

Ohio Food Policy Advisory Council

August 2009

Bringing Everyone to the Table

Ohio

Department of
Agriculture



Sustainable Agriculture



Acknowledgements

The Food Policy Advisory Council sought feedback from across the state about issues of concern, to assess the public interest and support in local food system development, to identify how we can support local efforts and importantly, ensure access to healthy food for Ohioans across the state. One of the means of getting that feedback was through public listening sessions*.

The Council would like to thank the following organizations that hosted listening sessions:

Catholic Charities, Rural Life Office
Center for Innovative Food Technology
Northeast Ohio Food Congress
Ohio Ecological Food and Farming Association
Ohio Farmers Union
Ohio Produce Growers and Marketers Association
The Ohio State University Extension, Holmes County

The following Council members attended or facilitated these sessions: Casey Hoy, Sister Christine Pratt, Ellen Mee, Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, Joe Logan, Elizabeth Lind, Leslie Schaller, and Jennifer Scofield.

*A summary of listening session comments are listed at the end of the document.

The Ohio Department of Agriculture would also like to acknowledge the partnership with Kenyon College's Rural Life Center which allowed for the development of new farm to school resources in the state.



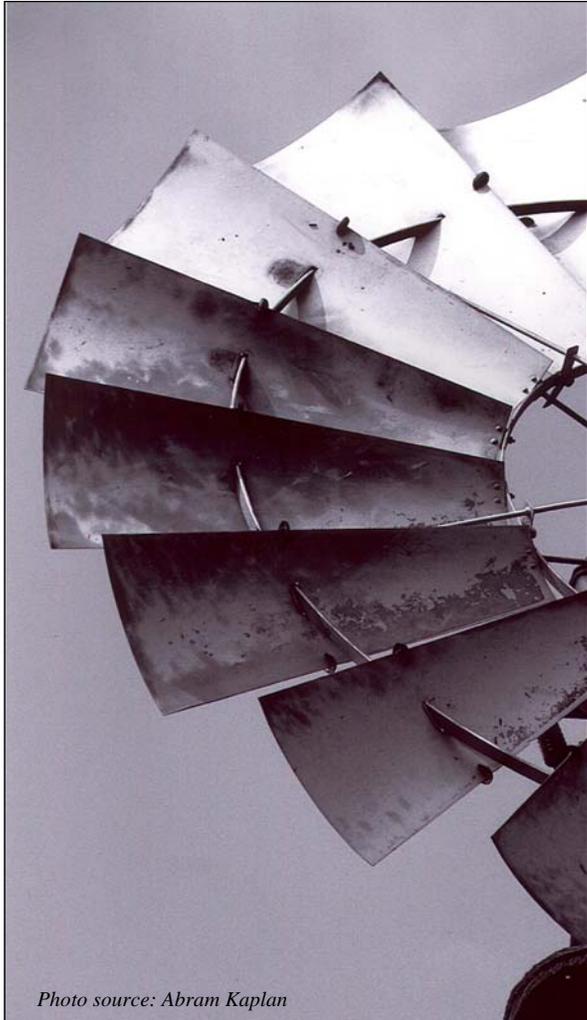
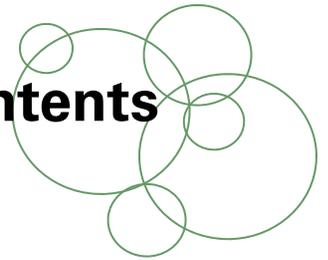


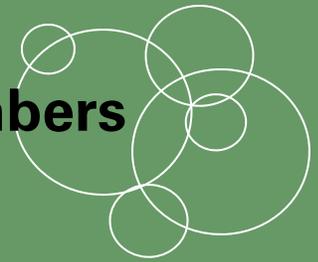
Photo source: Abram Kaplan

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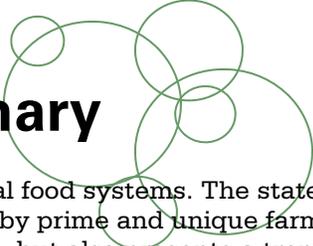
Ohio Food Policy Council Members



- Shari Baker, Ohio Department of Aging
- John Coker, AVI Food Service
- Jim Chakeres, Ohio Poultry Association
- Jack Fisher, Ohio Farm Bureau Federation
- Carol Goland, Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association
- Meryle Gordon, Ohio Kaiser Permanente Medical Group
- *Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, Ohio Association of Second Harvest Food Banks*
- *Casey Hoy, The Ohio State University, Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center*
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- Beth Kowalczyk, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services*
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- Ellen Mee, Ohio Environmental Council
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- Leslie Schaller, Appalachian Center for Economic Networks
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- Cecelia Torok, Ohio Department of Education*
- USDA Rural Development
- *Dave Wible, The North Market*
- *Brian Williams, Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission*

* Ex-officio members
Task Force Chairs

Executive Summary



Ohio is uniquely positioned to benefit from the development of local food systems. The state has 16 metropolitan regions, many of which are located on or surrounded by prime and unique farmland. This has presented challenges to maintaining the agricultural land base, but also presents a tremendous opportunity for increasing direct markets for agricultural products, reducing negative environmental impacts of long distance transportation, and increasing the economic and job creation benefits of local food systems. Governor Ted Strickland created the Ohio Food Policy Advisory Council in August of 2007. The council is charged with maximizing the economic benefit of the food industry by localizing a portion of the food system and increasing the access to fresh and healthy food for all Ohioans.

The Ohio Food Policy Advisory Council is a public-private partnership that provides a framework for collaboration leading to greater efficiency in developing and implementing recommendations. The mission for the diverse stakeholders of the council is to:

- Collect and analyze information on the production and processing of food in Ohio as well as the patterns of food consumption
- Protect Ohio's valuable farmland and water resources by encouraging the growth of food products in Ohio
- Provide those in need with greater access to fresh and nutritious foods
- Assist Ohio farmers and businesses in marketing their food products inside and outside the state
- Develop strategies to link producers and consumers in local food systems

The 21 appointed council members represent: private food businesses, environmental interests, sustainable agriculture, health, education, urban and rural development, farmers, farming associations, commodity groups, anti-hunger advocates, religious groups, and agricultural non-profits. Ex-Officio members are state agency representatives from the departments of: Education, Job and Family Services, Health, Rehabilitation and Correction, Aging, Administrative Services, Faith Based and Community Initiatives and Development.

The council formed four task force areas to address the mission as outlined above. Those task forces include: Agricultural Viability, Food System Assessment, Healthy Food Access, and Market Connections. Approximately 80 people met in monthly or bimonthly meetings over the past year to deliberate the best way to advance the purpose of the Governor's Executive Order. These participants were council members, state employees, farmers, public practitioners, educators, researchers, and business interests. They dedicated significant time and resources to the goals of the council and have demonstrated tremendous commitment and creativity in developing recommendations and implementation strategies. Public comments were accepted on an ongoing basis, through five formal listening sessions, and online through the Ohio Food Policy Council Web site at <http://www.agri.ohio.gov/divs/FoodCouncil/foodcouncil.aspx>.

Each task force has made formal recommendations to the full council. Fifteen recommendations have been approved and advanced for consideration by the Governor. Their rationale and status are detailed in this report. Some recommendations request commitment of public funds while some require a shift in priorities. As these recommendations move forward from concept to implementation, the state will realize large scale economic impact of more than \$7 billion per year, health benefits, green business development, job creation, and increased farm profitability.

