Michigan Farm to Institution Network

20% by 2020
State and Regional Partners
Vision

The Michigan Farm to Institution Network aims to help:

- Farmers, food processors and food suppliers provide the local foods institutions want in the forms they need;
- Institutions like hospitals, schools, pre-K programs, and colleges locate, purchase and use these products; and
- Eaters at these institutions recognize, understand and enjoy local foods.
Structure

- **Staff** - Co-coordinators from MSU CRFS and the Ecology Center & Project Coordinator from the Ecology Center
- **Advisory committee** - representatives from key practitioner groups to provide guidance and direction
- **Three chaired subcommittees** - engines to support network and purchasing initiative
- **Membership** - practitioners, advocates, supporters, researchers, etc.
- **Institutions** - pledge to participate in the **local purchasing initiative** to increase local food purchases
## Subcommittees

### Impacts
Kathryn Colasanti, MSU CRFS ([colokat@msu.edu](mailto:colokat@msu.edu))

- Measure the impacts of local purchasing campaign
- Investigate gaps, limitations and practical opportunities to support Farm to Institution programs in Michigan

### Outreach & Engagement
Julia Darnton, MSUE ([darntonj@msu.edu](mailto:darntonj@msu.edu))

- Engage and assist buyers in finding, purchasing and using Michigan foods
- Connect farmers and vendors with local institutions to sell Michigan foods

### Tech Ed
Garrett Ziegler, MSUE ([zieglerg@msu.edu](mailto:zieglerg@msu.edu))

- Provide educational resources, tools and training focusing on institutional food marketing and purchasing to practitioners
- Develop product promotion toolkits to support local purchasing initiative
## Plans for Year 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct 17, 2013</td>
<td>Pre-Launch Meeting with key partners</td>
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<td>Nov 14, 2013</td>
<td>Advisory Committee Meeting</td>
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<td>Nov 2013</td>
<td>Subcommittee meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct - Feb 2014</td>
<td>Formalize Network Functions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov - Feb</td>
<td>Develop Product Promotions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb/Mar’14</td>
<td>Full Launch Event &amp; Local Purchasing Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>March +</td>
<td>Outreach/Engagement</td>
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<tr>
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<td>- expand membership of Network</td>
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<td>- secure commitments from institutions</td>
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<td>- plan for evaluation &amp; dissemination</td>
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Colleen Matts
Farm to Institution Specialist
MSU Center for Regional Food Systems
matts@msu.edu
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Hillary Bisnett
Healthy Food in Health Care Program Director
Ecology Center
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Alyson Oslin
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Ecology Center
alyson@ecocenter.org
734.369.9273
PARTNER-BASED FOOD HUB

Building a Collaborative Local Food Hub Servicing Weld County of Colorado
Basic Facts of Weld County

• 3,999 square miles in North Central Colorado:
  • 9th most populous county in Colorado
  • 31 diverse communities

• Third largest county in Colorado:
  • Ranks as the third leading agricultural area in the US
  • Leading producer of cattle, grain and sugar beets

• Primary Industry Sectors
  • Manufacturing
  • Agriculture
  • Energy Production
  • Health & Wellness
  • Business Services
### Local Food Projects of Weld County

#### Goals
- Focus on healthy food access
- Farmers’ Markets/ Food Trucks
- Cost - $23,000

#### Assets
- 3,921 farms in Weld
- 303 farms participate in direct selling
- Cost - $8,000

#### Potential
- Increasing local food consumption and production would be best accomplished by enhancing existing food distribution networks
- Cost - $10,000
Takeaways

- Food hubs encompass a wide variety of business models and infrastructure
- Plan for the seasonal nature of producers and buyers
- Buy-in is key: know your farmers
- Process was facilitated but group driven
- Plan for multi-year development
- Regional impact
The Partner-Based Concept

Advantages

• Capitalizes on existing expertise, equipment and processes
• Does not require large infrastructure expenditures
• Scalable

