



**A Community-Based
Food System:
Building Health, Wealth,
Connection, and Capacity
as the Foundation of
Our Economic Future**

Virginia Cooperative Extension



A Community-Based Food System: Building Health, Wealth, Connection, and Capacity as the Foundation of Our Economic Future

Developed for the Martinsville/Henry County Region

*Prepared by
Eric S. Bendfeldt, Martha Walker, Travis Bunn, Lisa Martin, and Melanie Barrow*

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A local food system and strategic planning initiative of the Harvest Foundation,
Patrick County Chamber of Commerce, Reynolds Homestead,
Economic Development Authority of Patrick County, and Virginia Cooperative Extension.



Virginia Cooperative Extension



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A Community-Based Food System: Building Health, Wealth, Connection and Capacity as the Foundation of Our Economic Future

Executive Summary

Interest in and demand for local foods continues to grow in Virginia and across the United States. The unprecedented demand for local and regionally identified foods has created a myriad of economic and social opportunities for agricultural producers and communities.

Leaders in the Martinsville region realized that a robust, community-based food system could contribute to the economic, social, and environmental stability of local farms and communities. They examined the region's capacity for expanding agricultural production and creating value-added products, and they explored the potential to build and utilize the local food and farming system to meet growing demand and to be a foundational economic development tool.

A local food system assessment and strategic planning effort was initiated in 2010 by the Harvest Foundation, Patrick County Chamber of Commerce, Reynolds Homestead, Economic Development Authority of Patrick County, and Virginia Cooperative Extension. Community members were actively involved to build on this interest and to lay a foundation for the region's economic future.

After months of discussion and data collection, four overarching goals and work areas were identified to guide the development of a local food system and strategic planning initiative.

A strong food and farming system should:

1. Advance the health and well-being of the population.
2. Improve the local community's economic wealth and vitality.

Key Findings

- The food and farming system is critical to economic vitality and community health; however, it is often overlooked and undervalued.
- Households in the Martinsville region spend \$1 billion annually for food.
- Of this amount, \$577 million is spent on groceries; however, almost all of this money leaves the local economy.
- If households in the region spent 15 percent of their weekly food budget on locally grown food products, \$90 million in new farm income would be created for the region.
- In 2007, \$274 million worth of crops and livestock were produced and sold.
- Health care costs for treating diabetes in the region are \$239 million per year.
- The Martinsville region has convenient market access to 60 percent of the U.S. consumer population within a leisurely day's drive.

3. Increase connections and opportunities to improve food access and meet demand.
4. Enhance the capacity to produce, process, distribute, and consume food locally and regionally.

Through the achievement of these goals, each community and the region will realize an improvement in:

- Health.
- Wealth.
- Connection.
- Capacity.

As part of this initiative, Ken Meter of the Crossroads Resource Center conducted a local food and farm



economic study of the Martinsville region to examine the potential for community-based food and farm system development. The study area included the cities of Danville and Martinsville and the counties of Henry, Patrick, Carroll, Floyd, Franklin, and Pittsylvania in Virginia, and Caswell and Rockingham counties in North Carolina.

The two cities and eight counties that constitute the Martinsville region have the potential to establish a robust, community-based food system. Utilizing the available information, analytical tools, and the comments from numerous stakeholders, recommendations have been developed that will move the concept of a community-based food system from vision to reality for economic recovery, long-term community resilience, and improved quality of life.

Recommendations

The recommendations for the community-based food system initiative are:

- Establish a coalition of stakeholders organized to serve as the steering committee for the community-based food system providing oversight to work groups, connection to community networks, access to manpower, and linkage to intellectual capital. The coalition would benefit and improve the probability of sustainability if it were adopted by an organization that could provide some staff support and organizational expertise and that has the capacity to receive and manage funding.
- Organize work groups to develop goal statements and strategies for each of the four areas identified during the January and March discussions. The strategies include:
 - Increase consumer demand and community engagement.
 - Establish progressive producer outreach and production development.
 - Connect institutional, restaurant, and wholesale opportunities with agricultural producers and food-based entrepreneurs.

