

# Building a Local Food Economy in North Carolina



CEFS



CENTER for ENVIRONMENTAL  
FARMING SYSTEMS

Farm-to-Fork

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# Center for Environmental Farming Systems

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

- Partnership initiated in 1994
  - NCSU
  - NCA&T SU
  - NCDA &CS



# New CEFS Initiative: Building a Local Food Economy in NC

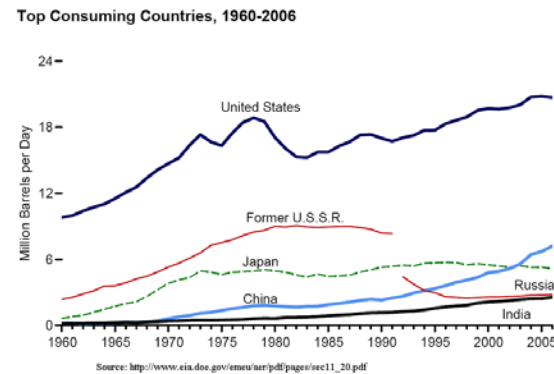
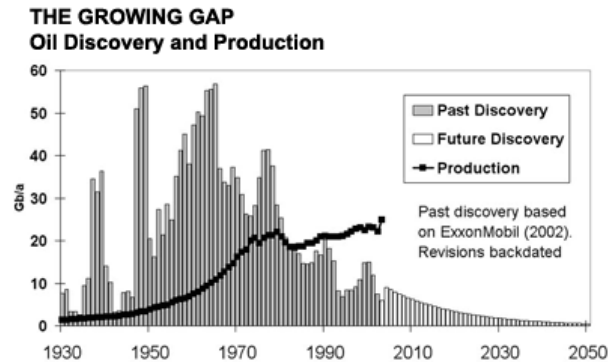
- Initiated in April 2008 with funding from Golden Leaf Foundation, Z Smith Reynolds foundation, Agriculture Advancement Consortium, and W.K. Kellogg Foundation.
- Goal was to develop a **Statewide Action Plan** for building the **Local Food Economy** describing the current food system, important successful models in the state, and prioritizes policies and programs for the private and public sectors.



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# Changing Agricultural Landscape

- **Changes and trends in agriculture**
  - *Volatile and higher energy prices*
  - *Natural resource issues (climate change, water, soil)*
  - *Rising age of farmers*
  - *Food security*
  - *Rural community decline*
  - *Labor shortage issues*



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## Trend: Farm Loss in NC

- 100,000 farms in 1976
- 73,000 farms in 1986
- 55,000 farms in 2001
- 48,000 farms in 2008
- 83% of NC counties lost farms between 1997 and 2002



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# Changing Consumer Landscape

- **Public Health Interest**
  - *Increasingly, trends in obesity and diabetes are being tied to the current food system.*
  - *Unequal access and health disparities exist*



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# Changing Consumer Landscape

- **Consumer interest: local, sustainable, organic, fresh**
  - *70 percent of consumers want to know where their food comes from and would pay more for locally grown food if they could find it (packaged facts, 2007)*



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# “Why is it so Hard”

- ✓ Why can't our children have a salad bar in every school?
- ✓ Why aren't kids selling CSA shares in their schools as fundraisers instead of candy bars and cookie dough?
- ✓ Why can't those in poor urban areas find fresh fruits and vegetables near where they live?



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# “Why is it so Hard”

- ✓ Why aren't there enough producers to sell at all of the new developing farmers markets?
- ✓ Why is it difficult for institutional markets to source local products?
- ✓ Why can't small and mid-scale producers find adequate liability insurance?
- ✓ Why are there so few small scale processing plants available to allow farmers to take advantage of new markets?
- ✓ Why can't our regulatory framework be appropriate to scale and size of the operation?



