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10th Congressional District (IL) Briefing (redistricted)

HEALTHY, FAIR, AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS: Successful Local Food Policies, Projects, and Partners April 2012

CONTENTS

- I. Current Policy Framework for Local Food Systems
 - A. FEDERAL
 - B. STATE OF ILLINOIS
 1. Local Food legislation passed in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
 2. State Legislators in 10th Congressional District who support local foods
 - C. ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGES
 - D. REGIONAL (multi-county)
 - E. COUNTY
 - F. MUNICIPAL AND SCHOOL
- II. Current or Recent Local Food Projects and Partners
 - A. Local food leaders who live in the 10th district, but whose projects are located outside the district
 - B. Local food projects and partners in the 10th District (by municipality)
- III. Local Food Networks Serving 10th District (located outside the district)
 - A. NATIONAL
 - B. REGIONAL (Midwest)
 - C. ILLINOIS
 - D. REGIONAL (Greater Chicago)

I. Current Policy Framework for Local Food Systems

A. FEDERAL

1. Know your Farmer, Know your Food (USDA)

Not a separate law or policy, but a coordinating framework adopted by the USDA. Here is the description from the KYF, KYF homepage.

http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=KYF_MISSION

***Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food* (KYF2)** is a USDA-wide effort to carry out President Obama's commitment to strengthening local and regional food systems.

We know that demand for local and regional foods is strong, as consumers across the country are looking to connect with their food and the people who grow and raise it:

- The number of farmers markets has more than tripled in the past 15 years and there are now more than 7,175 around the country;
- In 1986 there were two community supported agriculture operations, today there are over 4,000;
- There are farm to school programs in 48 states, totaling more than 2,200 and up from two in 1996;
- All 50 states in the U.S. have agricultural branding programs, such as "Jersey Fresh" or "Simply Kansas;"
- As Governor of Iowa, Tom Vilsack started one of the first food policy councils. Today there are over 100 food policy councils;
- And the National Restaurant Association declared "locally sourced meats and seafood" and "locally grown produce" as the top two trends for 2011.

Local and regional markets often provide farmers with a higher share of the food dollar, and money spent at a local business often continues to circulate within community, creating a multiplier effect and providing greater economic benefits to the area.

An Economic Research Service Study ([May 2010](#)) identified barriers to local food market entry and expansion, including capacity constraints for farms, a lack of infrastructure for moving local food into mainstream markets, and regulatory uncertainties. This is the work of the Initiative.

Our mission is to strengthen the critical connection between farmers and consumers and supports local and regional food systems. Through this initiative, USDA integrates programs and policies that:

- Stimulate food- and agriculturally-based community economic development;
- Foster new opportunities for farmers and ranchers;
- Promote locally and regionally produced and processed foods;
- Cultivate healthy eating habits and educated, empowered consumers;
- Expand access to affordable fresh and local food; and
- Demonstrate the connection between food, agriculture, community and the environment.

Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food also leads a national conversation about food and agriculture to strengthen the connection between consumers and farmers.

Thanks to the 2008 [Farm Bill](#), there is more support for local and regional agriculture than ever. To make the most of our programs we are working to foster innovative, effective, and open government. While there is no office, staff, or budget dedicated to KYF2, Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan chairs a task force of USDA employees representing every agency within the Department in order to break down bureaucratic silos, develop common-sense solutions for communities and farmers, and foster new partnerships inside USDA and across the country.

2. Local Farms, Food, and Jobs Act S. 1773 and H.R. 3286

This bill is currently in the pipeline in Congress. Here is the summary as taken from the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition website: <http://sustainableagriculture.net/our-work/local-food-bill/>

Sponsored by Representative Chellie Pingree (Maine) and Senator Sherrod Brown (Ohio)

The Local Farms, Food, and Jobs Act will improve federal farm bill programs that support local and regional farm and food systems. This legislation will help farmers and ranchers engaged in local and regional agriculture by addressing production, aggregation, processing, marketing, and distribution needs and will also assist consumers by improving access to healthy food and direct and retail markets. And of utmost importance, this legislation will provide more secure funding for critically important programs that support family farms, expand new farming opportunities, and invest in the local agriculture economy.

B. STATE OF ILLINOIS

1. Local Food Legislation: Passed in 2009-10 (96th) and 2011-2012 (97th)

Senate Resolution SR0530 Adopted Feb. 9,2012

Sen. D. Koehler

Urges Congress to adopt a farm bill that supports and promotes the development of local and regional food systems.