- Develop appropriate infrastructure and resources for sustaining a community-based food system.
- Implement a plan of action related to identified goals and strategies.
- Work with regional economic development entities and local governments to give local agriculture a higher priority and more visibility.
- Develop a community indicator report on the components of a community-based food system that signal social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Deliver the indicator of progress report to the region at least annually.
- Compile a database of agricultural producers and value-added product entrepreneurs.
- Offer recurring trainings for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and organic certification.
- Promote the registration of producers and food-based entrepreneurs with online databases such as Virginia Grown, Local Dirt, and other sites.
- Establish a network of agricultural producers, value-added product entrepreneurs, farmers markets, restaurants, schools, universities, hospitals, and other institutions that would utilize locally produced products.
- Develop a local brand identity to increase visibility, foster a culture of food and farm entrepreneurship, and create a sense of place.
- Prepare a model business plan for food-based entrepreneurs to assist them in accessing small business technical assistance and resources.

Through strategic thinking and the engagement of multiple community and regional partners, the Martinsville regional food system will deliver a return on the initial investment that will positively impact the health and economic status of the region. However, economic growth based on a community-based food system will occur only through highly focused and directed actions by the region's leadership. This region has the capacity to implement the strategic plan and deliver the vision.

Introduction

Interest in and demand for local foods continues to grow in Virginia and across the United States. The unprecedented demand for local and regionally identified foods has created a myriad of economic and social opportunities from the farm to the table for agricultural producers, food-based entrepreneurs, and communities.

Leaders in the Martinsville region realized that a robust, community-based food system could contribute to the economic, social, and environmental stability of local farms, businesses, and communities. They examined the region's capacity for expanding agricultural production and creating value-added products, and they explored the potential to build and utilize the local food and farming system to meet growing demand and to be an economic development tool.

A local food system assessment and strategic planning effort was initiated in 2010 by the Harvest Foundation, Patrick County Chamber of Commerce, Reynolds Homestead, Economic Development Authority of Patrick County, and Virginia Cooperative Extension. Community members were actively involved to build on this interest and to lay a foundation for the region's economic future.

After months of discussion and data collection, four overarching goals were identified to guide the development of a local food system and strategic planning initiative.

A strong food and farming system should:

1. Advance the health and well-being of the population.
2. Improve the local community's economic wealth and vitality.
3. Increase connections and opportunities to improve food access and meet demand.
4. Enhance the capacity to produce, process, distribute, and consume food locally and regionally.

Key Findings

- The food and farming system is critical to economic vitality and community health; however, it is often overlooked and undervalued.
- Households in Martinsville and the surrounding eight-county region spend \$1 billion buying food each year.
- Of this amount, \$577 million is spent on groceries; however, almost all of this money leaves the local economy.
- If households in the region spent 15 percent of their weekly food budget on locally grown food products, \$90 million in new farm income would be created for the region.
- In 2007, \$274 million worth of crops and livestock were produced and sold.
- Health care costs for treating diabetes in the region are \$239 million per year.
- The Martinsville region has convenient market access to 60 percent of the U.S. population within a leisurely day's drive.

Through the achievement of these goals, each community and the region will realize an improvement in:

- Health.
- Wealth.
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As part of this initiative, Ken Meter of the Crossroads Resource Center conducted a local food and farm economic study of the Martinsville region to examine the potential for community-based food and farm system development. The study area included the cities of Danville and Martinsville and the counties of Henry, Patrick, Carroll, Floyd, Franklin, and Pittsylvania in Virginia, and Caswell and Rockingham counties in North Carolina (figure 1).



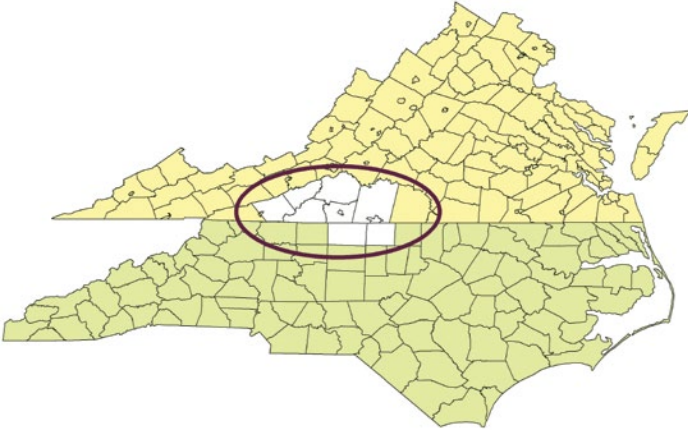


Figure 1. Virginia and North Carolina counties studied by Ken Meter of the Crossroads Resource Center.