Partnerships

• School District 6 Food
  • Food Storage
  • Volume purchasing
• Weld Food Bank
  • Food Transportation
  • Food Processing
• WCDPHE
  • Outreach
  • Technical Assistance
THE PARTNERS

Leveraging Current Operations
WELD COUNTY

Food Access Projects
Weld County Public Health & Environment
Healthy Weld 2020

Strategies

1. Food Hub
2. Healthy Food Retail & Farmers’ Markets
3. Recreational Exercise Opportunities

Deliverables

• Food Hub Operational Manual
• Food Safety Manual
Dan Burden-2008

Recommendations

1. Increase health funding support
2. Find a lasting funding source
3. Build Social Capital by stitching together a series of health focused community building changes that people can mobilize around
4. Focus on food
5. Launch Community Gardens
6. Access Healthy Food
7. Farmers’ Markets/Food Trucks
8. Active Aging Leadership
9. Create, Inspire and retain leaders
10. Build programs and projects that maximize community projects
Main Findings
• Food is an infrastructure system that deserves detailed study
• Interest in local food is growing – and growing rapidly
• Agriculture of varying types and scales has more in common than in conflict

Weld County Food Access Projects
• Retail stores in food deserts
• Creating demand through education and marketing
• Farmers Markets start up support
• Food Producer Hub to improve access for local growers and local consumers

• www.larimer.org/foodassessment/
Farmer Focus Groups 2011

Identified Producer Needs

- Technical assistance for food safety plans
- Assistance with entry to Farm to School marketplaces
- Logistics (difficulties in efficient transport of crops to markets)
- Post harvest cooling and storage
- Marketing assistance
Weld County

- 3,921 farms in Weld County
- Larimer = 1,757
- Boulder = 746
- 303 Weld County farms participate in direct selling
- 27% of Weld farmers are 65 and over
- 25% of Weld farmers are between ages of 55 & 64
- 47.9% of Weld Farmers are 54 and younger
- From 2002 to 2007 new farms increased by 26%

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture, 2007
13 members

Guidance for Food Hub development
Food Hub Outlets

- Corner store and food retailers
- Institutional buyers: Schools, Hospitals....volume buyers
- Restaurants
- Food Banks

Mapping of food access points in Weld County
GREELEY EVANS WELD 6

School-Based Food Hub
• K-12 Public School District
  • (13th Largest in CO)
• 20,000 Students/60% F&R
  • 58% Hispanic; Growing Refugee population
• 10,500 Lunches/4,200 Breakfasts
• 150 Staff; 31 Kitchens; Annual Budget $7.6M
• NSB, NSLP, ASSP, FFVP, Head Start, Catering, Contract Sites
Weld 6’s Journey

- **SY09→** First local crop purchased:
  - Began with one crop from a single farm
  - Currently, purchasing over 30 crops from five local farms

- **SY11→** Collaborative bid process with the Northern Colorado Coop
  - 10 Districts bid together for Farm to School Products

- **January 2011→** “School Food Renaissance,” transforming school meals through:
  - Scratch cooking
  - Revamped facilities
  - Increased local food purchasing
Greeley-Evans D6
Produce Purchasing History

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<th>Amount</th>
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<td>2008-2009</td>
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<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>$50,849</td>
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<td>2012-2013</td>
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Farm Products Purchased

2011 Farm to School Produce

- Apple: $18,000.00
- Cantaloupe
- Watermelon
- Bell Pepper
- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Cauliflower
- Cherry Tomato
- Corn
- Cucumber
- Onion
- Pinto Beans
- Potatoes
- Pumpkins
- Radishes
- Romaine
- Snow Peas
- Tomato
- Yellow Squash
- Zucchini
District 6 Local Purchases

Actual Purchases – 2011-2012 SY

- Produce: 4% $28,297.22
- Grains: 5% $35,830.80
- Beef: 1% $6,196.50

Dairy Products: 90% $596,123.07

Total: $666,447.59
District 6 Local Purchases

Anticipated Purchases 2012-2013 SY

22% of all food purchases from local sources!