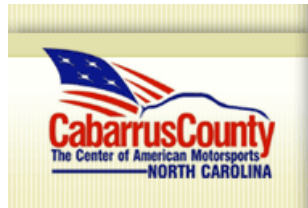
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# Asset: Diversity



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



**Southeastern NC Food Systems Project**




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# Economic Development Potential

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

*If just 5% of the \$4010 was spent on **Local** (\$.55/person/day)...  
With 8,8000,000 people in the state (US Census, 2006), local food sales would **total \$1.7 billion.***

*To meet this demand, we need... enhanced local processing, distribution, transportation infrastructure, more farmers growing diverse products...*

*This all translates to **economic development and jobs.***



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# Other Benefits

- Job creation and economic development
- Money circulates in the community, region, state
- Green space and farm viability
- Carolinians enhanced health and nutrition
- Decreased use of fossil fuels and reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Enhanced environmental quality
- Enhanced food security & access for all North



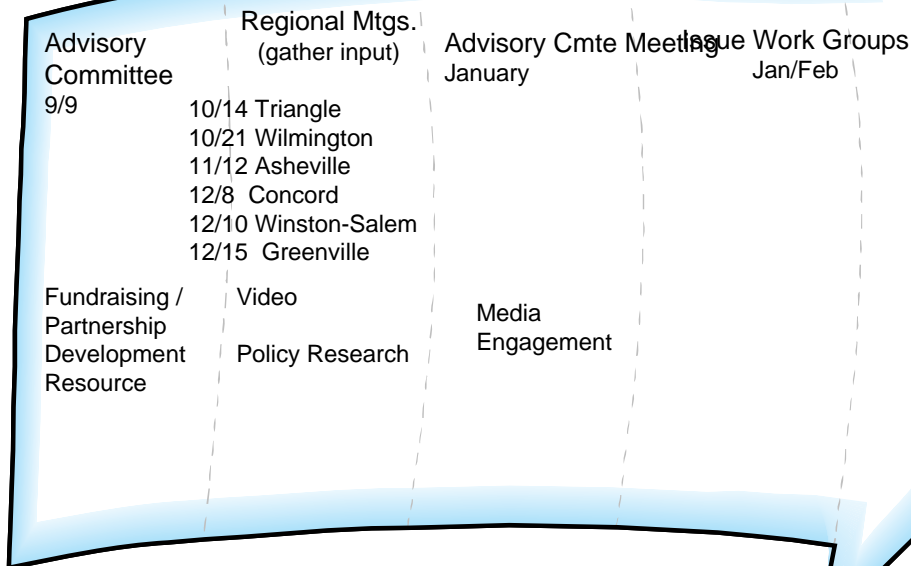
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# Statewide Initiative

