and facts and figures.

## Why community-based food systems?

Community-based food systems emphasize relationships between growers and eaters, retailers and distributors, processors and preparers of food. They give priority to local resources and focus on local markets. Social equity and environmental sustainability are emphasized along with efficiency and profitability, and food security is a right and responsibility of all community members. Most

importantly, they rely on the participation of well-informed consumers who have a stake and a voice in how and where their food is produced, processed and sold.

**When local agriculture and food productivity are integrated in community, food becomes part of a community's problem solving capacity rather than just a commodity that's bought and sold.** By eating locally-produced food, and developing connections among local consumers, farmers, processors and retailers, we can have profound effects on the health and wellbeing of our community.

## Using this Guide

Usually, we think of food as following a linear path from farm to table - produced on farms, processed in factories, distributed in trucks, purchased by consumers at grocery stores or restaurants. Thinking, instead, of the food systems as a circle, as in the diagram on the Table of Contents page, reminds us that we are all linked in multiple ways. By paying attention to these connections and, when possible, making them within our community, we begin to see that a host of outcomes are possible. The outer ring in the Circle of Connections diagram suggests a number of outcomes of a community-based food system (you can probably think of others). The following page details their importance.

Everyone, regardless of economic status, ethnicity or political bend; whether economic development professional, farmer, grocery retailer, public health advocate or eater - has a stake in the food system.

**It is indeed reasonable to ask: "What type of food system do I want for my community?"**

**This Community Food Guide is a step in answering that question.**



# Outcomes

Here are some of the issues a community-based food system can influence. Which one affects you?

## Small and Medium Scale Farm Viability

If current trends continue Michigan will lose 71 percent of farms that are between 50 and 500 acres by 2040, representing nearly 50 percent of the total farms statewide. In the Saginaw Area, this would translate to 1120 farms - 1/3 of area's total. This loss is not just farms, but also farmland, farmers, skills and infrastructure necessary for long-term food production capability. Many studies have demonstrated the importance of small- and medium-scale farms in maintaining the social, economic, and environmental health of rural communities.

## Environmental Stewardship

Food production is inextricably linked to the environment. However, the intensification and industrialization of agriculture over the past 50 years have resulted in practices that are detrimental to environmental health. A community-based food system highlights the connection between food and environment, creating opportunities for consumers to recognize and value the environmental services provided by local farms, such as water filtration and wildlife habitat.

## Jobs

In a time when job outsourcing is a painful reality for many communities, local food production and processing can create significant numbers of stable jobs. Like "Buy American" campaigns, "Buy

Local Food" campaigns can foster an understanding that purchasing choices affect the economic well-being of people in our community.

## Healthy Individuals

Michigan is in the midst of an obesity epidemic. Sixty-two percent of Michigan's adults and 12 percent of high school students are overweight. In 2003, obesity related medical costs in the state totaled \$2.9 billion. Most people become overweight from inadequate physical activity and poor diet. Community-based food systems encourage healthy lifestyles by making fresh, delicious fruits, vegetables and other foods more accessible. Healthier citizens mean reduced healthcare premiums, making Michigan communities more business friendly.

## Economic Development

People in the Saginaw area spend XXX billion annually on food and beverages in stores, restaurants and other eating establishments. The vast majority of these food dollars are spent on products originating outside the area. Community-based food systems capitalize on opportunities for entrepreneurial farmers and small businesses to add value to local agricultural products and keep a larger portion of each food dollar within the local economy.

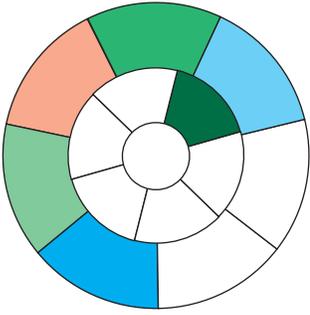
## Farmland Preservation

Community and state efforts are underway to preserve farmland from the growing threat of urban sprawl. Preserving farmland, however, must go hand-in-hand with assuring farm viability. Re-localizing the food system - relying more on local and regional sources for our food needs - forms valuable markets that help keep farmers farming on farmland and increases awareness of the importance of preserving local farmland.

## Community and Social Vitality

At the heart of a community-based food system are relationships that build social capital, strengthen social networks and form the basis of community identity. Food is a deep-rooted aspect of our social interactions. In fact, the Latin root of the words *companion* and *company* means "with bread". Food is an inclusive focal point for rebuilding community, in urban as well as rural settings, and especially between the two.





# *Land Use and Farming*

**Growing Food  
Farm Viability  
Environmental Stewardship  
Economic Development  
Farmland Preservation  
Community Vitality**

For the past 50 years, U.S. agriculture has been moving toward fewer and larger farms, and increasingly specialized agriculture. The Saginaw area is no exception. Yet studies have repeatedly shown that a diversity of farms, including small- and medium-sized farms, is important to the social and economic health of rural communities. More small- and medium-sized farms mean more business operators and their families involved in community life. A greater diversity of farms can also provide more food choices. In many cases, smaller farms allow for better land stewardship - taking care of the ecological services that farmland provides. However, smaller farms struggle to compete in global “commodities” markets - tankers of milk, bulk grain, or mass-produced meat. Smaller farms thrive in specialty and niche markets - tailoring their production to meet changing consumer demands, adding value through processing, and selling locally grown food to local consumers. All farms in the community can benefit from developing differentiated products.

The trend to fewer, larger farms is not inevitable - it can be changed. But it is consumers that need to act. More food purchased at a fair price from small- and medium-sized, diversified farms will allow those farms to stay in business. Michigan agriculture is among the more diverse in the nation. It would indeed be possible to support nearly all of our nutritional need in-state. Yet, most of the food eaten in east-central Michigan comes from out of state, and increasingly from overseas.