This report for the Martinsville region outlines what a food system is and how it can build health, wealth, connection, and capacity around food and farming at the community and regional levels. Consumer demand for locally grown and sourced food is unprecedented. The Martinsville region has the acreage, labor, and convenient market access to capitalize on this community economic development opportunity as a means to address economic recovery, promote health, and enhance long-term community resilience and quality of life.

What Is a Food System?

The food system is an important component of community economic development and an indicator of social well-being within a community and region. Yet, the food system is often overlooked and undervalued as a means and strategy for building health, wealth, connection, and capacity where the food is produced (Meter 2011).

Because everyone needs to eat each day to thrive, the food system affects and touches everyone on a daily basis. Therefore, the local food system is an important resource and consideration for long-term community economic development and well-being.

When the food system is considered more comprehensively and holistically, its relationship to community health, wealth, connections, capacity, and other elements of overall community well-being becomes

more apparent. Because a food system is so closely interconnected to the production, processing, distribution, sales, purchasing, preparation, consumption, and waste disposal pathways of food, its significance cannot be overstated.

A community-based food system can be defined as being socially embedded, economically invested, and integrated across food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste disposal to build health, wealth, connection, and capacity in a particular place. (Garrett and Feenstra 1999; Meter 2011).

A community-based food system is also directly connected to community and social viability, environmental stewardship, the viability of small- and medium-scale farms, farmland protection, the health of individuals, and overall food security (figure 2).

Components and markets of a local, community-based food system may include:

- Farmers markets.
- Community-supported agriculture (CSAs).
- U-pick operations and roadside stands.
- Food cooperatives and chefs collaboratives.
- Community gardens.
- Farm-to-school, -university, -hospital, and -institution programs.
- Food and meat processors.
- Produce and livestock auctions.
- Food banks and community food pantries.
- Community kitchens.
- Producer cooperatives.
- Grocery stores, restaurants, and food service operations.

From an asset-based, community economic development perspective, the local food system will include most of these components and markets, but it also seeks to build on local needs, resources, design, investment, and control to be more locally integrated and community-based.



Figure 2. Circle of food system connections. Adapted from the C. S. Mott Group at Michigan State University.

Why Is a Community-Based Food System Important?

Virginia communities face a multitude of economic, environmental, and social challenges. The prolonged recession has generated a sense of urgency and has triggered discussions about community economic development strategies that will promote short-term economic recovery and long-term economic vitality, community viability, and improved quality of life.

Challenges and obstacles facing Virginia communities include:

- Job loss and dwindling revenue streams.
- Decline in rural community vitality.
- Loss of small and mid-size farms.
- Loss of farmland and working landscapes.
- Rise in obesity and diet-related chronic diseases.
- Increase in environmental constraints.
- Increase in household food insecurity.

For some communities dependent on manufacturing and other industries, the economic downturn has been longer and more persistent. During these challenging times, it is important from a community economic

Potential Outcomes of a Vibrant, Community-Based Food System

Health

- Improved individual and community nutrition.
 - Reduced obesity and diet-related healthcare costs.
 - Improved soil, water quality, and environment.
 - Improved food security for individuals and households.
 - Increased food recovery, reuse, and recycling.
-

Wealth

- Increased sales and net income for local farms and food enterprises.
 - Increased number of locally owned, independent businesses.
 - Increased employment in production, processing, distribution, and retail.
 - Increased choices and opportunities for farmers and consumers due to a diverse, robust agricultural economy.
-

Connection

- Increased direct connections among farmers, producers, wholesalers, retailers, manufacturers, processors, distributors, public health providers, and consumers.
 - Expanded farm-to-school, farm-to-university, and other institutional programs.
 - Increased local government efforts to expand local markets and access for local products.
 - Recognized by the community food system as an asset-based social and economic development strategy.
-

Capacity

- Improved storage, processing, and distribution infrastructure.
 - Increased educational training and networking from farm, to table, to fork.
 - Increased production and consumption of locally grown foods.
 - Expanded protection of working landscapes and retention of local arable farmland for present and future food production.
 - Improved community resilience.
-

development perspective to examine the foundational assets of the local community and economy.