Introduction

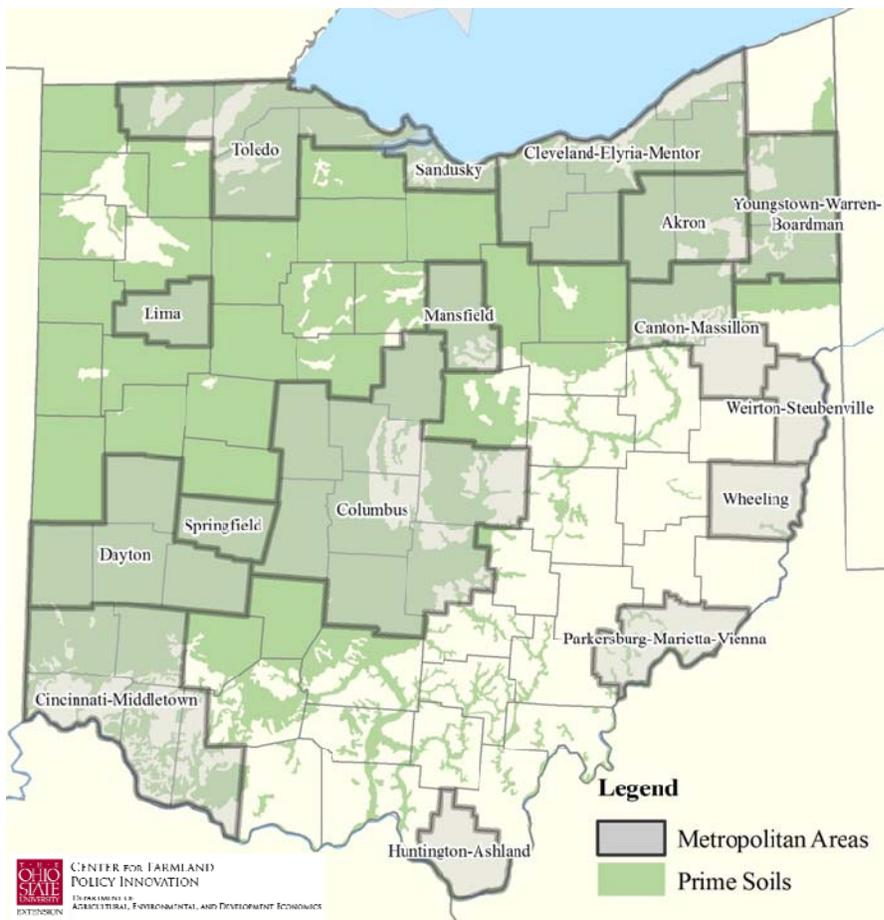
The public has an increasing awareness of the value of local food systems. There is a growing demand for “food with a face,” including the knowledge of where and how the food we eat was grown and raised, as well as a desire to make purchases that contribute to their communities.

Ohio is uniquely positioned to take advantage of opportunities in sustainable agriculture and local food systems. With 16 metropolitan regions located on or surrounded by prime and unique farmland, pictured below, Ohio can create and expand local food and agricultural businesses and jobs, enhance the viability of its farmers, conserve natural resources, and increase access to fresh and healthy foods. The benefits of locally grown food presented relate to core environmental, economic, and social sustainability components.

Protect Ohio's Fertile Farmland

Ohio is second in the nation in the loss of prime farmland. It represents 1/32 of the earth's surface that over six billion people depend on for survival. At the same time, 10 percent of the nation's food stream was disposed of as waste in 1998 (EPA, 2000). Based on tipping fees at that time, the cost to society of

disposing of food waste in landfills was 700 million dollars (Heller and Keoleian, 2000). These are resources that could help re-build productive soils.



Transportation

The food system uses 17 percent of the total energy supply in the U.S. (Pimentel et al, 1989). Resources are not limitless and are becoming more costly. This requires reducing environmental impacts. Offering more local food choices is a practical, delicious way to reduce the carbon footprint.

Local Foods Foster a Healthier Ohio

Spending on health care has risen from 5 percent of national income in 1960 to 16 percent today. Total cost of obesity in the U.S. was estimated to be \$117 billion in 2000 (CDC, 2008). According to the Health Policy Institute of Ohio, 24 percent of adult Ohioans are obese– the 13th highest level in the nation.

Cheap food is considered beneficial, but when we think about the true costs over time, it is important to consider food value and how what we eat contributes to health– individually, environmentally, socially, and economically.

Food Investments are Recession-Proof

The United States is in an economic recession and there is increased focus on investment in recession-proof industries. Food system spending is non-discretionary and is a good target for investment. According to a survey by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Ohioans spend approximately \$35 billion each year on food. Estimates indicate that only about 1 percent of that \$35 billion dollar industry is spent on food from Ohio farms. If just 10 percent of our food purchases came from Ohio farms an additional \$7 billion a year in local wealth could be generated and circulated throughout our communities.

Making the choice to purchase from Ohio producers is supporting a local industry—one that is not likely to leave anytime soon. Buying locally grown and raised food keeps wealth in the state.

Social Services

Between November and December of 2008, there were almost 20,000 new applicants to the Ohio Food Assistance Program. This represents one of the highest increases on record (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, 2008). It is estimated that 500,000 people who are eligible for food assistance have not yet applied. If they did, Ohio would benefit from an additional \$1.4 billion in the state economy and more than 12,000 jobs (Ohio Association of Second Harvest Food Banks, 2008). Focusing on local food purchasing and helping people with low food security, could generate nearly \$10 billion per year in additional wealth and tens of thousands of new jobs in Ohio.



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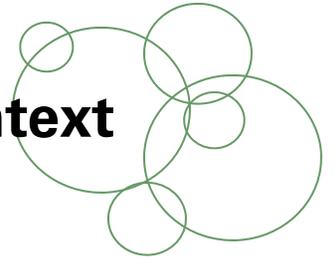


Photo source: Amalie Lipstreu



Photo source: Amalie Lipstreu

Ohio Food Policy Council in Context



Situational Analysis

Ohio is faced with real and proposed changes to agricultural markets and increasing public concern with the quality of food and food security. The Federal Government is mandating improved nutrition in school lunch programs. Energy concerns have become paramount. Tremendous amounts of energy are used in the production and transportation of food. The council has an opportunity and an imperative to plan for and promote local food production, processing, and distribution. Choosing to support the development of local and regional food systems will build community resiliency for Ohioans.

Food policy councils focus on many issues including food security, health, and farm profitability. They are also an important tool to focus on food systems as an economic development strategy that can provide benefits to and linkages between farm production, conservation, and farm viability, as well as public health, food security, and community well being. Ohio's agriculture and food related industries contribute approximately \$98 billion to the state economy. (OSU, 2008) This presents a built-in base for growing the state's green economy.



Purpose

Food policy councils provide a powerful vehicle for taking a comprehensive approach to examining and improving the food system and planning for the underlying agricultural system on which the food system depends.

They are officially sanctioned and include representation from various sectors including: farmers, agricultural stakeholders, consumers, chefs, food processors, distributors, grocers, academics, wholesalers, school system representatives, anti-hunger advocates, and government and non-governmental organization representatives.

History

Food policy councils are a relatively new policy instrument. The first state food policy council was established in 1997 in Connecticut. Since that time many states have established councils. There is considerable variation in the structure, method of establishment, and accomplishments of these councils to date.