Illinois Food, Farms, and Jobs Act HB3990 Public Act 96-579

Rep. J. Hamos

- Commissions the **Illinois Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Council** to facilitate development of an Illinois-based food and farm economy, whereby Illinois farmers grow diverse foods and other farm products for Illinois consumers. Goals are based on report commissioned in 2007: **Local Food, Farms, and Jobs: Growing the Illinois Economy** (2009, 48 pages). www.foodfarmsjobs.org
- Sets forth procurement goals for state agencies and state-funded institutions.
- Authorizes the development of a labeling and certification program, whereby a label may be placed on local farm and food products that are grown, processed, packaged, and distributed by Illinois citizens or businesses located wholly within the borders of Illinois.

Farm Fresh Schools Program HB78 Public Act 96-0153

Rep. S. Cole

Illinois Fresh Food Fund (DCEO Capital Bill) SB1221 Public Act 96-0039

Sen. D. Trotter

Obesity Prevention Initiative HB3767 Public Act 96-0155

Rep. E. Coulson

EPA Composting Facilities SB99 Public Act 96-0418

Sen. H. Steans

Solid Waste - Use of Compost SB1932 Public Act 96-0077

Sen. D. Wilhelmi

Farmers Market Technology Improvement Program HB4756 Public Act 96-1088

Rep. L. Ford

Chemical Drift Specialty Crop Farm Registry SJR105 Adopted

Sen. D. Koehler

Farm-to-School Database (Local Food, Farms, & Jobs Act) SB615 Public Act 96-1095

Sen. L. Holmes

Public Health - Honey Exempt SB2959 Public Act 96-1028

Sen. D. Luechtefeld

Farmers Market Task Force SB1852 Public Act 97-0394

Sen. D. Luechtefeld

Food Handling-Cottage Food SB840 Public Act 97-0393

Sen. D. Koehler

Liquor Craft Brewer Distributor SB754 Public Act 97-0005

Sen. D. Trotter

2. State Legislators in 10th Congressional District who support local foods

All 10th Cong. district state legislators in office in 2007 and 2009 voted for the Illinois Food, Farms, and Jobs Acts (both bills were unanimously passed except for one southern Illinois Senator in 2009).

C. ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Illinois Green Economy Network (IGEN): *The Role of Community Colleges in Developing the Illinois Local Food System* (2011, 28 pages). Report of the IGEN Local Food Task Force. www.igencec.org

D. REGIONAL (multi-county)

CMAP Go to 2040 Plan. "Promote Sustainable Local Food" (2010, 18 pages), one of 12 major recommendations by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. CMAP currently working on model ordinances, data collection, etc.

E. COUNTY

- **Cook County Food System Steering Committee.** Writing a snapshot assessment of the Cook County food system and proposing a Cook County food council. Report and ordinance to be completed by March 2012. Under a CDC grant to the Cook County Department of Public Health under the Communities Putting Prevention to Work initiative).
- **Lake County:** working to create some kind of "food council" or county-sponsored local food initiative.

F. MUNICIPAL AND SCHOOL

I have not been able to keep track of all of the municipal and school initiatives that fall under "local food systems" heading. Policies might cover:

- community gardens on public land or unused non-profit land
- backyard livestock (chicken, duck, bee, rabbit, etc.)
- school gardens
- farm-to-school curricula
- farmers markets and farmstands
- food scrap composting (home and commercial)
- home-based businesses of all kinds (production, processing, cooking)
- agricultural zoning (especially as it relates to small acreage)

II. Current or Recent Local Food Projects and Partners

This list does not include all of the many small independent projects and businesses, such as restaurants, grocery stores, farmers markets, community-based agriculture (farms, gardens). There are too many to mention and new ones are popping up every day.

A. Local food leaders who live in the 10th district, but whose projects are located outside the district

----- **Midwest Fruit Explorers** (MidFex), beekeeper, makes squirrel stew, cooks, cans -- a food lover and community treasure.

----- **National Farm to School.** The national office is currently located in Chicago.

----- **Tall-Grass Beef** (Kansas), spokesperson for local foods.

----- **The Organic Gardener**, is the farmer for **Lincoln Park Zoo's edible garden** (Chicago)

B. Local food projects and partners in the 10th District (by municipality)

DEERFIELD

Deerfield Public Library. Partnered with Whole Foods to host "Reading at the Table" book series

Nurture (non-profit based in Highland Park, with many projects in northern Cook County): teaches cooking classes for families in conjunction with food pantries and use of labor-saving appliances (e.g., crock pot). Expanding programming into gardening, etc.

Ryerson Woods

- New Allies (2007-08) with Field Museum to create partnerships among nature, health, and social enterprise groups.
- Sponsored Year of Locally Grown (2009).