Dairy Products
86%
$600,000.00

Produce
7%
$51,845.60

Grains
5%
$37,000.00

Beef
1%
$8,000.00

$696,845.60
Weld 6’s Journey

• May 2011- End school year with <20% entrees being prepared from scratch.

• June 2011- Central Production Kitchen remodel begins.

• SY12-Salad bars implemented at all sites. 75% of entrees prepared from scratch.

• June 2012 Phase 1 of Food Hub begins.
Phase 1 Project Scope:

- Remodel existing facility allowing for an expanded central scratch cooking production as well as self-processing of farm fresh produce items.
  - Purchase from local farms and provide a central delivery destination.
  - Ability to process products for immediate in-season use as well as process products for extended use.
  - Self distribute within District.
Greeley-Evans Weld 6
Central Kitchen Facilities
Pictures of Change-

Production Kitchen
Pictures of Change-
Production Kitchen
The future holds…

- Reaching out to additional districts
- Reaching out to institutions
- Being the conduit to local foods in Northern Colorado
School District Based Food Hub: PHASE 1
Greeley Evans Weld 6
Jeremy West, Nutrition Director

Phase 1 Project Scope: Weld 6 recently underwent a revitalization of their Central Kitchen Facility allowing for an expanded central scratch cooking production as well as self-processing of farm fresh produce items.

Phase 1 Population Served: 15,000 meals served daily [http://www.greeleyschools.org/Page/2434]
Phase 1 Roll-Out: October 2011

1. **Aggregator:** facilitates and develops all direct from farm or Farm to School (FTS) purchases in accordance with school food procurement practices. The goal is to facilitate purchasing from multiple producers for multiple in-season whole and fresh ingredients.

2. **Processor:** District is able to convert in-season FTS products into 2 essential forms:
   1. Minimal for immediate and in-season use such as whole, fresh ingredients utilized in salad bars and center of plate menu items.
   2. Minimal for extended uses such as canning of tomatoes, freezing of string beans and other seasonal, local produce items that may not be readily available during the school year.

   A School District's ability to purchase in-season ingredients when available potentially allows Schools increased flexibility on price.

   Processing allows flexibility on ingredient grades. For example, a school can purchase locally grown ingredients that may not be Grade “A” to be used in salad bars.

   In addition, processing these ingredients can greatly aid a school's ability to harness seasonal ingredients traditionally unavailable once school term begins.

3. **Distributor:** District will distribute whole, fresh produce and minimally processed FTS products to their individual sites.
School District Based Food Hub: PHASE 2
Greeley Evans Weld 6
Jeremy West, Nutrition Director

Phase 2 Project Scope: Expansion beyond Weld 6 District sites to servicing other School Districts within Weld County as well as participating NoCo Coop* Members that consist of 12 other School Districts, including one in Wyoming.

Phase 2 Population Served: 72,654 meals served daily [link to document]

Weld 6 Food Hub: aggregates, processes and distributes fresh fruit and vegetables via FTS purchasing programs for participating NoCo Coop School Districts, potentially 12 other neighboring school districts within Weld, Larimer and Boulder Counties with an active interest in FTS purchasing.

The expansion of Weld 6 Food Hub Phase 2 allows multiple and much smaller school districts to engage local producers by:

1. buying collectively can provide competitive pricing with higher usage figures.
2. Schools with limited infrastructure can receive ingredients in usable forms that match their food service needs.
3. Increases access to fresh fruits and vegetables to underserved population by creating access points for other school districts who may be limited in resources and facilities to receive whole, fresh produce.
4. Increases access to more locally grown fresh fruit and vegetables by making meaningful connections to local producers. This can create mutually beneficial relationships between schools and local producers where schools can receive the freshest and most nutritious impactful ingredients while local farms can diversify their business, allowing fairness in the marketplace for small to mid-sized farms.
5. Creates system change by empowering school districts with self-sufficient infrastructure capabilities, diversifying resources thereby increasing ingredient choices in order to create the most nutritious, balanced and healthful meals for students.