The Work of Food Policy Councils

These councils focus on areas such as using agriculture and food systems as an economic development tool, protection for farmland and farming, hunger prevention, local processing and marketing of food and agricultural products, reducing producer risk, food safety, nutrition education, and farm to school programs. They develop legislation and program recommendations and promote increased coordination between state agencies.

The Food System in Ohio

Of the 75,861 farms spanning almost 14 million acres in Ohio, most farms are relatively small in size. In fact, 65% of them sell less than \$20,000 per year, and 76.3 percent of them are composed of less than 180 acres. Over 40 percent of farm operators consider farming to be their primary occupation and more than 90 percent of Ohio farmers are individual operators. In terms of ownership, 67 percent of Ohio farmers are full owners of their farm businesses, while 27 percent are part owners, and just 6 percent are tenants (USDA, 2008). Ohio farmers are an aging population, with the average age being 55.7 years (USDA, 2007).

Agricultural yield in the state of Ohio is a substantial \$7 billion industry. Multiple products, including swiss cheese, creamed cottage cheese, milk sherbet, chickens, eggs, tomatoes for processing, pumpkins, sweet corn, soybeans, and maple syrup rank in the top 5 of United States production rates (USDA, 2008).

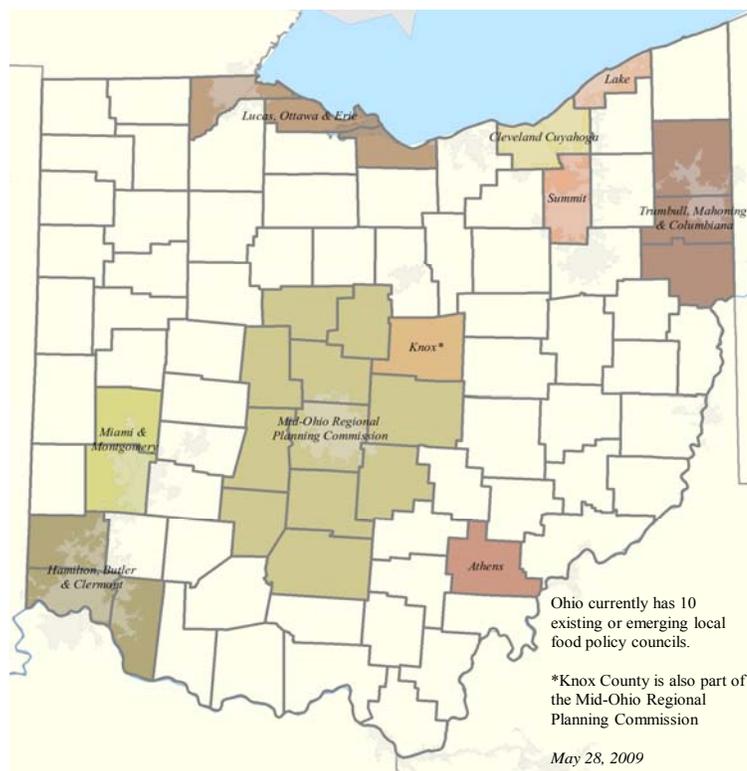
Local and Regional Food Policy Councils in Ohio

There are currently 10 existing and/or emerging local and regional food policy councils within Ohio. These groups, identified in the adjacent map, represent regions ranging from a single county to as many as 12 counties. In keeping with state food policy councils, these local and regional counterparts are organized and funded in a variety of ways. They are united in their dedication to building the local food economy, increasing access to healthy foods in Ohio communities, and fostering a healthy environment.

Knox County was the first food policy council developed in Ohio. The effort grew out of the work of the Rural Life Center at Kenyon College.

In 2007 the Cleveland/Cuyahoga Food Policy Coalition formed. It includes 46 participating organizations, agencies, and businesses and has led the nation in urban agriculture policy.

Ohio's Emerging Local Food Policy Councils



Opportunities in Food Policy

The work of food policy councils across the country has engaged a large number of stakeholders in a dialogue about how to promote food and farm businesses for the well-being of the current and future residents of their respective states. Ohio is well on its way to contributing to the work that has been done in food policy over the past 10 years.

Since the council held its first meeting in March, 2008 it has made 15 formal recommendations, set eight overarching food system goals, and implemented efforts to develop the local food economy, ensure access to healthy food for all Ohioans, and developed connections with 10 local and regional existing and emerging food policy councils.

The Ohio Food Policy Advisory Council is not only important to legislators and local food system advocates. Research conducted by Associate Professor Jeff Sharp and Research Associate Molly Bean Smith found this to be a very important issue to all Ohioans. In the 2008 survey of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Issues, Drs. Sharp and Bean Smith asked respondents how important it was for state and local governments to work to develop stronger local food systems. Nearly two-thirds of Ohioans indicated that it was very important and one-third stated that it was somewhat important for the state to be acting on this important issue. All tolled, 98 percent of Ohioans surveyed believe their government should be engaged in the development of local food systems (Smith and Sharp, 2008).



***Ninety-eight percent
of Ohioans surveyed
believe their
government should
be engaged in the
development of local
food systems.***

Agricultural Viability Task Force



This task force works to address the following mission of the Governor's Executive Order:

4b) Protect Ohio's valuable farmland and water resources by encouraging the growth of food products in Ohio.

Identify and evaluate opportunities for market expansion, diversification, value-added and niche markets. Identify opportunities and resources to support beginning farmers; examine the state's food processing infrastructure needs; catalog innovative local/sustainable agriculture and food system efforts in the state; assess the impact of the food system on the environment; consider the relationship between farmland preservation efforts and our food system.

Goals developed by this task force and approved by the full Council:

1. Retain and expand local food processing capacity by 15 percent in the state by 2015.
2. Expand poultry processing and flash freezing to new and underserved producers by a minimum of one unit each on line by 2010.
3. Develop a minimum of one food business incubator within a region that has the capacity by December, 2010.

Recommendations developed by this task force and adopted by full Council:

Support for the expansion of funding for the Clean Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase program.

RATIONALE

Support for the renewal and expansion of the Clean Ohio Bond issue in the November 4, 2008 election would meet the intention of the council to preserve Ohio farmland.