Within the context of community economic development, food and farming can often be overlooked as an asset for economic recovery and future economic development. And yet, the food and farming system is directly related to:

- Nutrition, education, and critical health issues.
- Financial well-being of producers, consumers, and communities.
- Social and economic development.
- Working landscapes and the natural environment.
- Local identity, history, and culture.
- People's values and society's policies.
- Overall rural and urban quality of life.

A vision to reintroduce consumers to producers and link health, food, farming, and the economy will require leadership and dedication. Entrepreneurial farmers, food business owners, community-based work groups, community and economic development personnel, government officials, and the research and education communities will need to be connected and involved through good communication and collaboration to achieve the projected outcomes.

Assessment of the Local Food System

To plan and build for the future, it is necessary to assess the current situation and understand the assets, challenges, opportunities, and priorities for moving forward. Using a participatory process, the local food assessment and strategic plan for food system enhancement has focused on identifying and building on the assets within Martinsville and the surrounding eight-county study area.

In January 2011, two discussion sessions with area stakeholders took place. Through these discussions, participants listed numerous community assets, including:

- The land, people, and tradition of the region.
- Facilities such as the certified kitchen incubator at the Spencer-Penn Centre.
- Availability of square footage for the processing industry, cold storage, and distribution.
- The region's climate for growing a variety of food.
- Accessibility to metropolitan areas such as Raleigh-Durham, Winston-Salem, Greensboro, Roanoke, Charlottesville, and the mid-Atlantic region by multiple four-lane highways (appendix A).

Additionally, (1) existing markets have demonstrated the success of a coordinated local food initiative, (2) local funders appear to be interested in supporting a local food system project, and (3) educational and training resources are available through regional partners to support the implementation and sustainability of a local food system.

The planning team utilized the Crossroads Resource Center as one resource to assess the eight-county region around Martinsville and to develop a report on the local farm and food economy. The report, presented at both January sessions, provided the participants with a clear



understanding of the potential economic impact should a community-based food system approach be adopted for the region. Based on this assessment and the expanding interest of the participants, a plan for strategically developing a local food system was launched.

As an outcome of this community-based food system initiative, a coalition of the region's food system stakeholders was

formed. The priority issues identified in this reporting and planning process will be addressed through four work groups:

1. Consumer demand and community engagement.
2. Infrastructure and resources.
3. Institutional, retail, and wholesale opportunities.
4. Producer outreach and supply development.

Within the coalition, the work groups will further develop the goals and prioritize the strategies and action steps to strengthen and enhance the local food system. The food and farming system is often overlooked and undervalued as a community economic development strategy. However, the food and farm system can be a foundational economic driver for communities and the region. The goal of the assessment and strategic planning is to build health, wealth, connection, and capacity within communities and the region through development and enhancement of the local and regional food system.

A Health Perspective

One of several reasons to address and strengthen the food and farm system is that many communities are facing a crisis of food access, nutrition, and health.

Currently, one in six Americans is considered "food insecure," which means being unable to afford balanced meals, reducing the size of meals, or being hun-

gry because of too little money for food. Households are considered food secure when they have physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food all the time. In 2009, Virginia's food insecurity rate was 9.2 percent, which was below the U.S. average of food insecurity (Nord et al. 2009).

With the economic downturn, the number of communities wrestling with food-insecure households continues to rise.

Food insecurity and limited access to fresh local foods is an issue affecting low-income residents of the Martinsville region.

Poverty and economic distress affect all communities and can limit food access and increase nutritional needs. More than 104,000 residents (30 percent) earn less than 185 percent of federal poverty guidelines. At this level of income, children qualify for free or reduced-price lunches at school. These lower-income residents spend an estimated \$215 million each year buying food, including \$70 million in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) and additional Women, Infants and Children (WIC) coupons.