Though the sprawl of urban populations into rural communities threatens farming, it also presents opportunities for farms to market directly to consumers. Farmers’ Markets and Family Farm Markets are examples of how farmers can market their products directly to consumers.

## Saginaw Area Farm Facts

12 percent of Michigan farmland is in Saginaw Valley - that’s 1,264,031 acres.

The value of agricultural products in 1997 was \$372,143,000.

Agriculture contributes 27,252 jobs to Saginaw Valley’s economy - that’s 8.9 percent of the District’s total job market.

10 percent of Michigan’s 52,000 farms are in Saginaw Valley - that’s about 5,200 farms.

The average Saginaw Valley farm is 231 acres and about 2,700 farms are considered full-time.



# Land Use and Farming, continued

## Research Helps Farmers Reap Higher Yields

The 2004 sugar beet yield in the Saginaw Valley was more than 21 tons per acre and 19.3 percent sugar, which was the highest tonnage and best quality on record.

The *Sugarbeet Advancement* program began in 1997 in response to record low yields (15 tons per acre) and unprofitable beet production.

Yields have increased to the level that the sugar beet growers have bought both Michigan and Monitor sugar companies and merged them as a cooperative called Michigan Sugar Company. Recent Sugarbeet Advancement efforts have included the harvest of almost 30 research trials.

The data from these studies will be compiled into a book of results that will be distributed to sugar beet growers.

This research continues to serve as a source of information to growers for producing larger and more profitable sugar beets. In conjunction with this research, six production meetings were held that will help producers select the best varieties for their farms. Industry research and educational efforts are prioritized by the Sugarbeet Advancement's 24-member committee. For more information, contact: Steve Poindexter, Sugarbeet Advancement Extension Educator, (989) 758-2500.



## Michigan Sugar Company

Michigan Sugar Company was formed in 1906 with six factories. Today, we have four operating factories: Bay City, Caro, Croswell and Sebawaing, including three warehouse terminals located in Michigan and Ohio. Our brand name of Pioneer Sugar is now joined with Big Chief Sugar as of October 1, 2004.

Michigan Sugar is a cooperative owned by approximately 1,300 growers.

Michigan Sugar Company is the largest sugar beet processor east of the Mississippi River and fourth largest in the United States. The Company is a cooperative owned by approximately 1,300 sugarbeet growers, employing 450 year-round employees and 1,750 seasonal. It generates nearly \$300 million in direct economic activity in

the local communities in which it operates. Michigan Sugar Company became a cooperative in 2002 and the Monitor Sugar Beet Growers and Monitor's Bay City factory joined the Cooperative on October 1, 2004. Beginning with the 2004 crop, a single, grower-owned cooperative processed all sugar produced in the state of Michigan. Michigan Sugar Company annually produces nearly one billion pounds of sugar under the Pioneer and Big Chief brand names.

The employees and grower-owners are very proud of their company. Please check out the recipe page on the website, learn how sugarbeets are grown and processed, or visit the store, Michigan Sugar Company, 2600 South Euclid Avenue, Bay City, Michigan, 48706, (989) 686-0161.

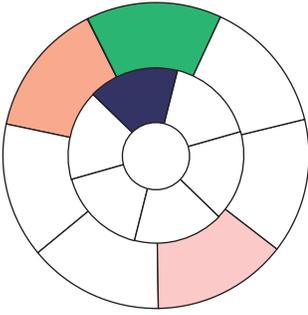
[www.michigansugar.com](http://www.michigansugar.com)

### What You Can Do

**Individuals:** Spend \$10 per week during the growing season at a farmer's market, CSA farm, or roadside farm stand.

**Community:** Develop a local food directory to help identify places to buy locally produced food in your community. See, for example, <http://www.buyappalachian.org/>

**Municipality:** Keep your community's food system in mind when making decisions about land use, planning and development.



# Farmers' Markets

**Distributing  
Farm Viability  
Healthy Individuals  
Community Vitality**

Around the country and across the region, farmers' markets offer a way for local farmers to connect directly with consumers. Fresh fruits and vegetables are the mainstay of farmers' markets, but locally produced meat, eggs, honey, maple syrup, baked goods, bedding plants and flowers and craft items are often available.

By selling directly to consumers, farmers eliminate the middle man and maximize their profits. For many farmers, the direct connection with consumers gives them a deep sense of purpose and community. Consumers also benefit from a chance to buy the freshest food available from farmers they know and trust. Farmers' markets also generate economic benefits for the community. According to studies conducted in Oregon and Ontario, Canada, 40 to 60 percent of farmers' market customers also shop at neighboring businesses before or after their visit to the market. In addition, spending at farmers' markets has a high multiplier effect - money circulates more times in the local economy before leaving.

Well-functioning farmers's markets are vibrant social occasions, offering a meeting place and giving a community a sense of identity. The friendly, relaxed atmosphere of the market represents a valuable alternative to mainstream supermarket shopping.

## What You Can Do

**Individuals:** Shop regularly at your local farmers' market; tell others about it!

**Community:** Make your farmers' market a festive community event with music, cooking demonstrations, kids' activities.

**Municipality:** Sponsor a farmers' market in your town center. See: <http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/farmmarket.pdf>

### Tri- County (Saginaw, Bay and Midland) Farmers' Markets

#### Saginaw County Farmers' Markets

##### Downtown Saginaw Farmers' Market

Location: Corner of Thompson and S. Washington  
Season: Friday, May 26th - Saturday, Oct. 28th  
Days: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays  
(Also on Saturdays beginning July 8)  
Hours: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. M, W and F  
9 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Saturdays

##### Chesaning Farmers' Market

Location: Market Street Mall (625 Broad Street)  
Season: Saturday, June 3rd through Saturday, Oct. 28th  
Days: Saturdays  
Hours: 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

##### Frankenmuth Farmers' Market

Location: Main Street near Cass  
Season: Saturday, May 20th through Saturday, Oct. 21st  
Days: Every Saturday  
Hours: 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

##### Hemlock Farmers' Market

Location: Richland Township Park  
Season: July 13th through September 28th  
Days: Every Thursday Evening and Saturday of Sawdust Days  
Hours: 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.