The voters first passed the Clean Ohio Bond Initiative in

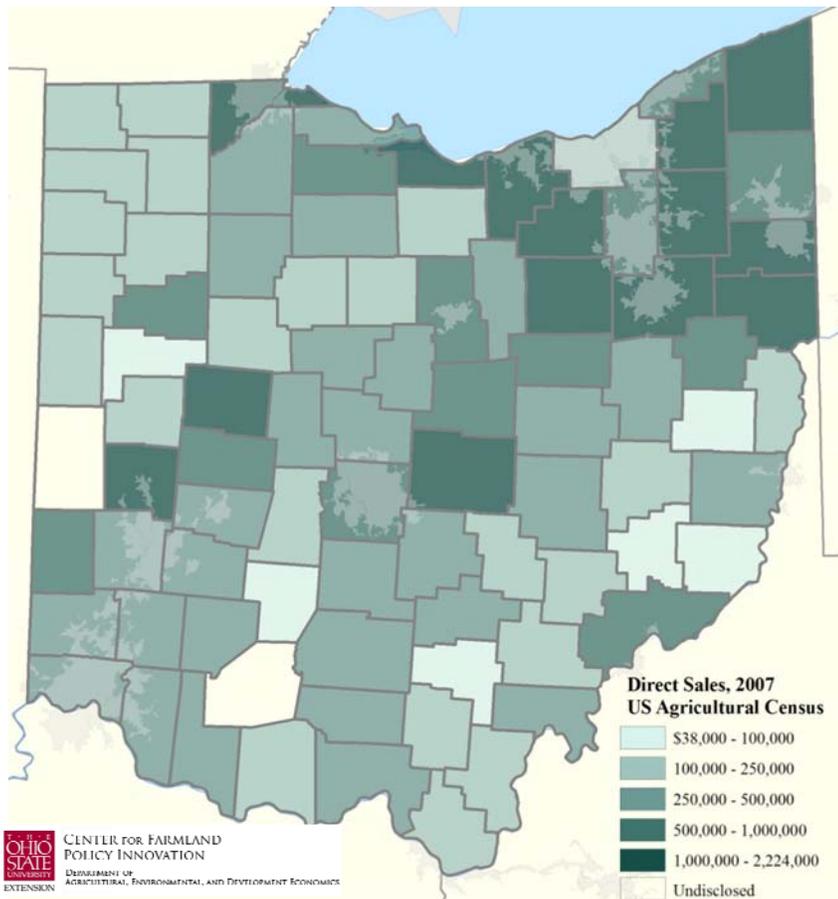
2000. Subsequently, the Office of Farmland Preservation was created at the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Since the first round of funding in 2001 the department received over 1,800 applications. State funding has been extended by additional grants from the Federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program. Combining these funding sources the state has been successful in funding approximately 7.5 percent of all applications submitted.

PROGRESS TO DATE

The Food Policy Council supported this issue that went before the voters in the fall of 2008 and passed by a wide margin. The Ohio Department of Agriculture, Office of Farmland Preservation now has an increased level of resources to protect working farms in Ohio and ensure that the land is available for farming for generations to come.

Staffing at the Ohio Department of Development for a full-time agricultural economic development professional to work on agricultural issues other than energy.

Local food systems are a sleeping giant of economic development and a great way to grow the green economy in Ohio.



RATIONALE

Food and agriculture are leading industries in Ohio representing more than \$98 billion a year in the state economy. (OSU, 2008) Food consumption alone is a \$35 billion a year industry that is largely non-discretionary spending. Estimates are that about 1 percent of food spending is on product from Ohio farms. By localizing a greater share of that spending, Ohio can be successful in creating wealth and new job opportunities.

Although agriculture is a leading industry in the state, efforts to retain and expand agricultural businesses have been limited. Investing in food and agricultural systems will pay dividends not just in local wealth and job creation, but also represents investments in environmental sustainability, reducing dependence on long distance food transportation and energy costs, providing social benefits to Ohio communities and increasing personal health.

The council recommends creating a full-time staff position focused on the

abundance of prime farmlands and a large number of metropolitan statistical area markets for those food and agricultural goods.

PROGRESS TO DATE

The Department of Development's Strategic Business Investment Division has an agricultural economist on staff. A portion of this position will focus on agricultural economic development. Additionally, agriculture and food processing was named as one of nine statewide targeted industries in the department's Strategic Plan.

The Ohio Department of Agriculture is a member of the state Economic Growth Cabinet and was successful in getting support for the development of an Agricultural Venture Fund into both the House and Senate versions of the state budget. As the budget process moves forward, the department will look to implement this fund for agricultural innovation and look for opportunities to support an agricultural economic development position.

The Agricultural Viability Task Force will begin the process of review to examine the feasibility of creating a revolving loan fund or grant option for farmers who donate agricultural easements to the state farmland preservation program.

RATIONALE

Ohio's Agricultural Easement Purchase Program has been overwhelmingly successful. There is an opportunity to stretch the farmland preservation resources in the state and to create a stronger link between the preservation of agricultural land and the viability of Ohio farm businesses.

This alternative would pay less than the 40 percent easement value traditionally received but would offer 30 percent of that value as a grant for new business investment, environmental enhancement, or other options to increase farm viability. By granting a donation to the state, the land owner could receive greater long term tax benefits, fulfill the goal of farmland preservation, and create more wealth and potentially new jobs in the community.

PROGRESS TO DATE

The Ohio Department of Agriculture is in the process of developing the statutory authority that will allow the Office of Farmland Preservation to create new options in the farmland preservation program.

The Ohio Food Policy Advisory Council supports a feasibility study for mobile poultry processing development in the state. The Ohio Department of Agriculture will provide support to this project. It is further recommended that the study address bio-security, economic, regulatory, siting and harvesting issues.

RATIONALE

The Food Policy Council has identified poultry processing as a severe deficit area in the state. Many small to mid-scale poultry producers have difficulty getting their birds processed or have to travel excessive distances to do so. To make an informed investment in poultry processing, the council would like an assessment of the financial feasibility of a mobile processing model to demonstrate how specific components of the processing are handled in a safe and effective manner.

PROGRESS TO DATE

At the May 4, 2009 meeting of the council, a presentation was made on the results of a feasibility study conducted by the Center for Innovative Food Technology. A mobile poultry processing working group, facilitated by the Agroecosystems Management Program of the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, has been meeting over the past six months to discuss how such a system might operate and bring interested parties to the table. The Ohio Department of Agriculture is developing a request for proposals to assist in funding the development of mobile poultry processing infrastructure to meet this important need.



Food System Assessment Task Force



This task force works to address the following mission of the Governor's Executive Order:

4a) Collect and analyze information on the production and processing of foods in Ohio, as well as the patterns of food consumption.

Identify how much Ohio food is produced, processed, distributed, and marketed in the state. How does this compare to the potential in these areas? Identify the barriers – what limits access to: farming, distribution, processing, local and statewide markets and institutions? Identify and assess cost barriers; What policy barriers exist and what types of policies can advance access and development of local markets?

Recommendation developed by this task force and adopted by the full council:

Appropriate \$95,000 to assemble the disparate databases on food production, processing and consumption in the state, analyze the data and identify any information gaps to assist the Ohio Food Policy Advisory Council in establishing benchmarks for local food systems in the state.

RATIONALE

Existing resources on food production, processing and consumption are disconnected and incompatible. In order to make informed policy recommendations, set targets, aid economic development, and create jobs there should be a clear understanding of our current capabilities, capacity, and potential for local food systems. It is also important to identify gaps in information and propose a means for collecting that information.

PROGRESS TO DATE

Dr. Jill Clark, a member of the Food System Assessment Task Force, developed resources to guide the Council in