As in many other communities throughout the U.S., food distribution and access in this region can be disproportionate, causing some people to suffer from food insecurity and others to suffer from other diet-related health conditions.

In 2002, the Virginia Center for Healthy Communities reported that 24 percent of adult Virginians were obese and 35 percent were overweight. Virginia has the 14th-highest obesity-related health care costs in the 50 states, and direct obesity-attributable health care costs reached more than \$1.6 billion in 2003.

Further, those costs have continued to rise over the past decade. Current annual diet-related health care costs

“If consumers in Martinsville and the surrounding eight-county region purchased 15 percent of their food directly from the region’s farmers, \$90 million of new farm income would be created in the region.”

~ Ken Meter
Crossroads Resource Center

are \$4.5 billion for Virginia and \$5.3 billion for North Carolina (Meter 2011). Health care costs for treating diabetes in the Martinsville region are \$239 million per year. The costs for the Winston-Salem metro area are \$277 million per year.

This health crisis presents a tremendous challenge for communities and future generations, as currently only 2 percent of children ages 2 to 19 meet the recommended standards for a

healthy diet, and only 25 percent get at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise five days a week. As a result, one in three U.S. children and adolescents is either overweight or obese. The U.S. Surgeon General has stated that because of the unprecedented increase in obesity and related chronic diseases, today's youth may actually have a shorter life span than their parents (The Food Trust 2011).

A Wealth Perspective

Ken Meter of the Crossroads Resource Center states that local foods as part of a community-based food system approach may be the best path toward economic recovery and resilience because it builds health, wealth, connection, and capacity in the local economy and community. Additionally, because we all eat every day and people generally postpone purchasing other consumer goods before they abandon purchasing food, everyone contributes to the effort.

U.S. consumers spend \$1.2 trillion for food each year. In 2008, food purchases were the No. 2 household expenditure after housing expense. Because of Virginia's climate and diverse physiographic regions, there is tremendous potential to increase the production and consumption of high-quality fruits and vegetables from local and regional sources for more nutritious food and healthier diets.

Increasing direct connections with producers and consumers is a sound, asset-based social and economic

development strategy for rural and urban communities. From an economic perspective, encouraging the buying and consumption of local foods can have a positive impact on the local economy by recirculating and reinvesting dollars in local, independently owned businesses.

The Martinsville region’s 413,000 residents earn \$12.5 billion annually. Although income from the region’s manufacturing sector fell by \$2.1 billion over the past decade, people in the region still have significant purchasing power.

In regard to food purchasing power, households in this region spend \$1 billion buying food each year. Of this amount, \$577 million is spent on food for home use. If more of these food-purchase dollars were directed toward locally grown food and farm products from the Martinsville region, \$90 million of new farm income could be created in the region (Meter 2011).

Virginia Cooperative Extension conducted a similar economic analysis of the direct economic impact of local food purchases (Benson and Bendfeldt 2007). The analysis showed that if each household in Virginia spent \$10 of its total weekly grocery expenditure on locally grown food, it would have a direct, state-wide economic impact of \$1.65 billion. This relatively small, conscious effort by consumers and residents to spend \$10 — about the equivalent of one movie ticket a week — on local foods in support of local agriculture shows a significant regional and state benefit (table 1).

These projections indicate a potential economic opportunity for locally owned businesses to meet demand, and for communities and the region to retain more food dollars for the local economy. During this time of economic distress and recession, it is critical to capitalize on potential economic opportunities, particularly those that would require little short-term investment and could offer a long-term financial benefit.

Table 1. Annual economic impact if each Virginia household would spend \$10 of its weekly food expenditure on locally grown food.

Locality/region	Economic impact
Martinsville	\$3.3 million
Henry County	\$12.4 million
Patrick County	\$5.3 million
Virginia	\$1.65 billion

Additionally, it is important to evaluate possible economic leakage from the community and region. Economic leakage simply means total sales within the area are not as much as they could be based on the area’s population, income, capacity, and existing resources. Leakage suggests local producers and businesses could more effectively meet the demand and capture more dollars that are already circulating in the area (Sharp, Webb, and Smith 2009).