#### Bay County Farmers' Markets

##### Bay City Farmers' Market

Location: 108 Adams Street  
Season: June 15th - November 2nd  
Days: Tuesdays & Thursdays  
Hours: Noon to 6 p.m.

#### Midland County Farmers' Markets

##### Midland Farmers' Market

Location: Market Pavillion at base of Ashman St.  
Season: May 6th - October 28th  
Days: Every Wednesday and Saturday  
Hours: 7 a.m. to Noon

##### Sanford Farmers' Market

Location: 17 E. Saginaw Road  
(corner of N. M-30 & E. Saginaw)  
Season: May 8th - October 30th  
Days: Every Monday  
Hours: 7 a.m. - 1 p.m.

# *Farmers' Markets, continued*

## **Hemlock Farmers' Market**

*Teresa Harrison*

In the spring of 2005 several fiber (wool and llama) growers met with Dan Keane to discuss demonstrations that might be provided to the Downtown Saginaw Farmers market. Dan's enthusiasm for the Farmers' Market fueled a lot of ideas and soon after the meeting several of those in attendance met to discuss the possibility of a Hemlock Farmers' Market.

Encouraged by the Community Food meetings, Frankenmuth's Farmers' Market start up and the enthusiasm within our own group we held a trial market at Sawdust Days in September 2005. The response was great. We had five producers. People bought and signed up as potential producers and interested buyers.

We have decided that the market will be held Thursdays, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. from July 13 to August 31 and at Hemlock's annual Sawdust Day in September. We have recently met with the township manager to discuss location and insurance issues. Here again we have found great support. Soon a letter will go out to those individuals who indicated an interest in being producers so they can plan accordingly in ordering seeds and other preparations. Stay posted.

## **Saginaw Downtown Farmers' Market**

*Dan Keane, Market Coordinator*

For over 75 years farmers have been bringing their produce to sell in Downtown Saginaw. In early 1990, Saginaw City officials asked PRIDE in Saginaw Inc., (Positive Results in a Downtown Environment), to organize and reestablish a farmers market in the core city area. The first season began under a single tent with two farmers, two days a week. By focusing on direct sales of high quality, Saginaw Valley fruits, vegetables and bakery products, we have grown tremendously over the years.

In 2002, PRIDE joined with the Saginaw Riverfront Commission and the Downtown Development Authority sponsoring a Non-Profit Downtown Saginaw Farmers' Market Corporation and Board of Directors. This new group brings more leverage

and talent to support the Market. With funding from a USDA Food Grant and Match from St. Mary's Medical Center, the Market moved to its current site on Washington Street under new tents. Supporting funds were also provided through the Saginaw Community Foundation and the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network.

The Saginaw Downtown Farmers' Market boasts more than 40 farmers and vendors operating 3 weekdays and on Saturdays from May through October. The average daily customer count is over 1600, including the many surrounding communities. This lends itself to a wonderful multicultural, multigenerational blend representing the diverse community of Saginaw County. Seventy percent of customers say they come to the Downtown area specifically for the Farmers' Market. This influx of people and money boosts our economy as well as our image.

The Market is a hub of community activity. Lunch hour is particularly busy with many local workers stopping by for burritos, tacos and bakery treats, as well as shopping for local produce. The Market also sponsors the very popular Soup Days, in collaboration with the local Soup Kitchen, with much-needed profits going to the Soup Kitchen.

Saturdays at the Market prove to be extra special with cooking demonstrations from Scott Kelly, local Chef at the Saginaw Montague Inn. Scott can also be seen during the week at the Market as he shops, looking for the finest vendors' fresh produce to prepare his original delicacies for the Montague Inn.

Outreach is a core value of the Saginaw Downtown Farmers' Market. Each year market space is made available for Project Fresh, a partnership between WIC, MSUE, the USDA and local farmers. Over 2,000 eligible WIC Participants come to the market during the season to get Nutrition Education from MSUE, and receive \$20 in coupons to purchase fresh Michigan Produce. Many of the 40 vendors accept Project Fresh Coupons, receiving \$2 profit from the coupons. This also helps to support our local economy. In part because of the success of this program the Market also offers space and support for Senior Project Fresh, which offers the same Nutrition Education and \$20 in coupons for low income seniors.

# Farmers' Markets, continued

## Frankenmuth Farmers' Market

The Impact of a Farmers' Market...Through the Eyes of a Market Master  
*Laurajeanne Safford Kehn*

A phenomenon such as a farmers' market can be far reaching. The social and economic influences of this event leave lasting memories and create a strong community.

During the first year of our market in Frankenmuth, from beginning to end, the level of appreciation from the consumer as well as the grower never faded. Week after week the patrons would arrive and leave with their arms full of produce and product. The producers became friends to the community. The market had become a location for commerce and social exchange.

Looking at the word agriculture: The science, art, and business of cultivating soil, producing crops, and raising livestock; farming. [Middle English, from Latin agricultra : agr, genitive of ager, field]

Looking closer then to the meaning of culture:  
1a : the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thought, speech, action, and artifacts and depends upon the human capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations  
b: the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group.  
2a : the act or process of growing living material in prepared nutrient media  
b: a product of cultivation in nutrient media.

Ultimately the experience at the FFM became a cultural event within our community. Historically, farming has played an important role in our development and identity as a community and a nation. From strongly agrarian roots, we have now evolved into a culture with few farmers. Less than two percent of Americans now produce food for all U.S. citizens. To know the source of our food is rare.