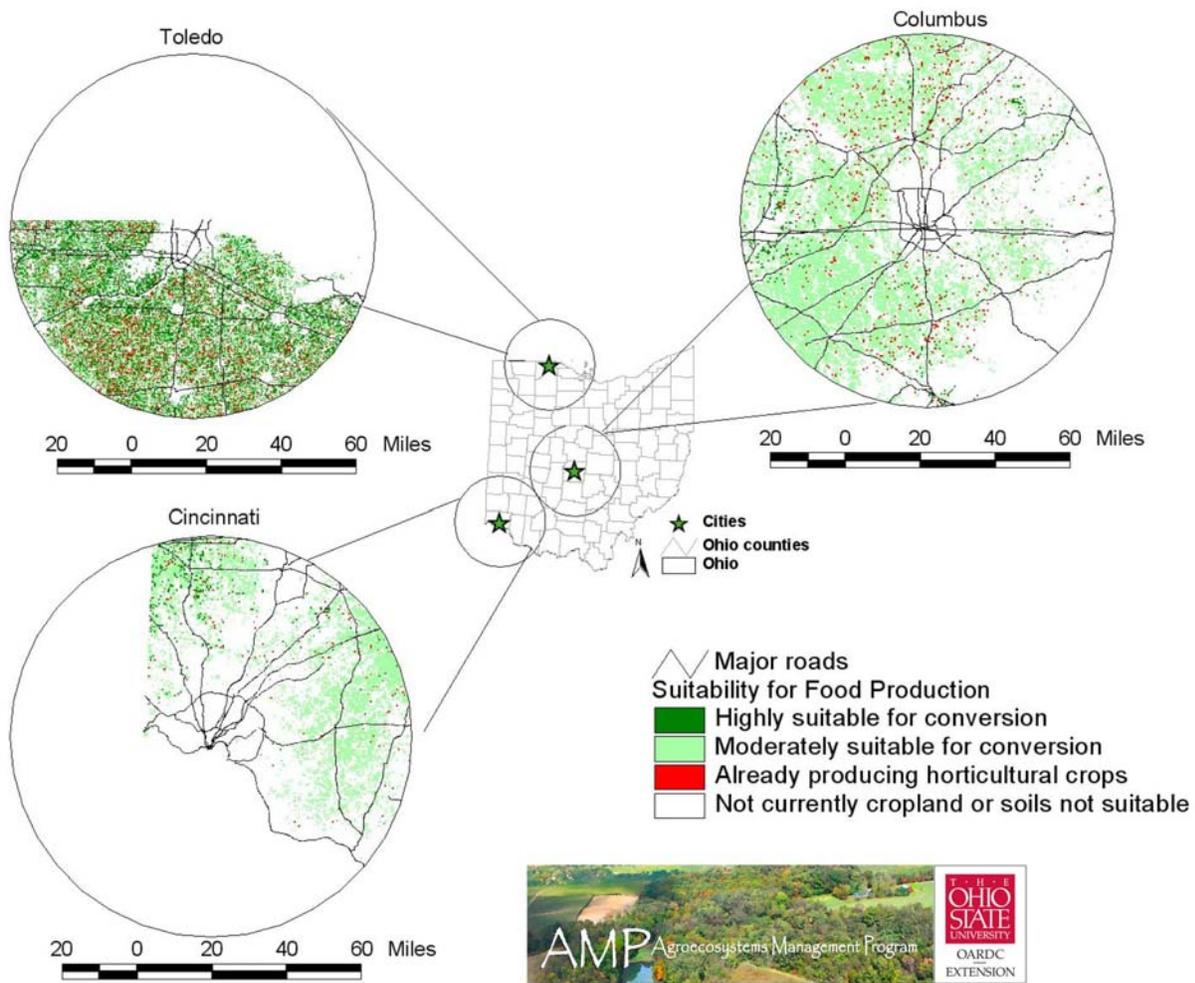
making recommendations. Based on a model from the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, the U.S. Food Market Estimator, Dr. Clark has estimated the per capita and total yearly consumption of: dairy, fats and sugars, red meat, poultry, fish, vegetables, fruits and grains. This analysis illustrates the consumption of these food commodities by Ohio consumers and the opportunity for local producers who are interested in meeting local demand (Webb and Clark, 2009).* It is clear from this analysis that there are many opportunities for Ohio producers — even if they only wish to supply a small portion of the overall demand.

A second analysis sought to determine the percentage of Ohio food consumption that current Ohio production could potentially satisfy. This analysis found that overall, slightly less than half of all Ohio consumption could come from local sources if Ohio farmers continued with current lines of production. It demonstrates the opportunity for Ohio farmers to diversify and fill the gaps in production, and the opportunity for Ohio distributors and retailers to be the connection between producers and consumers in the state. Of note are areas where production significantly lags consumption, including fish, fruits, berries, and nuts (Webb and Clark, 2009).*

* Dr. Clark's food policy briefs are included at the end of this report.



Ohio produces enough fruits, tree nuts and berries to meet a little more than five percent of demand, enough aquaculture production to meet just more than seven percent of total demand, and vegetable, melon, and potato production to meet about 26 percent of total demand in the state.



Dr. Casey Hoy, chair of the Food System Assessment Task Force, and Dr. Krishna P. Vadrevu recently examined the capacity for producing horticultural food crops on land within a 50 mile radius of selected Ohio cities. They identified those areas where the soils are moderately or highly suited for horticultural food crops and where feed crops, primarily corn and soybeans, are currently being grown instead. The map above illustrates areas where a shift in production to support local food systems could bring economic benefits for growers and nutritional and economic benefits for Ohio citizens. (Casey Hoy and Krishna P. Vadrevu, 2009).

Additionally, the Ohio Department of Agriculture allocated funding for a study of local food distribution for Ohio specialty crops. The research will survey distribution companies in the state to determine the level of local food currently in formal distribution channels and assess interest in increasing those levels. The research will also look at models of innovation and make policy recommendations by the end of 2010. The Food System Assessment Task Force is continuing to assemble food-system-related research and identify funding sources for a comprehensive state analysis.

The Food System Assessment Task Force developed guidance for the other three task forces in the development of goals for the impact of food policy. Those goals are listed with the respective task force descriptions. The Food System Assessment Task Force will monitor progress toward achieving these goals.

Healthy Food Access Task Force



This task force works to address the following mission of the Governor's Executive Order:

4c) Provide those in need with greater access to fresh and nutritious foods.

Maximize coordination of federal, state, and local resources; increase participation rates in food assistance programs; ensure the state receive the maximum allocations for federal food assistance; promote full utilization of EBT technology at farmers markets in Ohio; streamline food assistance programs; address nutrition and healthy food access issues; promote farm to school programs as a means of educating children on the source of their food and increasing the availability of healthy food options in Ohio schools.

Goals developed by this task force and approved by the full council:

1. Identify rural and urban food deserts in Ohio by Dec. 31, 2009, and decrease these areas by 10 percent by providing access to healthy, local foods by 2015.
2. Increase the number of schools using the national farm to school program by a minimum of 50 schools by 2015.

Recommendations developed by this task force and adopted by the full council:

Utilize the Farm Bill Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program in Ohio elementary schools. Educate producers on the procurement process as a model to encourage the use of Ohio grown and raised agricultural products including fruits, vegetables, protein and dairy products in Ohio schools. Encourage the Department of Education to advise school districts regarding local purchasing directives in the procurement process.

RATIONALE

The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 includes a nationwide expansion of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program. One billion dollars will be used nationally to provide free fresh fruit and vegetables to low-income children. In 2005, Ohio became one of the original pilot Fruit and Vegetable Program states. Since then, the Ohio Department of Education was able to expand the program from the original 25 schools to the 2009 program serving 80 different schools meeting the 50 percent or more free school meals program enrollment. Changes in Federal Nutrition Program regulations included local procurement options that will allow schools to specify a local preference. This is an opportunity to assist producers in accessing school markets through a better understanding of the procurement process. To capitalize on that opportunity, the state can promote education and outreach on the processes involved for producers, distributors, schools, and institutions.