*NoCo Coop: is an informal buying group consisting of 13 school districts in the Northern Colorado area, including Laramie County School District #1 in Cheyenne, WY. Weld 6 is the largest school district in Weld County.
WELD FOOD BANK

Full Service Operation Alleviating Hunger
Weld Food Bank is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization which alleviates hunger and poverty by providing food and services to people in need.

• Work to educate the public about the nature of hunger and poverty.
• Provide emergency and supplemental food programs to meet the critical needs of low-income families.
Food Bank Facility

- 2005—move into a 35,000 square foot warehouse:
  - 6 vehicles
  - Completed an on-site commercial kitchen
  - Offers cooking classes, nutrition courses and job training
  - Moved 8.2 million pounds of food
  - 22 full and part-time staff members
Kitchen

- Includes equipment allowing increase both quantity and quality of food prepared and served.
- Served 37,000 meals through Kids Café and Summer feeding programs.
- Only commercial facility with a generator to respond to disasters.
Food Bank Purchases

WHERE FOOD COMES FROM

- USDA (Commodities): 31%
- Grocery Stores, Local Distributors & Restaurants: 22%
- Feeding America: 22%
- Produce: 15%
- Purchased Food: 7%
- Food Drives: 4%
Food Bank Local Food Story

• In 2013, the Larimer and Weld food banks have partnered with their local school district to purchase produce through the bid process.

• All five Colorado food banks make up the Feeding Colorado network, and actively work with Northern Colorado producers for donations and sourcing foods.

• The Food Bank for Larimer County has a long history of purchasing locally:
  • In Weld County, local purchasing is an identified growth area.

• Both Northern Colorado food banks bring a long history of producer networking to Healthy Weld 2020.
Food Bank Local Food Story

- Relationship with local Producers for food donation and purchase
- Currently self operates logistics for on-farm pickup and food distribution
- Works in partnership with Rocky Mountain Food Bank and other food banks
- Provide inherent operational services:
  - Distribution
  - Aggregation
  - Processing
PARTNER BASED FOOD HUB
FEASIBILITY STUDY

Leveraging Assets and Building Collaborative Partnerships for a Healthier Food System
Weld County’s Local Food Evolution

• Currently, there are no Food Hub identified services (cooler/storage aggregation, processing and distribution) currently existing at one facility in Weld County.
• A collaborative, partner-based food hub model began to emerge as a way to leverage pre-existing infrastructure and services of current operators.
• Each agency has upgraded or is upgrading their commercial kitchen facility with state of the art processing equipment that will allow them to minimally-or-above process produce into season extension products.
• Each agency values local food purchasing and increasing access to its end users.
Partners’ Assets

- **WCSD6 offers:**
  - Limited season extension processing (dependent on kitchen availability)
  - Cooler/storage services
  - Refrigerated distribution to school districts

- **Weld Food Bank offers:**
  - Limited season extension processing
  - Limited freezer holding time (4 days maximum)
  - Refrigerated trucks for distribution during non-food bank use.
## Shared Local Food Values

### Food Hub Operational Services - Mapping Document

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aggregation Services*</th>
<th>Operational Functions</th>
<th>Food Value Chain - Shared Partner Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Phase 1 Pass-through facility (Warehousing/Storage):**  
Advisory Panel identified Characteristics  
* Located on major travel corridors- I-25 & HWY 85  
* Self-service  
* Minimal staffing  
* Rent-a-pallet/surrogate storage for buyers  
* Delivery services  
* Food Safety Program  
* Cost Control- competitive pricing  
* Product Standards-specs  
* Other Services  
* Automated Services: online ordering  
* Billing Payment: Producers and buyers education component assisting with reasonable payment expectations (timelines) and proper procedures in place before selling (pre bid meetings)  