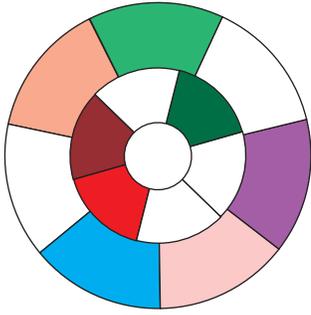
The business at hand then for the FFM is to sustain this vital link from the farmer to the consumer in a social environment that is healthy and serving to the needs of the community.

The Frankenmuth Farmers' Market is a link to other farmers market creating a chain of sustainable food systems that support the local farmers and feed our communities.

Time and again - nearly daily - I am reminded of the impact our market has had on our community. There is no social event, no trip to the hardware store, no stop at the pharmacy, in the dentist chair or at a filling station that I am not asked about our market.

What does this mean to our community? It means we are getting the word out and fulfilling our mission. We will reach further and further to educate the lower income community to the benefit of local harvest and how it is possible to eat health on a budget. We will enlighten our community to the 'local' taste of produce. We will plant a seed of wonderment and memories in our youth to carry on the tradition of agriculture where ever they go-to seek out farmers markets. We will honor our local heroes—our farmers.





# Family Farm Markets

Retailing  
 Economic Development  
 Eating  
 Farm Viability  
 Growing Food  
 Jobs  
 Healthy Individuals  
 Community Vitality

For more than 75 years, the Hemmeter family has been selling its produce to customers big and small. The family raises its produce on two farms that are about 120 acres and located in Saginaw and Tittabawassee townships.

Years ago the family sold tomatoes to Hunt's Ketchup factory in Ohio and sweet corn to A&P stores all over the state. The business provided green peas and squash to Gerber Baby Foods and cucumbers to the former Dailey Pickle and Canning Company.

However, it was the individual customers that has turned Hemmeter's into the popular farm market that it is today. In the



beginning, the family sold bread and strawberries under a tree in their front yard. Over the years the family has grown the business to what it is today and sells a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, baked goods and flowers. Customers can pick their own strawberries and during the month of October Hemmeter's has become a tradition for hundreds of family looking for the perfect pumpkin to carve.

Businesses such as Hemmeter's and Thiel's Farm Market in Chesaning began as small fruit and vegetable stands and maintain a preference for

**Thiel's Farm Market**  
 Corner of Fordney and M-57  
 Chesaning, MI 48616  
 Season, June - October  
 Friday, Saturday and Sunday 8 am - 8 pm  
 (989) 845-6707

**Hemmeter's Farm Market**  
 4050 Lawndale  
 Saginaw, MI 48603  
 Season, May - October  
 7 days a week, 8 am - 8 pm  
 (989) 792-8381

Michigan-grown products. The purchasing freedom of independent grocers allows them to differentiate themselves from supermarket chains by featuring local foods.

Currently the barriers include convenience, accessibility, and often, price. Ultimately, demand for local products needs to come from buyers. **Can you justify paying a few extra cents when it supports the local community and helps maintain the visibility of local farms?**

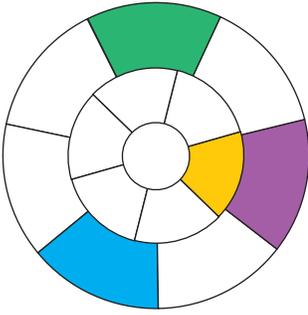
Voting with your dollars by shopping or eating at businesses that purchase Michigan farm products is one way to help create a community-based food system.

**What You Can Do**

**Individuals:** Ask your favorite grocery stores and restaurants to buy local and Michigan foods - the purchase it from them!

**Community:** Sponsor "buy local" campaigns to encourage eaters to seek out locally grown foods. See <http://www.foodroutes.org>

**Municipality:** Encourage schools, hospitals, and senior centers to regularly purchase local food to include in served meals.



# Local Food Processing and Adding Value

**Processing**  
**Farm Viability**  
**Jobs**  
**Economic Development**

## Hausbeck Pickle Company

*Mark Seamon*

Hausbeck Pickle Company, founded in 1923, is a family owned and operated business located in Spaulding Township. Hausbeck processes and packages pickles for commercial and consumer use. Their original processing facility is located on M-13 South of Saginaw. Recently additional commercial markets have led to expansion of operations and the purchase of a new processing and warehousing facility on Hess Road in the City of Saginaw. During this expansion, thought was given to efficiencies of locating closer to their major markets (possibly Indiana) but strong family roots and the support and efforts of Saginaw Future kept them local.

Cucumbers used in the pickling process are grown throughout Michigan and supply the company with a steady stream of high quality product. Hausbeck has added jalapeno and banana peppers to their product line up to diversify and penetrate new markets.



Hausbeck Pickle Company's new headquarters, warehouse space and future processing site.

## Star of the West Milling Company, Frankenmuth

*Mark Seamon*

The Star of the West Milling Company was built in 1870 by the Hubinger family in Frankenmuth. In 1903 the Mill was purchased by 53 local farmers joining the 500 mills in Michigan at that time. By 1929 the company changed to being held publicly by over 400 stockholders.

They began an expansion in 1980 to other industries such as grain, dry beans and farm input supply. Currently Star of the West Milling has 5 wheat mills in three states.

The Frankenmuth site mills 15,000 bushels of wheat per day, which works out to be nearly 5.5 million bushels per year. Grower value of wheat is over \$16 million per year. Star of the West is one of 7 mills in currently operating in Michigan.

Soft white wheat produces flour for pie crust, cookies, pastries, pretzels, bran, breakfast cereal, wheat germ, and Pop Tarts.