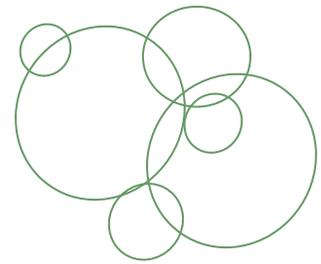
PROGRESS TO DATE

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) has provided guidance to school districts on the change in federal procurement policy that will allow for "geographic preference" in food sourcing. Each year, ODE provides training to schools that will receive USDA funding for produce purchasing. Included in the training is information regarding local product purchasing. Additionally, the Ohio Department of Agriculture conducted interviews with schools that participate in the fruit and vegetable snack program in the state. A report detailing the results of those interviews along with policy recommendations to advance farm to school programs in Ohio have been developed as have additional Web-based resources.

Further work in this area is detailed under the recommendation to "Encourage and promote farm to school supply chain programs," which deals more directly with farm to school program development.



Photo source: Local Matters



Expand and fund the Ohio Food and Agricultural Clearance Program to \$17 million per year / \$34 million per biennium to provide wholesome, Ohio-grown fruits, vegetables, protein, and dairy items to Ohioans with income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

RATIONALE

It is becoming more difficult for food banks and agencies to meet the needs of their clients as donations are down, fuel and food costs are up, and new families continue to arrive at their doors on a daily basis. National and local food donations that have historically supplemented the contributions provided by the state of Ohio, a main food resource for our network, have drastically dropped. From corporate and government to individual donors, from manufacturers to families, the traditional means of support for the hunger relief network are no longer sufficient to meet the rising demand.

Charity alone cannot ensure that food is on the tables of our state's working poor, senior citizens, children and families. The allocated funds went a long way toward addressing this issue but were not enough. The \$8.5 million granted for this program was exhausted early in the year. The shelves at many of the state's foodbanks, particularly outside the major metropolitan areas, are empty (Ohio Association of Second Harvest Food Banks, 2008). The dedication of state resources is necessary to start closing that gap.

PROGRESS TO DATE

A statement of support for increased food resources for needy Ohioans was made by the Council. The outcome of current budget deliberations will determine the amount of increased funding dedicated to meet the growing food needs in the state.

Access all available federal funds through coordination and collaboration and provide sufficient state resources to expand nutrition education and promotion efforts for the following programs:

Ohio Food Assistance Program, Ohio Food Assistance Program Nutrition Education, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, Child Nutrition Programs, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, Food Distribution Programs, Commodity Supplemental Food Program.

RATIONALE

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) works to improve eating and lifestyle behaviors as a preventive approach to reducing diet-related health problems among Americans. Each year, the USDA nutrition assistance programs serve one in five Americans and provide increased access to food and nutrition education for low-income populations. These programs play a vital role in promoting dietary and physical activity behaviors.

PROGRESS TO DATE

The Healthy Food Access Task Force has developed a survey of nutrition education and promotion programs and resources for state agency personnel. The agencies charged with nutrition programming have completed the survey. The task force will identify synergistic opportunities in program coordination, delivery, and any additional needs in the area of nutrition promotion activity.

Ohio receives the third largest grant award from USDA to support the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP). Ohio's SFMNP, which is administered by the Ohio Department of Aging, has a base award for 2009 of \$1,779,625. The award will allow the state to serve Ohio-grown produce to 32,033 low-income, older adults in 38 of Ohio's 88 counties. The SFMNP supports 389 farmers at 93 farmers' markets and 259 roadside stands.

Support food policy changes that provide Ohio Food Assistance Program categorical eligibility and provide simplification to reduce barriers and provide access to all food assistance programs.

RATIONALE

The food assistance program provides states with numerous flexible policy options for implementation. The vast majority of states took advantage of the significant expansion of policy options made available by the passage of the 2002 Farm Bill. While Ohio made some changes, the state had not taken full advantage of the new options and other flexibility under the program's rules. By adopting policies that simplify reporting, remove unnecessary paperwork requirements and coordinate existing programs, Ohio will be eligible for performance bonuses and will ensure that its hungry citizens are able to access the federal Food Assistance Program dollars allocated to them.

Many Ohioans eligible for assistance are denied access or bypass the Ohio Food Assistance Program because of burdensome applications and recertification requirements, unnecessarily stringent asset requirements, or because they are unable to claim child support paid to custodial parents or child care costs as deductions in determining their benefits. This results in the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars of federal food assistance benefits that could benefit hungry Ohioans as well as local and state economies. The U.S. Agriculture Department found that every \$5 in food stamps generates \$9.20 in total community spending (Ohio Association of Second Harvest Food Banks, 2008).

PROGRESS TO DATE

The Food Policy Council supported the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) in their efforts to seek a federal waiver for categorical eligibility. ODJFS was granted the federal waiver and is hoping to provide more food assistance to qualified families across the state. The Council will continue to support efforts to increase the outreach and provision of food assistance to needy families in Ohio.

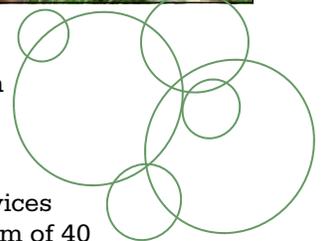
Additional progress in meeting healthy food access goals:

- a.) **Increase access to fresh and healthy food for all Ohioans by increasing the participation rate of nutrition assistance recipients at Ohio farmers' markets.** In

2008, there were approximately 160 farmers' markets in the state, eleven of which could process federal food assistance through the Direction Card. The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) developed a grant program for farmers' markets to create the infrastructure for processing the Ohio Direction Card and assist in outreach to the community. ODA and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services are partnering to implement this grant program. This grant will provide a minimum of 40 new markets with infrastructure grants by December 2010.



Photo source: Julia Barton



- b.) **Identification of "food deserts" in Ohio.** The council will provide support to local governments and food policy groups to identify urban food deserts in Ohio. The council will also work in partnership with the Center for Farmland Policy Innovation at Ohio State University to map rural food deserts across the state. After identification of these areas of need, the council will recommend best practice policy and program options for increasing healthy food access.
- c.) **Increased utilization of healthy Ohio food products through farm to school programming.** The council is currently bringing together partners and resources, reviewing state legislation and developing resources and policy guidance for the promotion of farm to school connections in Ohio.

Maximize participation rates for school food programs.

RATIONALE

Ohio students receive two-thirds of their nutrition through school meal programs. Education of students, families and communities on the benefits of healthy, local food choices will ultimately develop into healthier eating habits, improved student health, and increased nutrition awareness. It will also provide important education about the food and agricultural system while supporting school meal programs.

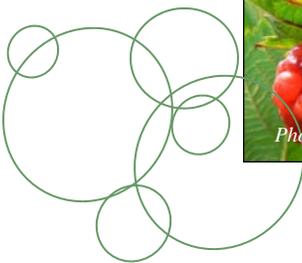
PROGRESS TO DATE

The Ohio Department of Education is providing guidance to area schools about the ability to source local product in the procurement and production of school meals. Planning is underway to disseminate resources and information to school administrators and food service personnel about healthy, local food choices. These efforts aim to increase participation, maximize nutritional benefit, and promote new educational opportunities.

Enhance direct certification by bringing together state agency poverty data with software that will allow for easier data sharing capability.

RATIONALE

Often, families move during the school year. As a result, children who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals may not receive the benefits of the nutrition programs. The goal is to be sure that families who may slip through the cracks or suddenly find themselves in tight economic conditions will be able to maximize school meals benefits.