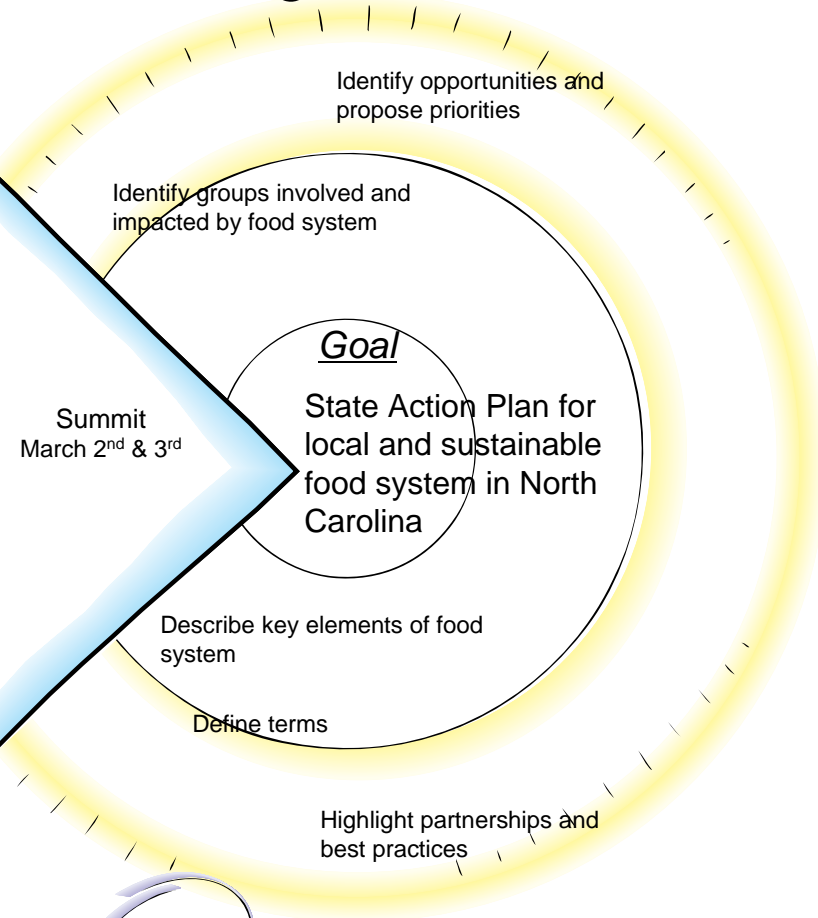
**TEAM/RESOURCES**

CEFS  
 ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
 PARTNERS  
 FUNDERS  
 Z Smith Reynolds, Ag Advancement Consortium, WK Kellogg Golden Leaf

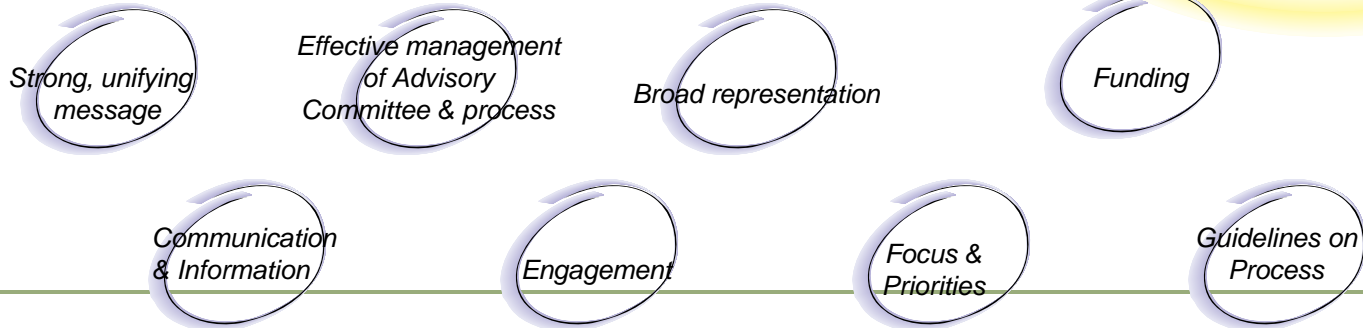
**STAGES/TASKS**



**TARGET**



**SUCCESS FACTORS**



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# Working Issue Teams

- Formalizing the Initiative: Foundations and Baselines
- Farm-to-School
- Institutional and Retail markets
- Public health and Food Access Disparities
- Direct markets
- New and Transitioning Farmer Support



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# Working Issue Teams

- Community Gardens
- Land Use and Local Government Initiatives
- Youth and Social Networking
- Consumer Outreach and Marketing
- Processing and other Physical Infrastructure



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# Game Changer Ideas

## Foundations and Baselines

- Establish a North Carolina Sustainable Local Food Policy Council
- Legislative body with broad representation that deals with aspects of Health and Wellness, Hunger and Food Access, Economic Development, Working Lands and Working Waters



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# Game Changer Ideas

## Foundations and Baselines: SB 1067

- Establishes baselines and benchmarks for success
- Serves as an information and engagement hub
- Identifies and develops solutions to regulatory and policy barriers in developing a strong local food economy
- Strengthens local infrastructure and entrepreneurial efforts
- Ensures access to local products for all North Carolina citizens



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# Game Changer Ideas

## Community Gardens

- Community Gardens offer a cost-effective option for direct action with a track record going back to the Victory gardens of the 1940s
- They offer hands-on, outdoor education about sustainability, stewardship, and food production
- They provide direct increased access and exposure to foods that establish positive life-long health habits



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# Game Changer Idea

## Community Garden in Every Community

- Identify and map existing gardens to these can be networked and supported
- Identify regions without demo gardens and partner efforts to create new hub sites
- Pursue active support and funding
- Develop statewide government policies and planning guidelines.



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# Game Changer Ideas

## Farm to School

- Farm-to-school programs connect farmers, fresh local food, and school children in a mutually beneficial relationship
- Help address two major challenges: rising rates of childhood obesity (and associated diet concerns) and the loss of farming as a way of life.