A Connection Perspective

There are existing producers, businesses, and organizations working to connect with consumers and meet the demand of these emerging markets. A review of other communities has exposed numerous examples that could serve as models for this initiative (appendix B).

Additionally, many locally grown food and farm products that buyers and consumers are demanding and looking for are already available or being produced in the Martinsville region. In 2010, area producers reported significant acreage of apples, broccoli, cabbage, cherries, cilantro, peaches, peppers, potatoes, pumpkins, squash, and sweet corn. All of these products are on consumers’ “most-wanted” list (appendix E).

A Capacity Perspective

Food production and an agricultural tradition are among the assets and resources that characterize the Martinsville region. There are 6,642 farms with an average farm size of 157 acres. One-third of the farms in the region are smaller than 50 acres.

With a large land base and more than 1 million acres of land in farms, the potential exists for farms to diversify and offer more differentiated food products in the local and regional food market and system. Of this amount of land, 258,507 acres was harvested cropland in 2007

(Meter 2011; U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) 2009a, 2009b).

Also in 2007:

- \$274 million of crops and livestock were sold in 2007. This is an increase of 23 percent over 2002 sales.
- \$97 million of crops were sold (36 percent of sales), about the same as in 2002.
- \$177 million of livestock and products were sold (64 percent of sales).
- 4,491 (68 percent) of the region's farms sold less than \$10,000 of products.
- These farms sold a total of \$11 million of commodities, 4 percent of total sales for the region.
- 432 farms (7 percent) sold more than \$100,000 of products.
- These larger farms sold \$203 million of commodities, 74 percent of the region's production.
- 60 percent of the region's farms (3,982 of 6,642) reported net losses.
- The region's farmers collected a combined \$4.6 million of federal commodity support payments.
- Production expenses rose 32 percent from 2002 to 2007.
- The region's farmers purchased \$42 million of feed — the No. 1 production cost.

As previously stated, the Martinsville region spends \$1 billion on food each year. Most of this food is grown and processed outside the region. It is estimated that only \$2.6 million of food products (0.8 percent of farm cash receipts and 0.3 percent of the region's consumer market) are sold by farmers directly to consumers (Meter 2011; USDA 2009b).

An Assessment Perspective

To build health, wealth, connection, and capacity around the local food and farm system, indicators of social, economic, and environmental sustainability should be assessed to gauge progress. According to a 2009 University of Michigan study, a more community-oriented food system should:

- Increase farm income.
- Build local food infrastructure.
- Link local food to chefs and the local food entrepreneur to the local food supply.
- Provide education.
- Engage youth.
- Make nutritious food available.
- Increase ethnic and cultural food options.
- Foster producer-consumer interactions.
- Conserve natural resources.
- Enhance soil quality.
- Reduce transportation energy.
- Reuse vacant land.
- Encourage recycling and reuse.
- Increase biodiversity.

Local and Regional Brand Identity

To tie the concept and effort to build health, wealth, connection, and capacity together in communities and throughout the region, development of a local and regional brand identity can be a key initial strategy to increase demand and foster a culture of food and farm entrepreneurship to serve local and regional markets. The branding effort would give greater visibility to local agriculture and food enterprises. It would also complement existing community development efforts to cultivate a musical/artisanal culture and business sectors in the region.

Logos displayed in appendix C are examples of branding efforts in Virginia and across the United States. Some logos are used only by a specific county, while others represent a broader identified region.

Conclusion

The food and farming system is critical to the economic vitality and the overall health and well-being of rural and urban communities. The unprecedented demand for high-quality, local food provides a sound and viable community economic opportunity for the Martinsville region. By developing and enhancing the local food system, it provides an opportunity for the region to invest in itself, in existing community assets, and in the long-term health, education, and well-being of its communities.

Current demand has set the stage for an unprecedented potential for expanding the production, processing, and distribution of locally and regionally identified foods. Economic opportunities exist for farmers, producers, retailers, and others within the food system to meet the local and regional demand from the farm to the consumer's table.