**Phase 2 Packing Shed:**  
Advisory Panel identified characteristics:  
* Delivery System  
* Food Safety Program  
* Cost Control  
* Standards- Specs  
* Producer Friendly  
* Farm Identification  
* Traceability  
* Other services  

Multiple Satellite Sites  
Food Safety Review of Approved Producers  

| Year Round or Seasonal  
Considerations for each:  
* Customer Retention  
* Off Season Facility Use  
If Year Round:  
* Off Season - buy outside region  
* Diversified Products - examples:  
  - Meat/Poultry  
  - Dairy  
  - Eggs  
  - Value-Added Products (Baked Goods, etc)  
  - Honey/Sauces  

| Technology  
* Business Management (e-Commerce)  
* Traceability (Food Safety)  
* Producer Profiles/Product Info  

| Product Handling  
* Requirements by Classification  

| Food Safety  
* Facility Licensing  
* Liability Insurance  
* Product Classification Certifications  

| Financial Structure  
Farmer Engagement  

**Shared Mission Values**  
ex.  
* Healthy Food Access  
* Farmland Preservation  
* Farm Viability  
* Sustainable Production Practices  

**Shared Operational Values**  
ex.  
* Transparency through all Food Hub Segments  
* Long Term Commitment  
* Open Communication  
* Accountability

* Identified by the Weld Producer Food Hub Advisory Panel
<table>
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<th>Weld County School District 6 (SD6)</th>
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<td>Benefit: WFB can be receiving agent for SD6 and can process onfarm pickup of produce and single point of delivery from multiple farms. SD6 can still receive product direct from Producers who choose to deliver direct to SD6.</td>
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<td>Lower cost: staff processed foods, or volunteers can be utilized with proper registration through SD6 process for in house use (closed system). Will have to confirm SD6’s accounting procedures for offering third party processing services for non-SD6 use (open system to WFB, LFB, other SDs, etc). Will need address liability insurance component/requirements from SD6’s legal department.</td>
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| Processes, aggregation, distribution and other topics will be similar for LFB |  |

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Weld RFP: Feasibility Study

- Local Food Assessment
  - Availability of raw local specialty crop products
  - Demand for locally grown specialty crops (whole and processed)
- Facility Analysis
  - Action steps needed for each facility to aggregate, store, and process increased amounts of local food
  - Ability to meet immediate and prospective demand
- Business Plan
  - Mapping out a five-year implementation plan and timeline
    - Financial Analysis
    - Logistical recommendations
    - Marketing Strategies
    - Implementable Timeline
A project development organization focused on local food systems and healthy communities.

- Partnered with Weld County for the last three years:
  - Producer driven Food Hub Concept
  - Local Food Advisory Panel
  - Partner Based Food Hub Concept

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Local Food Distribution: Institutional Sales

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Who are we?

• A rural distribution hub dedicated to developing markets and trucking routes outside of our regions.
  – Facilitate $350,000 of local food sales since May
Custom Hauling for Farmers
Farm to School Programs
Sales and Marketing Programs

Would you like to buy some local food?
Institutional CSA Programs

Keep up with the truck.
Our Overall Model

• Multiple Markets in Same Geographical Area = Profitability for the Hub
  – Example:
    • Iowa City
      – 4 Institutional CSA Programs
      – Several custom hauling stops (two of the account we opened with sales and marketing services)
What have we learned?

• CSA programs allow us to provide 3PL services for a lower overall cost to growers.
• 3PL services allow us to provide CSA programs at competitive prices.
• Generally enough capacity on our truck as of now to do many stops, all of which generate cash for our business.
Key Understanding

• What is the capacity on your truck?
  – Time?
  – Space?
Questions??