### What You Can Do

**Individuals:** Seek out and purchase locally processed foods.

**Community:** Start a community kitchen as a cottage-industry food processing business incubator. See: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/agmarkets/kitchdir.html>

**Municipality:** Create opportunities and incentives for food processing businesses in your area.

# Local Food Processing and Adding Value, continued

## Hensler's Country Market Tittabawassee Township

The Henslers raise about 80 head of Holstein cattle on the 140-acre farm that has remained in the family for nearly 130 years. The family also harvests corn, wheat, and soybeans. They buy animals as calves and visit farms to see how the farmers feed and raise their animals.

The calves they buy are three days to one week old and are bottle fed until weaned. They are then fed on corn, hay and an all natural protein supplement. When the animals grow to about 1,200 pounds they are taken to Bernthal Packing Inc. in Frankenmuth. The cuts of meat are then taken back to Hensler's Country Market. The meat is packaged and frozen. The market also sells quarters, halves and whole cows.

Henslers also buys chickens from Amish growers in Southern Michigan and Northern Indiana. They are all federally-inspected, free-range chickens.

The market, located at 7620 Freeland Road, is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. each Thursday and Friday by appointment. The number is (989) 695-2196

## Leaman's Apple Farm Freeland

Leaman's Green Applebarn is a seven-generation apple orchard that has been around since 1889.

Located in Freeland, between Midland and Saginaw. Leaman's Green Applebarn is a place where you can have a fun and relaxing farm experience.

Visit us in the small town of Freeland where you can enjoy our Country store and gift shop, have a bite from our bakery, or take a walk around our gardens. Enjoy a cool, refreshing cider slush. Visit us in the fall for our play area, hayrides, apples, cider, pumpkins, mazes, and much more. Leaman's Green Applebarn is located at 7475 N. River Road in Freeland and the phone number is (989)695-2465.

"Going local does not mean walling off the outside world. It means nurturing locally-owned businesses which use local resources sustainably, employ local workers at decent wages, and serve primarily local consumers"

Michael H. Schuman  
*Going Local*

## Saginaw Valley Bee Keepers Association

Sixty percent of the food you eat comes from honey bees, directly or indirectly. Many agriculture crops couldn't exist without bees to pollinate them. The US Department of Agriculture estimates that about a third of our diet is derived from insect-pollinated plants, and the honeybee is responsible for 80% of pollination.

In 1999, a Cornell University Study concluded that the direct value of honey bee pollination to the country's agriculture is more than \$14 billion.

Another byproduct Klein reaps is beeswax. The insects consume 3 pounds of honey to produce 1 pound of wax. A church group from Ohio buys thousands of 1 pound hexagon shaped cakes of yellow beeswax to make into candles. Religious organizations prefer to make ceremonial candles from clean burning beeswax rather than paraffin, which drips.

## T.M. Klein and Sons Honey Farm Hemlock

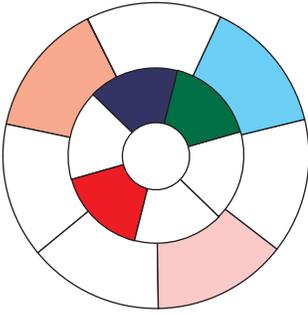
Klein bought his first hive to keep his garden and apple trees thriving soon after moving to St Charles in 1969. Soon, family and friends were hounding him for honey, so he added colonies. Today they have about 1,000 honeybee hives, which create products that travel throughout Michigan and the surrounding states.

At the same time, the Klein's are buying stocking shelves at Jacks Fruit and Meat Markets in the Tri Cities, St Charles Township and Chesaning Franks and Meijer Inc. stores throughout the state. The business can be reached by calling (989) 865-9377.

## Zastrow's Wholesale Popcorn and Supplies

Lloyd Zastrow's father, Clarence Zastrow, ventured into popcorn by buying some seeds from a catalog in 1929 and planting them in his garden. Since then acreage dedicated to popcorn varies between 75 and 150 acres each year. The popcorn business was an addition to the cash crop farm. Zastrow always has farmed the 550 plus acres.

Zastrow credits the quality of his corn to the hybrids he uses, harvesting with a corn picker instead of a combine and putting the ears in cribs where they dry naturally.



# Community-Based Programs

## Increase Food Security

**Distributing  
Growing Food  
Eating  
Community Vitality  
Environmental Stewardship  
Healthy Individuals**

Food security is a necessary aspect of a community-based food system. People in many communities lack reasonable access to fresh, health, culturally appropriate foods. Community groups in the Saginaw Valley and across the state have organized around a systems approach to food security. For example, the Michigan State University Extension Family Nutrition Program (FNP) works to serve the nutrition, health and budgetary needs of our county's low-income, food-stamp eligible or recipient families. This program helps adults and children improve their dietary quality through educating them about healthy food choices.

In addition the Saginaw County MSUE Family Nutrition Program worked with the Saginaw Family Child Care Network and other community organizations to establish gardens in child day care homes, neighborhood homes and other community sites. The purpose was to teach nutrition education principles around the importance of eating fresh fruits and vegetables.



### What You Can Do

**Individuals:** Volunteer for a neighborhood or other community group interested in improving access to healthy food.

**Community:** Conduct a community food assessment. See: [www.foodsecurity.org/cfa\\_home.html](http://www.foodsecurity.org/cfa_home.html)

**Municipality:** Start a local Food Policy Council. See: [www.worldhungeryear.org/fslc/faq/ria\\_090.asp](http://www.worldhungeryear.org/fslc/faq/ria_090.asp)

On the next few pages you will read about other community-based programs that are working toward increasing food security for all citizens in Saginaw County.