Walgreens. Partners with Northwestern University to carry fresh foods in 10 inner city (Chicago) stores.

DES PLAINES

Des Plaines Library frequently features food films (and pays speakers to lead post-film discussion).

Oakton Community College.

- Strong sustainability network: installed edible garden on main campus and community gardens at Skokie campus (in partnership with The Talking Farm)
- Food Systems Workshops for faculty (2010-11). In partnership with the Evanston Food Council and The Talking Farm. Did two rounds of 4 workshops each. Faculty created service learning projects as a result of these workshops: chemistry (soil testing), business (partnered with Glenview farmers market to do a survey of restaurateurs), English as a Second Language (students did interviews over the phone with municipal officials regarding local food projects), economics (students surveyed food prices in grocery stores). Grant co-sponsor No Child Left Inside.

GLENCOE

Chicago Botanic Garden.

- Working farms, job training, food composting: Green Youth Farm, Windy City Harvest, Cook County Sheriff's Boot Camp, etc.
- Numerous programs, classes, initiatives on urban agriculture, community gardens, natural resources.

GLENVIEW -- a "hotbed" of local foods initiatives

Farmers market combining lots of synergistic initiatives:

- Sponsored by Glenview Park District and Wagner Farm
- Hosts a "Green Table" - weekly table featuring different environmental topics and experts
- Successful grant writing: Received grant from local bank under Community Reinvestment Act (for doubling value of Link cards)
- Hosted the March 7, 2012 Farmers Market regional forum for Chicago-area market managers, vendors.
- Manager is member of new Illinois Farmers Market Task Force.

The Grove. 123-acre living museum, part working farm. Glenview Park District.

League of Women Voters - Glenview Chapter spearheading state and national "sustainable food and water policy"

The Organic Pantry Project (TOPP). Church-based community garden feeding hungry

Wagner Farm.

- Historic farm (animals and crops), sponsors farmers market, part of Glenview Park District, does outreach all over the Chicago area.
- Exec. Director is on board of the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences, a national leader in living museums.

GRAYSLAKE - a "hotbed" of local foods activities

College of Lake County.

- Leading the way in developing community college connections to local foods. Current president founded the sustainability network for Illinois community colleges (Illinois Green Economy Network). IGEN released a "local foods" report in 2011 and has an active Local Foods Working Group.
- Brae Loch. Creating a working farm under the auspices of CLC.
- Hosted Midwest Ecological Landscaping Assn. conference (Feb. 2012).

Prairie Crossing.

- Vicky Ranney, co-founder. Vicky was on the task force created by the Illinois Food, Farms, and Jobs Act, 2007-08
- Charter School: farm-to-school programs
- Small farm incubator: Farmer training, land, shared equipment, etc.
- Farmers Market

Heartland Flavors. Providing positive experiences of food to children and adults.

Liberty Prairie Foundation. Founding member of Fresh Taste, a funders collective for the Great Lakes foodshed (based in Chicago).

Lake County Fairgrounds. Home of the annual county fair, one of the most well-attended in the Chicago area.

HIGHLAND PARK

Ravinia farmers market. One of the oldest markets in the Chicago area (Wednesday market).

Heller Nature Center. Beekeeping, natural resource conservation, educational programs.

LAKE FOREST

Elawa Farm. Historic 18-acre gentleman's farm turned into a living museum.

METTAWA

Stevenson Center on Democracy.

- Hosted events on Woman's Land Army (World War I) in October 2010.
- Board president is supportive of sustainability and local foods.

- A founding board member (and long-time Lake County Board commissioner) is also aware of local food issues as it might relate to the Stevenson Center and a healthy democracy.

MUNDELEIN

Alternative Behavior Treatment Center. Production garden partially integrated into high school curriculum (students are mostly wards of the state)..

NORTH CHICAGO

Green Youth Farm - project of Chicago Botanic Garden

WAUKEGAN

Green Town Project. Urban gardening.

FIST (Former Inmates Striving Together)

Nu-Earth Organics (food scrap composting business just getting started. Will take Northwestern University food scraps.)

PROJECTS WITH MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

Chicago Wilderness: Most natural areas in the 10th district (forest preserves, nature centers, etc.) are members of the Chicago Wilderness consortium, which has a strong biodiversity and Green Infrastructure component in its overall mission. No Child Left Inside provides grants and programming to all sorts of edible gardening, service learning projects (see Oakton Community College)

Cook County Farm Bureau: Ag in the Classroom and other educational programs for 3rd grade, 4th grade, junior high, and high school students.

III. Local Food Networks Serving 10th District

(located outside the district)

Publicly accessible groups, e-mail lists, meetings, media, etc. Based in Illinois unless otherwise indicated.