A comprehensive and strategic approach to the development of a community-based food system will have a substantial impact on job creation and retention, farm income, and community well-being. The Martinsville region is well-positioned to expand local farm and food production to serve retail markets in the surrounding metro areas of Roanoke, Raleigh-Durham, Piedmont Triad (Greensboro, High Point, Winston-Salem), and Charlottesville. The region also has convenient market access to 60 percent of the U.S. population within a leisurely day's drive.

This region has the potential to develop a local and regional brand identity, thereby increasing demand, fostering a culture of food and farm entrepreneurship

to serve local and regional markets, and creating a sense of place. The branding effort would give greater visibility to local agriculture and food enterprises and would complement the region's economic development efforts to cultivate a musical/artisanal culture and business sector in the region.

As an outcome of this community-based food system initiative, a coalition of the region's food system stakeholders has been formed. The priority issues identified in this reporting and planning process will be addressed through four work groups:

1. Consumer demand and community engagement.
2. Infrastructure and resources.
3. Institutional, retail, and wholesale opportunities.
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Within the coalition, the work groups will further develop the goals and prioritize the strategies and action steps to strengthen and enhance the local food system. The coalition will also have to address potential challenges and barriers related to markets, regulations and traditions as the initiative moves forward. The food and farming system is often overlooked and undervalued as a community economic development strategy, but it can be a foundational economic driver for a region.

A community-based food system can be restorative and be a source and strong foundation for health, wealth, connection, and capacity. Leadership, communication, collaboration, and dedication will be required to reintroduce consumers to producers and better link food, farming, health, and the economy

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Appendix A. Summary of Community-Based Food System Discussions

The following community assets, challenges and barriers, and goals and strategies were identified through workshops and follow-up discussions.

Physical (land, water resources, roads, buildings, climate)	
Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land is available for crop and livestock production. • The geography of the Piedmont/Blue Ridge region and its microclimates allows for an extended growing season. • A wide variety of products can be grown locally because of the climate and adequate rainfall. • Climate in the region offers a perfect environment for production.
Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spencer-Penn Centre has a certified kitchen incubator. • Martinsville has significant square footage available for a processing industry, cold storage, and distribution. • An empty Food Lion facility is available in Stuart.
Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routes 58 and 220 allow for easy access and transportation to markets. • Raleigh-Durham, the Piedmont Triad (Winston-Salem, Greensboro, and High Point), Roanoke, Charlottesville, and the mid-Atlantic region are very accessible markets.
Social/Cultural (people, communities)	
Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a critical mass of interested people who are ready to implement a local community-based food system plan.
Tradition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a tradition of “scratch bakers” in the region to serve as buyers for local produce. • The region’s agricultural community has a proven history of production. • Region is considered a destination with the local race, music, and folk art culture. • There is a lack of bureaucratic layers so people are able to start from scratch with few barriers.
Financial/Business (access to loans or program funding)	
Business Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business planning resources are available to support agricultural entrepreneurs. • Martinsville Economic Development Council is actively recruiting food processing businesses and facilities to the region. • The Economic Development Authority of Patrick County partnered to fund Ken Meter’s local food and farm economic study as a priority and strategic plan.
Financial Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are numerous options for project funding available from foundations and other sources. • The region offers incentives for entrepreneurs and businesses. • Funding is available from the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification & Revitalization Commission.
Labor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A labor force is available for production, processing, and distribution.

-
- Market**
- Growing regional market demand for locally grown food and farm products.
 - Increase in local shrimp and meat producers.
 - Interested institutional buyers and close proximity to urban markets.
 - Route 58 traffic excellent for roadside stands.
 - Proximity to Hillsville market.
 - Virginia Grown; Local Harvest; Buy Fresh, Buy Local; and Local Dirt for registering local produce. Buy Fresh, Buy Local requires a chapter be established.
-

Existing Markets

Direct Retail

- Basset Community Market.
 - Danville Farmers Market.
 - King, N.C., Farmers Market.
 - Joe Sparks Online Organic Local Beef.
 - Martinsville/Henry County Farmers Market.
 - Reidsville Farmers Market.
 - Roanoke Farmers Market.
 - Rocky Mount Farmers Market.
 - Salem Farmers Market.
 - Smith Mountain Lake Farmers Market.
 - Stuart Farmers Market.
-