PROGRESS TO DATE

The Ohio Departments of Job and Family Services and Education are partnering to increase the frequency of data sharing to school districts to reduce paperwork in the determination of free and reduced-price meal benefits to children. This meets the goal of ensuring that children do not lose food assistance eligibility as a result of being transient or a reduction in family income. The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) through the Ohio Benefit Bank has included annual household income eligibility application needed to receive school meal program benefits. As the school meal programs are federal entitlement programs, ODE will provide support to schools for greater participation.

Encourage and promote farm to school supply chain programs by providing technical assistance and information to streamline the procurement process.

RATIONALE

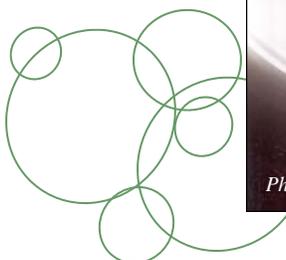
Farm to school initiatives involve connecting schools with local farms by bringing fresh, nutritious foods from local farms into school cafeterias and by offering students experiential learning opportunities through farm visits, and an incorporated nutrition education curriculum. Such initiatives serve both to support local farmers and keep food dollars in the community, and help create a generation of informed food consumers — informed of the nutritional significance of their food choices and the economic, environmental, and social impact. Ohio has a very limited number of schools participating in farm to school programs.

PROGRESS TO DATE

The Ohio Department of Agriculture has developed an online “How to” guide for the development of farm to school programs in Ohio. It includes information on the benefits of these programs, key principles, how to get programs started, distribution options, how to find funding, and examples of schools that have started programs in Ohio. The Farm to School Guide is available at <http://www.agri.ohio.gov/divs/FoodCouncil/FarmToSchool/FarmToSchool.aspx>. The Ohio Department of Education is incorporating healthy food menus and information about sourcing locally into training and workshops. The Healthy Food Access Task Force will continue to partner with agencies and organizations to provide resources to increase the participation for Ohio schools.



Photo source: Angie Otte



Market Connections Task Force



This task force works to address the following mission of the Governor's Executive Order:

4d) Assist Ohio's farmers and business in marketing their food products inside and outside of the State

4e) Develop strategies to link producers and consumers in local food systems

Link producers to consumers, grocers, restaurants, and institutions; support for regional and state markets, identify barriers to local marketing ; promotion of Ohio Proud; identify economic development opportunities in Ohio's food system; examine the state's distribution infrastructure

Goals developed by this task force and approved by the full council:

1. Expand the distribution system assessment to include analysis and recommendations for the location of regional distribution centers across the state by 2011.
2. Identify and build regional food networks across the state starting in May 2009.
3. Increase the amount of local food in the Ohio distribution system by 10 percent by 2015.

Recommendations developed by this task force and adopted by the full council:

Direct resources (\$50,000) toward improving the Ohio Market Maker program. Specifically, conduct outreach to encourage more Ohio producer participation and work with Ohio institutions to get more detailed data on those that are interested in doing local procurement and develop relationships with those institutions.

RATIONALE

MarketMaker is a national network of state Web sites connecting farmers and processors with food retailers, caterers, chefs, and other food supply chain contacts. The network has one of the most extensive collections of searchable food industry related data in the U.S. Each state site allows users to query, map, and locate data on producers, buyers, farmers' markets, wineries, meat processors and more. The site also includes census demographic data and a buyer-seller forum to help "make connections that work."

Ohio began using this national model in March 2008. To make the most of this marketing tool, additional resources are needed to engage more people throughout the food chain. More comprehensive marketing, and a series of potential case studies were identified. Site enhancements were suggested that will encourage greater producer participation and develop more detailed and accurate data on local procurement interest and activity. Ultimately, the connections made through Ohio MarketMaker lead to transactions, ongoing business relationships, and activity to develop the state economy.

PROGRESS TO DATE

The Ohio Department of Agriculture has allocated USDA funding to meet the goals of this recommendation. It is expected that the improvements will be made during the 2009-2010 program years. Dr. Julie Fox, direct marketing specialist at The Ohio State University Extension and member of the Market Connections Task Force, will work with extension educators throughout the state to conduct outreach to producers and make improvements to MarketMaker so that it can be fully utilized as a connector between farmers and markets in Ohio.

To create and retain jobs and leverage existing investment, \$2 million should be appropriated to the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Marketing Division to support a comprehensive public education and marketing campaign for Ohio grown and raised products.



RATIONALE

The Ohio Department of Agriculture invested significant time and resources to bring together food and agriculture stakeholders from across the state to update the Ohio Proud brand. States that have developed a strong brand also dedicate resources to provide the background education and marketing campaign that will allow that brand, as well as other local food marketing efforts, to be successful.

Creating an effective local food marketing and educational campaign that raises awareness about why Ohioans should support local food purchasing and the benefits to Ohio communities will produce tangible results. This investment has strong potential to increase the local food multipliers in the state, create jobs, keep Ohio farmland in production, increase the viability of Ohio farm businesses, decrease the use of energy in long distance transportation, increase quality of life, and protect local food sources.

PROGRESS TO DATE

The resources envisioned for broad-scale public education and marketing were not available in the state budget. Despite limited resources, the Market Connections Task Force is actively pursuing social marketing strategies and developing key partnerships to maximize local food marketing in the state.

Grant funding is secured to train extension educators in the creation of podcasts and video casts of local food stories that can be distributed to media outlets.

Create a directory of existing low or no interest loans, grants, and tax incentive programs available for agricultural businesses focused on local food systems to be housed and maintained at the Ohio Department of Development.

RATIONALE

A compilation of state, local, and federal programs and funding sources for agricultural businesses focused on local food systems would assist in growing this sector of the economy, creating jobs and promoting health.

PROGRESS TO DATE

The Governor's office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives has set up an "Environment and Agriculture" link on their page of Web-based grant resources. Several agencies, including the Ohio Department of Agriculture, USDA Rural Development, and the Ohio Department of Development are encouraged to post resources on this site and provide links from their respective agencies.



Photo source: Amalie Lipstreu

Ohio Food Policy Advisory Council Listening Sessions

The council conducted listening sessions at the following locations in 2008 and 2009:

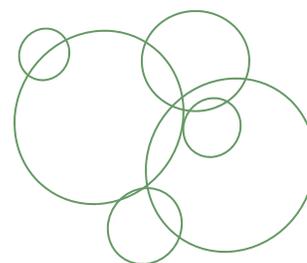
- Northeast Ohio Food Congress
- Ohio Produce Growers and Marketers Association Annual Conference
- Wayne County – OEFFA Real Food Chapter
- Holmes County – OSU Extension
- Center for Innovative Food Technology

Some of the most consistent themes from the listening sessions concerned:



Photo source: Amalie Lipstreu

- variations in local health department regulations at farmers' markets
- a desire for more institutional purchasing, including farm to school program development
- more resources for urban agriculture
- training on cooking and canning
- the development of food business incubators across all Ohio regions
- changes in state regulation. The state should not employ a "one size fits all" approach; consideration should be made for the diverse sizes and types of production
- requests for federal resources to support farm transition into high value and specialty crop production
- more education and outreach on food handling issues — good agricultural and handling practices
- strong support for the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and any expansion that can be made to this and other resources for increased access to healthy food





TED STRICKLAND
GOVERNOR
STATE OF OHIO

Executive Order 2007 – 27S

Creating the Ohio Food Policy Advisory Council

- 1. Ohio's System of Growing and Processing Food is a Key Component of Developing Ohio's Economy.** The State of Ohio has a 93 billion dollar food and agriculture industry and is in the unique position of having both an abundance of land ideally suited for growing and processing food and enough residents to purchase and consume food grown within the State. Because of these advantages, increasing the percentage of food grown, processed and consumed in Ohio will provide significant financial benefits to the entire State and will help preserve Ohio's farmlands and farm operations.
- 2. Ohio Must Ensure That Its Citizens Have Access to Food, Regardless of Their Socioeconomic Status.** Despite Ohio's thriving food industry, there are, regrettably, some Ohioans whose access to food is limited. A recent report from the USDA states that over twelve percent (12%) of Ohio households were uncertain about having, or being able to acquire, enough food to meet the needs of all of the household's family members because there was not enough money or other resources for food.
- 3. Establishment of the Ohio Food Policy Advisory Council.** To ensure that Ohio is taking full advantage of its agricultural industry, I hereby order the creation of the Ohio Food Policy Advisory Council (the "Food Policy Council").