Food assistance programs, such as the National School Lunch Program, the Food Stamp program, and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program are important safety nets for community members. In February 2005, there were 13,912 open Food Stamp cases in Saginaw County. Saginaw also has an overall poverty level of 13.9%, which is 3.4% above the state average, according to the 2002 US Census Data. Additionally, 46% of the total student population in Saginaw County receives free and reduced lunch. However, the network of private, non-profit food banks, food pantries, soup kitchens and gleaning organizations is critical to ensuring food security at a local level. In October 2005, two non-profits joined forces to create the Hunger Solution Center at 940 E. Genesee in Saginaw. The center is a joint venture between Hidden Harvest and the East Side Soup Kitchen. Each year, Hidden Harvest collects more than a million pounds of fresh and prepared food from restaurants, food wholesalers, bakeries, farms, and other certified sources and distributes the food at no cost to non-profit agencies throughout Saginaw, Bay and Midland counties. The East Side Soup Kitchen serves 400 after-school meals to children each day. In Saginaw County more than 10,000 children - nearly 20 percent of children ages 0-17 - live below the poverty level.

# *Community-Based Programs*

## *Increase Food Security, continued*

### **Growing Healthy Foods**

#### **Growing Healthy Neighborhoods**

Food Security Through Family Gardening Nutrition Education Pilot Project 2005

Holly B. Tiret, Extension Educator

Vickie Flynn, Program Associate II

Michigan State University Extension - Saginaw County

Saginaw County MSUE Family Nutrition Program worked with the Saginaw Family Child Care Network and other community organizations and their families to establish gardens in child day care homes, neighborhood homes and other community sites. The purpose of the project was to teach nutrition education principles around the importance of eating fresh fruits and vegetables, to increase the availability of and access to fruits and vegetables, to teach food preservation techniques, to encourage people to grow and try new varieties of produce, and to encourage physical activity through home gardening.

The project's community goal was to improve dietary quality by assuring access to fresh fruits and vegetables. The economic goal was to improve food security by assuring that adults and children will have more to eat so that there will be less dependency on emergency food assistance. The environmental goal was to improve food safety by teaching the value of food preservation techniques and by ensuring soil is tested as to be safe grow and maintain gardens. This project addressed the needs of low-income families to improve food security, dietary quality and food safety.

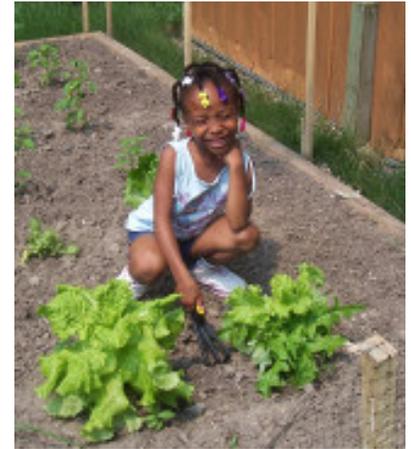
To date, 30 low-income families in Saginaw County have established vegetable gardens in their own yards. Eleven of those participants were childcare providers who care for low-income children. A total of 75 children were directly involved in planning, planting, weeding, watering the gardens as well as harvesting and eating produce from the gardens.

Participants started gardens in containers, in ground along side their homes, garages and fences, and raised bed gardens. They grew vegetables such as pole beans, broccoli, brussel sprouts, collards, cucumbers, eggplant, greens, lettuce, peppers, pumpkins, and of course many tomato plants. There were a few fruit plants such as muskmelons, watermelons, and strawberries planted.

All 30 participants wish to plant gardens again; many of whom were first-time gardeners. There also are 15 additional families who have heard about the program from friends and neighbors and are on a waiting list for the 2006 season.

### **Childcare Providers and the Downtown Saginaw Farmers' Market**

Amy MacDonald



The Saginaw Family Child Care Network is a non-profit organization comprised of daycare providers living in, or near the city of Saginaw. Most of the childcare providers in our network provide childcare services to the working poor. The SFCCN works with the childcare providers who belong to the network to mentor and educate them. We are particularly interested in offering educational opportunities regarding children, children's health and well-being, nutrition, business development, financial management, CPR and much more.

In 2005, we had the wonderful opportunity of partnering with this group to encourage members of our childcare network to take the children in their care to visit the Downtown Saginaw Farmers' Market. This project not only introduced low-income individuals to the farmers' market, it encouraged children to buy fresh, healthy, nutritious fruits and vegetables.

Together, we sent a letter to the childcare providers with coupons for children to use at the farmers' market. The letter discussed the importance of eating 5-9 vegetables and fruits daily, the lack of healthy eating today, and the wonderful farmers' market. Our hope was to get children to the market.

And, it worked. Of the 35 childcare providers we mailed coupons to, 15 of them took the children in their care to the farmers' market! During follow-up phone calls, the providers shared their experiences with us. Many told us the children had a wonderful time and learned a lot about the fruits and vegetables they bought. Childcare providers indicated to us that it was also their desire to provide healthy food choices for the children in their care.

One childcare provider stated the children in her care bought green beans. She stated she took the children back to her home and taught them how to clean, snap and cook the green beans. She indicated the experience was very rewarding and plans to take the children back to the Farmers' Market.

We believe this partnership was extremely rewarding, and can't wait to encourage more activities like this one next gardening/harvest season.

# Community-Based Programs Increase Food Security, continued

## Obesity and Food Insecurity Michigan State University Extension Programs

Many adults are not practicing healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors. This puts them at increased risk for heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, some types of cancer and osteoporosis. Fewer than one-in-twenty (4%) of Michigan adults maintain a healthy weight, eat at least five fruits or vegetables per day and are regularly physically active. The prevalence of obesity among Michigan adults nearly doubled between 1987 and 1999. Since 1989, Michigan has consistently been among the top 20% of states with the highest prevalence of obesity. Only about one-quarter of Michigan adults reported eating the recommended 5 or more fruit and vegetable servings daily. Less than one-quarter of Michigan adults were estimated to be exercising regularly. *Source: Weight Status and Healthy Diet. "Results from the Michigan Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Internal Report from the Epidemiology Services Division" March 2001. .*

Even in times of a strong economy, a significant number of households experience food insecurity and are unable to acquire nutritious and safe foods. One in ten U.S. households was food insecure, including 3 percent—3.1 million households—in which people were hungry at times during the year because there was not enough money for food. *Source: Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture*

According to the Economic Research Service in 2002, 26,920 persons or 13.9% in Saginaw County were below the poverty level. FIA statistics from February 2005 indicate 13,912 open Food Stamp cases in Saginaw County, an increase of 2000 since last year. Saginaw also has an overall poverty level of 13.9% which is 3.4% above the state average according to the 2002 US Census Data. According to the 2004 Kids Count In Michigan Data Book of the 53,881 children in Saginaw County between the ages of 0-17, 10,388 or 19% live below the poverty level. Additionally 46% of the total student population in Saginaw County receives free and reduced lunch.