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# Game Changer Idea: Pilot Pre-Service Teacher Instruction Program

- By providing instruction for teachers-to-be on the integration of activities such as school gardens, farm field trips, and experiential nutrition education, the next teacher vanguard will be equipped to address math, science, language arts, healthyful living, and other curricular subjects with exciting and experiential learning opportunities.



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# Game Changer Ideas

## New and Transitioning Farmer Support

- **Challenges**

- ✓ Economic viability of farming
- ✓ Training (production, business planning, management)
- ✓ One size fits all regulatory requirement.
- ✓ Land, water, and resources managed for the future
- ✓ Land tenure
- ✓ Capital and credit requirements
- ✓ Post harvest processing and distribution
- ✓ Accessibility to markets



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# Game Changer Idea: Policy and Regulatory Review

- Review of current municipal, county, and state policies, ordinances, and statutes that affect small, medium, and transitioning farms
- Implementation of policy and regulatory changes that enhance vitality and economic viability of small, medium, and transitioning farms in NC



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# Game Changer Ideas

## Retail and Institutional Markets

- **Challenges**

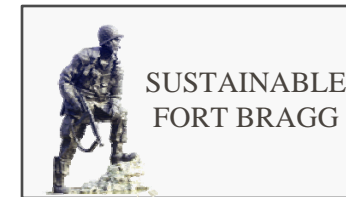
- ✓ Gap Certification and 3<sup>rd</sup> Party audits
- ✓ Liability Insurance
- ✓ Consistent Availability
- ✓ Specific Consistency (size, grade, packaging)
- ✓ Competitive Pricing
- ✓ Delivery Frequency
- ✓ Transportation and distribution Logistics
- ✓ Processing Infrastructure
- ✓ Ordering Systems



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# Game Changer Idea: Feed the Forces

- Develop a statewide model by coordinating support through the Sustainable Fort Bragg's Feed the Forces Initiative
- Model can be expanded to facilitate other institutional markets including UNC System, hospitals, K-12 schools and retailers.
- Launch a new business entity coordinating supply, distribution, marketing, GAP certification, and insurance, while working with project partners to facilitate supply chain and retail opportunities.



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# Game Changer Ideas

## Community Marketing and Outreach

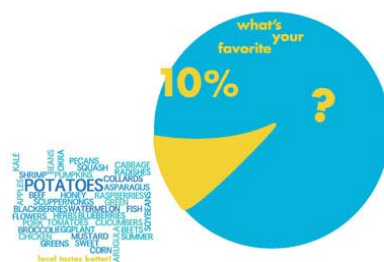
- Most Americans think very little about where their food comes from.
- Many different messages may resonate: fossil fuel availability and cost fluctuations, the obesity epidemic, food safety crises, loss of farmland and farmers, environmental degradation, climate change and lack of access to healthy foods.
- Need to make it easier for consumers to buy local food.



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# Game Changer Idea: Ten Percent Campaign

- 10% is a realistic goal, and will generate \$3.4 billion for the local economy.
- Implementation include a website (extension wi.. host) with information and materials accessible to all.



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# Game Changer Ideas

## Direct Marketing

- Includes direct sales between producers and Farmers
- Can include roadside stands, city or regional farmers markets, CSAs, food-buying clubs, and e commerce sites.
- About 87 farmers markets currently in the state
- Keeping the supply chain short yields more profit for producers



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# Game Changer Idea: Develop an NC Direct Marketing Network

- Develop a NC Direct Marketing Network whose mission is to enhance existing local efforts and encourage new innovations in direct marketing throughout the state.
- Empowering people across the state by connecting them through an online hub.



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# Game Changer Ideas

## Public Health and Food Access Disparities

- **To identify opportunities for Local Food Systems to Address Food Access and Health Disparities**
  - ✓ Assuring that that locally produced food doesn't go to waste, but gets to those who could use it most.
  - ✓ Establishing ways for agencies to retrieve and distribute fresh food quickly-before spoilage
  - ✓ Restoring food preparation and seasonal eating skills – broadening our taste horizons
  - ✓ Ensuring cultural appropriateness



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