4. **Council Role.** The mission of the Food Policy Council is to:
 - a. Collect and analyze information on the production and process of foods in Ohio, as well as the patterns of food consumption
 - b. Protect Ohio's valuable farmland and water resources by encouraging the growth of food products in Ohio
 - c. Provide those in need with greater access to fresh and nutritious foods
 - d. Assist Ohio's farmers and business in marketing their food products inside and outside of the State
 - e. Develop strategies to link producers and consumers in local food systems

5. **Council Composition.** The Food Policy Council will be composed of the following:
 - a. Representatives of diverse sectors of the food and agricultural industries in the State
 - b. Representatives of various geographic regions of the State
 - c. One member appointed by the President of the Senate and one appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate
 - d. One member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and one appointed by the Minority Leader of the House
 - e. Representatives of state cabinet agencies

6. **Governance; Support Staff; Meetings; Compensation.** The Food Policy Council may adopt by-laws setting forth rules for the governance of the Council and conduct of its meetings. The Ohio Department of Agriculture ("ODA") will provide support staff for the Food Policy Council. The Council shall meet at least on a quarterly basis and the Chair of the Council may call additional meetings as needed. Members of the Council will not receive compensation for their service to the Council. However, consistent with Executive Orders previously issued, members may be reimbursed their reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in conducting business of the Food Policy Council. Such expenses shall be paid by the ODA.

7. I signed this Executive Order on August 7, 2007 in Columbus, Ohio and it will expire on my last day as Governor, unless rescinded before then.


Ted Strickland, Governor



ATTEST:

Jennifer Brunner, Secretary of State

LOCAL FOODS: ESTIMATING CAPACITY FOR OHIO

OHIO FOOD POLICY COUNCIL — FOOD ASSESSMENT TASK FORCE

January 2009, Brief #2009 - 1, Michael Webb and Jill K. Clark

The Problem. While countless activists and many organizations advocate for increased consumption of locally-produced foods, little research has investigated what percentage of foods can be consumed locally, given existing production patterns. To alleviate this gap, Timmons, Wang, and Lass (2002) devised a methodology that could establish the upper limit of foods that could be produced and consumed locally by comparing an estimated nationwide per capita consumption [(production + imports - exports)/per capita] with the production for each state. Since the authors only report aggregated amounts for each state, this brief disaggregates agriculture into major subsectors to determine the percentage of Ohio food consumption that Ohio production could potentially satisfy.

Methodology. To identify what proportion of local foods Ohio’s production currently meets, we compare Ohio’s per capital production of various commodities to the per capita production of these goods nationwide. In essence, we believe that nationwide per capita figures, adjusted for imports and exports, represent the closest estimate of individual consumption. For Ohio, we divided the 2002 market value of nine commodity categories by a 2002 estimate of Ohio’s population. We borrow the U.S. data from Timmons, Wang, and Lass (2002).

Results. Results for the study are in the table below. For each category, the table lists US and Ohio production per capita, and maximum amount of consumption that could be met locally, and the percentage of consumption that could come from local sources. Overall, slightly less than half of consumption in Ohio could be met with Ohio-produced foods. Our research shows that Ohio consumers could meet all of their grain and nearly all of the poultry, eggs, and dairy consumption with food produced within the state. These are strengths to build on. In contrast, the state’s aquaculture, fruits, berries, and nuts production significantly lags consumption within the state. In the case of these products, Ohio has an opportunity to fill gaps in production.

USDA Category	Production per Capita		Maximum Local Food
	US (\$)	OH (\$)	OH (%)
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas	109.04	134.93	100.00%
Vegetables, melons, and potatoes	45.74	11.98	26.19%
Fruits, tree nuts, and berries	59.90	3.02	5.05%
Other crops and hay	27.50	8.86	32.22%
Poultry and eggs	73.70	52.95	71.85%
Beef, pork, and other meat	202.96	39.38	19.40%
Milk and other dairy	71.79	48.32	67.31%
Aquaculture	3.93	0.29	7.44%
Other animals and other animal production	2.50	2.32	92.71%
TOTAL	597.07	299.05	46.25%

Timmons, D., Q. Wang and D. Lass. 2002. “Local Foods: Estimating Capacity”. *Journal of Extension*. 46(5): <http://www.joe.org/joe/2008october/a7.shtml>



LOCAL FOODS: ESTIMATING OHIO CONSUMPTION

OHIO FOOD POLICY COUNCIL — FOOD ASSESSMENT TASK FORCE

February 2009, Brief #2009 - 2, Michael Webb and Jill K. Clark

The Problem. As a push is made for increased production geared toward local consumption, important questions arise about *how much* individuals are consuming of certain products. In other words, if Ohio could produce all of its own food, just how demand do Ohio consumers have in the first place. As such, the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture developed the U.S. Food Market Estimator, which uses per capita consumption data from the USDA's Economic Research Service. Users of the Food Estimator see that it is a powerful tool that can convey a daunting amount of information. This brief presents just a couple results of the Food Estimator - per capita and total yearly consumption data for Ohio consumers for a variety of commodities.

Methodology. We use the Leopold Center's U.S. Food Market Estimator to calculate total yearly consumption in Ohio for selected commodities. The Estimator uses per capita consumption data from the USDA and then multiplies it by the Census' 2007 population estimates. Results are available for all states and counties, but the tool uses uniform per capita consumption data across all geographies. The tool includes over 200 different food products, from broad categories (such as dairy) to specific commodities (like Muenster cheese). Users can choose for results to be reported in various units (pounds, servings, tons), market targets (production needed, amount received by retailers, amount consumed), and timeframe. The Food Estimator also allows users to choose the amount of consumption that will be met by local producers.

Results. Results for certain major commodity groups are listed in the table below. Unfortunately, this tool cannot compare consumption with production, as data provided by the USDA Agriculture Census is not provided in pounds (or any other unit the Food Market Estimator provides). Nevertheless, the results show the vast amounts of food consumed by Ohio consumers and highlight the many opportunities available to those local producers looking to meet the Ohio market. The large results in the yearly consumption column suggest that many opportunities exist for producers, even if they only hope to meet a sliver of demand.

Product	Yearly Per Capita Consumption in Ohio (pounds)	Total Yearly Consumption in Ohio (pounds)
Dairy	266.63	3,057,380,474
Fats and Sugars	242.99	2,786,320,049
Red Meat	158.53	1,817,876,477
Poultry	118.78	1,362,007,113
Fish	16.51	189,277,323
Vegetables	405.59	4,650,904,948
Fruits	268.89	3,083,302,249
Grains	192.84	2,211,325,602