The level of poverty encourages MSUE to seek ways to assist families to meet their nutrition needs.

The Michigan State University Extension Family Nutrition Program (FNP) works to serve the nutrition, health, and budgetary needs of our county's low-income; food stamp eligible or recipient families. Our goals include helping adults and children improve their dietary quality through educating them about healthy food choices to meet their needs, better shopping behaviors and use of proper food storage and preparation methods. Lessons are also given on how to stretch their food dollar to offer greater food security and on the integration of healthy eating into their meal plan.



The Family Nutrition Program works one-on-one and in group settings with parents of minor children who are food stamp recipients, applicants or eligible. Our program teaches healthy eating along with parenting skills to help build the confidence that our children have adequate nutrition for proper growth and development. The program also works with collaborating agencies like the MSUE Parenting and Better Kid Care Programs, Head Start, WIC, ARC, the Child Abuse and Neglect Council, Teen Parent Services and Saginaw Public Schools Birth-5 Program to teach nutrition to income eligible parents of children age birth to five. For more information on these programs and more please contact Saginaw County MSUE at 989-758-2500, or visit our website.

<http://www.portal.msue.msu.edu/portal/>

# Community-Based Programs Increase Food Security, continued

## SVSU Greenhouse Project

At SVSU, we are in the process of constructing two 20 foot by 96 foot hoop greenhouses to test the concept that green housing can become a profitable venture in the Saginaw region. This concept depends on the availability of inexpensive heat, such as may be obtained from a power plant, a sugar beet plant, a foundry, or even by the combustion of agricultural or woodlot waste in the form of pellets or chips.

At the same time, we are interested in evaluating foods that may be preferred in the region, or alternatively, may have high export value. The former would include fruits, berries, greens, peppers, etc., while the latter may include freshwater shrimp (prawn), tilapia, and fresh herbs.

The output of the greenhouses can be tied to the MSU extension program headed by Holly Tired, in which her summer urban agricultural efforts can be extended to a year-round season. Thus, not only will fresh foods be available to local food banks and charitable organizations, but the opportunity for people to acquire greenhouse culture skills, and job training, will eventuate.

The project has a background vision of better nutrition in the region, the development of jobs, creation of export markets, and development of a food industry that ensures regional food security.

The vision can only work by the dedicated cooperation of several sectors of our regional society, and by taking the best practices and extending them into the vision.

David H. Swenson, Ph.D.  
H. H. Dow Professor of Chemistry  
(989) 964-4292  
<http://www.svsu.edu/~swenson>  
<http://www.svsu.edu/Chem102A>

Community **food security** is a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice.

*Mike Hamm, C.S. Mott Chair of Sustainable Agriculture, MSU & Anne Bellows, Rutgers University*

## SVSU Sustainable Aquaculture Prawn Farm

*Brian Thomas*

The Sustainable Aquaculture Initiative is a research partnership between Saginaw Valley State University and the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN). The initiative hopes to demonstrate the possibility of creating environmentally sustainable businesses along the Saginaw Bay watershed.

Our first research project seeks to determine whether it is technically and economically feasible to use waste heat from sugar refining to warm aquaculture ponds in mid-Michigan. If possible, the technology has the potential to create jobs and net exports while improving local water quality.

This section studies whether it will be feasible to partner with an existing manufacturer in the Saginaw Bay Watershed (Monitor Sugar) to develop an environmentally sustainable business that utilizes the waste heat and water from the business. Specially, the team will study the waste water management process at Monitor Sugar with a view toward recommending an environmentally compatible business to utilize the company's wastewater.

Monitor Sugar's processing of sugar from beets generates significant quantities of hot water. The water is derived almost entirely from the beet itself. It is theoretically possible to utilize the excess hot water generated by beet processing to support alternative sustainable aquaculture adjacent to the manufacturing facility.

For this purpose, we have begun to consider the possibility of freshwater prawn aquaculture. Prawn farms are common in the most southern parts of our country where winter weather temperatures seldom approach freezing. The only perceived limit to aquaculture in Michigan is the availability of adequate warm water in rearing ponds.

If prawn farm technology developed in the warm waters of the Gulf coast could be transferred to Michigan, by utilizing the water from industrial processes, then environmentally sustainable aquaculture businesses could be established not only throughout the Saginaw Bay Watershed, but also throughout the state. With the high probability of export markets for this commodity, likelihood of job creation and utilization of an industrial waste product (hot water), this project would represent a major goal of the Saginaw Bay WIN: sustainable, ecologically sound businesses.

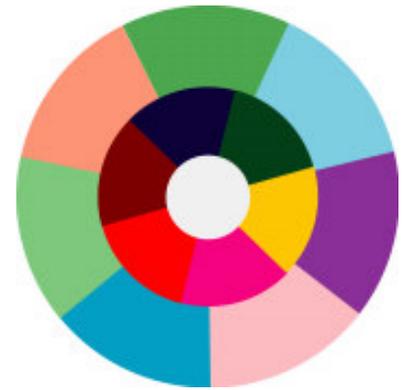
Text was copied from <http://www.svsu.edu/aquaculture/>

# What Does a Community Food System Look Like?

The preceding pages present examples of parts of a community-based food system. These examples are by no means all inclusive, nor do they represent a requisite or magical combination. They are a starting point. Much like the interconnections that hold together any ecosystem, the webs of connections within a community-based food system are central to its strength. These connections create long-term stability, encourage community self-reliance and present numerous synergies and opportunities. The interdependence among people in the community and between those people and the natural world becomes more visible and widely recognized.

