



Piedmont Triad Regional Food Council Report



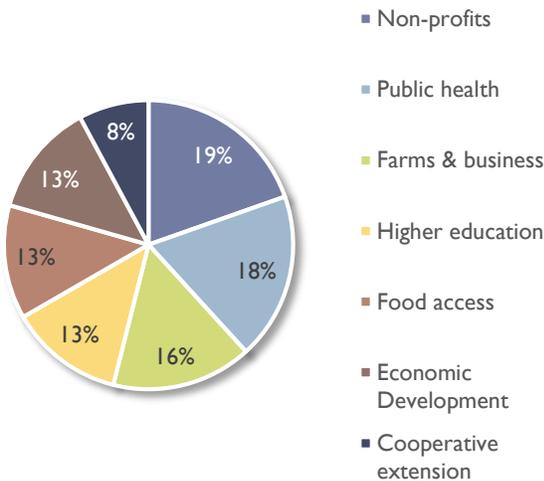
May 2, 2016

Strengthening partnerships to create a thriving, resilient community-based food system

Nearly 60 people, including representatives from all seven local food networks in the region, attended a Triad Regional Food Network Gathering to build relationships across various counties and sectors for greater impact in ensuring all citizens have the means to access and eat healthy food. The Piedmont Triad Regional Council co-hosted this event with Community Food Strategies (CFS) and the Local Food Council of North Carolina (LFCNC) as an opportunity to further initiatives in the Piedmont Together sustainability plan.



Sectors Represented at Event



Food Council Happenings

Six regional food networks gave brief presentations on their work, sharing current priorities and projects as fodder for later conversations and connections. Below is a listing of the presented local food councils or networks:

- Davidson County Local Food Network
- Rockingham County
- Alamance Food Collaborative
- Greater High Point Food Alliance
- Forsyth Community Food Consortium
- Guilford Food Council

New County Local Food and Farm Profiles, showing trends in agriculture census data, were also unveiled.

Regional Indicators

Small groups worked together to better understand the region's assets and needs for improving community health and the local food economy. Community Food Strategies is helping food councils develop regional priorities so that communities and organizations can better align programs and contribute to common goals. The groups each used a similar shared result or goal: *a thriving, sustainable community-based food system across all NC counties*. They developed indicators to track the shift toward that result and ranked the following as priorities:

- Distance low-income residents are to grocery store
- % of local institutions sourcing local foods
- % of population with diabetes or hypertension
- # of favorable policies supporting local foods
- % of population that is food secure

Each group brainstormed various partnerships, actions, and resources that would continue advancing this work. One of the goals of these networking events is to further connections, ideas, and synergies. Review more data from this process on the next page or the full summary of this event at communityfoodstrategies.org.

"It was really great to listen and learn about the work the various food councils are doing, their ongoing needs, and how they define success. This information is very useful as we figure out how the state level Local Food Council of NC can support these efforts. It was wonderful to learn about the great initiatives going on across the Triad region!" noted Nancy Creamer, LFCNC representative and Director of the Center for Environmental Farming Systems.

Selection of Attendee Data from Regional Visioning Exercise

Shared Result:

A thriving, sustainable community-based food system across all NC counties.

Experience

What you would hear, feel, or see if the shared result were true:

- Farmers have reliable, profitable local markets
- Seasonal menus
- Living wage opportunities for all people
- No need for backpack programs
- WIC/SNAP/Senior vouchers accessible at all food outlets
- Strong cross-sector engagement
- Affordable local meat
- Citizens enjoying protected green spaces
- Billboards for u-pick farms
- Garden at every school
- Kids want to farm!
- More diverse farms of all sizes
- More young farmers
- Creative urban design incorporating agriculture
- Fair regulation that promotes agriculture
- Less food wasted
- Preserved farmland

Indicators

What you could measure to track a shift towards the result:

- % of local ownership of food system
- # of FSA loans to beginning farmers
- “Happiness” index
- # of food education options
- Pounds of food in landfills
- Average age of farmers
- Average income of farmers
- % of farms implementing conservation practices
- % of farmers markets that accept SNAP, EBT, WIC, or Senior vouchers
- % of students on free lunch
- % increase in local produce in convenience stores
- % of family’s food income spent on local foods
- Childhood obesity rates
- % of local \$ reinvested in local economy
- % of distribution centers servicing smaller scale farms
- Water quality data

What’s happening

What is already happening in our communities to reach this result:

- NC Farm School
- Triad Community Kitchen
- Culinary programs in high schools and community colleges
- Biodiesel for school buses
- Active FFA program
- Growing 4H program
- Growth of food councils
- More focused work on the root causes of poverty
- Some corner stores selling local food
- Farmers markets accept SNAP vouchers
- Greensboro permaculture guild
- Hospital funds farmers market in food desert
- Davidson County Parks & Recreation runs school garden
- Active, effective FoodCorps program
- Company Shops market in Burlington

Greater Impact

What we could do more of to have greater impact:

- Offer leadership skills and advocacy tools for local leaders
- Provide food & agriculture curriculum and learning experiences for children, including visiting farms
- Create more accessibility for farmers to enter distribution networks and profitable markets
- Conduct Cost Benefit Analysis on not addressing these food system issues
- Assist institutions in navigating obstacles to purchase local foods
- Increase community, non-traditional stakeholder involvement and cross-sector collaboration
- Lead programs to reduce food waste and create market opportunities for non-perfect produce

This is a portion of the ideas generated at this regional gathering. Local food councils plan to continue collaboration at future networking opportunities. View more at www.communityfoodstrategies.org.