A. NATIONAL (too many to mention all)

Community Food Security Coalition (Portland, OR). Sustainable local and regional food systems. Active list-servs and support resources. Policy, technical assistance, programs. <http://www.foodsecurity.org/>

Crossroads Resource Center. Tools for Community Self-determination. <http://www.crcworks.org/>

Ken Meter has been studying local food and farm economies for years, often on a case-by-case basis. His studies are very readable. Many are free (downloadable).

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
Women, Food, and Agriculture Network
Foodroutes (Buy Fresh, Buy Local campaign)
National Farm to School
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture
Farmers Market Coalition
National Family Farm Coalition
Food Chain Workers Alliance
Hunger and Environmental Nutrition group
Wild Farm Alliance

B. REGIONAL (Midwest)

Good Greens (Chicago). USDA Food & Nutrition Service - Midwest Office (IL, IN, MI, MN, WI, OH).
www.goodgreens.org/

WCPT Radio. Mike Nowak Show (Chicago, Sunday mornings, 9:00 - 11:00). Mike is the voice of local foods in the Chicago area. Current President of the Chicago Recycling Coalition, co-founder of the Midwest Ecological Landscape Association, and all-around spokesperson for local foods and sustainability. Many, many listeners in 10th district.

CEED@Chicago Coalition. Based at University of Illinois-Chicago. Minimize the impact of cardiovascular disease and diabetes in the Latino and African American communities. Quarterly meetings, monthly committee meetings. www.ceedchicago.org

Chicago Farmers (Chicago). Annual Farmland Investment Fair, monthly meetings (200 S. Wacker). Fee. www.chicagofarmers.org/

Evanston Food Council (Evanston). Develops community-food projects, strategic partnerships, and food systems policies. Contact: Debbie Hillman DLHillman@sbcglobal.net 847/328-7175.

The Land Connection and **Midwest Farm Connection** (Congerville). Education, farmer training programs, local producers-consumers connection. <http://www.thelandconnection.org/>

Michael Fields Agricultural Institute (East Troy, WI). Research, education, advocacy. www.michaelfieldsagainst.org

C. ILLINOIS

Illinois Local Food & Farms Coalition. Grassroots, statewide urban-rural events, legislative alerts, discussions related to localizing the Illinois farm and food economy. Wrote, passed the Illinois Food, Farms, and Jobs Acts (2007, 2009). Yahoo Group list-serv: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/IllinoisLocalFoods/>

Illinois Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Council (Springfield). Meets quarterly in Springfield. www.foodfarmsjobs.org

Illinois Farmers Market Association (Springfield). The Illinois Farmers Market Association helps farmers markets, their managers, and their vendors develop best practices via workshops, consultation, and peer-to-peer sharing of resources and information. Informally created in 2008, IFMA was formalized in January 2012. Serves all 300+ Illinois markets. <http://illinoisfarmersmarkets.wordpress.com/>
Google Group: <http://groups.google.com/group/illinoisfarmersmarkets?hl=en>

Illinois Green Economy Network (IGEN) Local Foods Task Force. Illinois Community Colleges. <http://www.igence.org/workgroups/local-foods>

Illinois Interagency Nutrition Council (Springfield). Promotes health and wellness through nutrition education, coordination of services and access to nutrition programs so that Illinois residents can achieve food security. <http://inc.aces.illinois.edu/>

Illinois Public Health Association - Food and Nutrition Section (Springfield). Connects public health departments with food access and food security issues and policies. www.ipha.com/

Illinois Stewardship Alliance (Springfield). Promotes establishment of sustainable local food systems and facilitates creation of food policy councils. www.ilstewards.org/

D. REGIONAL (Greater Chicago)

Advocates for Urban Agriculture (Chicago). <http://auachicago.org/>
AUA is a coalition of organizations and individuals open to anyone interested in learning about, networking, and advocating for urban agriculture in the Chicago Area. Google Group list-serv.

Chicago Chicken Enthusiasts: Grassroots group especially for backyard chicken farmers. Google Group list-serv: <http://groups.google.com/group/chicago-chicken-enthusiasts?hl=en>

University of Chicago (Chicago). **Environment Agriculture and Food Working Group.** Program on the Global Environment. <http://eaf.uchicago.edu/>

University of Illinois-Chicago. Chicago Area Food Studies Working Group. Institute for the Humanities. www.uic.edu/depts/huminst/food_grp.shtml

Northwestern University. NU Sustainable Food Talks. New food clearinghouse for staff, faculty, students, and community. <http://nusustainablefoodtalks.blogspot.com/>