## What is a community-based food system like in practice?

Eating in such a system may involve purchasing some portion of your food directly from local farmers. This simple act helps to support small scale family farms in the area by passing the greatest amount of your food dollar back to the farmer. Local farmers in turn purchase goods and services from local business people, keeping your food dollars within the community. Buying local provides Michigan agriculture with a viable market and thus helps keep farmland in farming and curb urban sprawl. When more eaters choose a diversity of local food, the demand translates into



farms that grow a wide variety of crops rather than large monocultures of corn or

soybeans. These diverse farms offer local jobs because such mixed operations do not lend themselves well to complete mechanization.

With appropriate incentives and start-up assistance, entrepreneurial on-farm and specialty food processing businesses develop that offer greater choice at the local market and bring additional jobs and stable economic development to the area. Restaurants, cafeterias, hospitals, retirement homes and schools can all commit to buying a portion of their food purchases from local sources, presenting even greater markets for local farmers and food processors.

The interdependence that arises through this local food system creates a strong sense of community and encourages people to help one another and assure that everyone has equal access to healthy food. As awareness of the food system increases, attention turns to diet quality as an important aspect of preventative health care. Increased access to local foods through farmers' markets, CSAs and farm stands presents many options for healthy eating – fresh fruits and vegetables, antibiotic- and hormone-free meat and eggs, locally processed jams and sauces, and more. Healthy individuals translate into a dependable work force and lower healthcare costs for employers. The strong sense of community encourages young professionals to stay in the area.

In the end, a community-based food system is a wonderful opportunity to improve public health, strengthen the local economy, and develop sound land use stewardship. But it can be done only with a large number of community members working together. Strong connections and meaningful partnerships are needed.

# Strengthening Connections

Now that you have a clearer picture of what makes up community-based food system, it's time to begin building on the connections in your community. Much of this can be done simply by paying attention to your food choices and buying local and direct when possible. But some efforts need broader support.

Below is a list of some community leaders and decision-makers and suggestions of roles they can play. Share your ideas – and this guide – with them. A community-based food system frame can be useful in finding common interests and building strong partnerships. Together we can build the type of food system that we want, and strengthen our community along the way.

- **County planning commissions** make decisions that affect where food can be grown and processed.
- **Local elected officials** such as mayors and township supervisors may be able to offer support in starting and building a farmers' market.
- You may consider joining the **citizen planners** in your area to advocate for including food system issues in local planning efforts.
- **Health professionals** may be interested in improving their patients' awareness of and access to healthy food.
- **Local Departments of Public Health** provide WIC participants with Project FRESH coupons for local, fresh fruits and vegetables. They also design and implement a host of public health programs that are increasingly focused on disease prevention.
- **Chambers of Commerce** can assist in building alliances around business and infrastructure development. They may also be interested in supporting a farmers' market.
- **Local and regional economic development teams** can assist in creating opportunities for food processing and other businesses. They may be able to identify potential funding sources to develop food system infrastructure.
- **Communities of faith** might be able to organize CSA groups, offer space for a neighborhood farmers' market, and teach "eating as a moral act."
- **Farmers** grow the food and are essential in any partnership.
- **Schools** can incorporate food and agriculture in both curriculum and cafeteria.
- **Environmental groups** can support farming systems that preserve biodiversity, provide wildlife habitat and minimize pollutions to air and water.
- **MSU Extension** can assist with information and facilitation expertise. They can also help you identify researchers interested in community-based food systems.
- **Neighborhood groups and community organizations** can help mobilize communities and implement programs.

**This is just the beginning!**

**You will think of many others to involve in your work.**

# Some Community Food Systems Resources

## Saginaw Valley Area

### **Food Bank of Eastern Michigan**

<http://www.fbem.com>

### **Hidden Harvest**

<http://www.hiddenharvest.com>

## Michigan

### **Michigan Department of Agriculture**

<http://www.michigan.gov/mda>

Click on the Michigan Marketplace tab for information and directories on Michigan grown and produced foods.

### **Michigan Health Tools**

<http://www.mihealthtools.org>

A suite of websites aimed at promoting good health for all Michigan residents.

### **Michigan Surgeon General's *Michigan Steps Up* program**

<http://www.michigan.gov/surgeongeneral>

### **C.S. Mott for Sustainable Food Systems at Michigan State University**

312 Natural Resources Building  
MSU

East Lansing, MI 48823-5243  
(517) 432-0712

<http://www.miffs.org>

### **Michigan Land Use Institute**

<http://www.mlui.org>

See especially "The New Entrepreneurial Agriculture" at <http://www.mlui.org/downloads/newag.pdf>

### **Michigan Organic Food and Farming Alliance (MOFFA)** <http://www.moffa.org>

### **MSU Product Center for Agriculture and Natural Resources**

<http://www.aec.msu.edu/production/index.html>

## Regional and National

### **Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SARE)**

USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, Sw  
Stop 2223

Washington, D.C. 20250-2223

(202) 720-5203

<http://www.sare.org>

### **The Food Project**

<http://www.thefoodproject.org>

### **Growing Power**

<http://www.growingpower.org>

### **Hartford Food System**

<http://www.hartfordfood.org>

### **Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture**

<http://www.leopold.iastate.edu>

### **Food Routes**

<http://www.foodroutes.org>

### **Eat Well Guide**

<http://www.eatwellguide.org>

### **National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service**

<http://www.attra.org>