Commercial Retail

- Area restaurants and caterers.
 - Collinsville Farm Market.
 - Primland Resort.
 - Ridgway Farm Market.
 - Smith Mountain Lake Resort and area.
 - Tuggle Farms and Catering.
-

Institutional Sales

- Schools, colleges, and universities.
 - Hospitals, nursing homes, retirement communities and feeding sites
-

Wholesale

- Bottomly Farms in Ennice, N.C.
 - Critcher Brothers in Deep Gap, N.C.
 - Dan Valley Foods in Danville, Va.
 - Danville Fruit and Produce.
 - Hollar & Greene in Boone, N.C.
 - Rambos Produce in Cana, Va.
 - Virginia Produce in Hillsville, Va.
 - W & W Produce in Stuart, Va.
 - Woods Produce in Meadows of Dan, Va.
-

Value-Added Processors

- Blue Mountain Organic.
- Checkered Pig.
- Homestead Creamery.
- Hooper Foods.
- Knauss Foods.
- Rising Sun Breads.

Food Hubs (wholesale and direct retail sales)

- Piedmont Triad Farmers Market in Colfax, N.C.
- Southwest Virginia Farmers Market in Hillsville, Va.

Organizational (governments, non-profits, universities)

- Nonprofits**
- New farmers market in Stuart, Va.
 - The Harvest Foundation.

- Resources**
- 4-H Program.
 - Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project's Appalachian Grown program in Western North Carolina.
 - Appalachian Sustainable Development and Appalachian Harvest in Southwest Virginia.
 - Blue Ridge Parkway and Crooked Road Trail as a destination site.
 - Ferrum College's Sustainability Initiative and local procurement policy.
 - High School Agriculture programs.
 - Josephine Porter Institute for Biodynamics.
 - Lessons can be learned from Floyd County's work, such as Sustainable Floyd.
 - Partnerships including Karen Thompson's connection to Floyd as former town manager.
 - Successful models such as the Crooked Road Trail in the region.
 - Virginia Cooperative Extension's research-based resources and faculty.
 - Virginia Farm Bureau.

- Training**
- Career pathways available through the local schools and community colleges, with Patrick Henry Community College (PHCC) offering agribusiness, viticulture, culinary, and horticultural credentialing.
 - Spencer-Penn Centre training and processing capabilities.
-

Goals and Strategies Identified at January Workshops

Goals	Strategies
<p>Market Development and Access</p> <p>Identify and connect producers to new product markets.</p> <p>Define marketing for local farms and products.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify niche markets for local foods, e.g., Primland Resort (Meadows of Dan), Harvest Moon (Floyd), and Homestead Creamery (Wirtz). • Establish farm-to-school and farm-to-college programs as institutional drivers. • Identify multiple “sale points” for crops, such as “end of day” purchase options for unsold produce, including partnering with churches that support donations to local food pantries. • Expand operational hours of existing farmers markets. • Explore partnerships with Wal-Mart and other large retailers that understand the advantages and challenges of working with larger markets. • Assess advantage to diversify farmers markets to include artisans and chefs. • Educate consumers to extend the local food season through safe food storage and/or canning methods. • Survey consumers on what they would like to buy. • Develop branding and marketing campaigns for local products to give greater visibility to existing and emerging markets (e.g., Virginia Grown; Buy Fresh, Buy Local; Appalachian Grown). • Produce a map of the local food trail as a marketing tool. • Prepare farm profiles and descriptions for agricultural producers to use with retailers in order to promote local farms and create a sense of place. • Design and host a website featuring local farms and farm products. • Utilize electronic media outlets like Facebook to publicize availability of local foods. • Feature local farms in regional media outlets, including radio, newspaper, and television. • Release news articles related to local products. • Identify and promote celebrity farms throughout the region. • Highlight businesses (Poor Farmers Market, Lowes Market) utilizing local products. • Develop local food champions within communities.

Goals and Strategies Identified at January Workshops (cont.)

Goals	Strategies
<p>Assessment</p> <p>Assess impact of local food systems on health, wealth, connection, and capacity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish baseline data that might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of total jobs in the region that are agriculture- and food-based. - Average wage of these jobs. - Percentage of locally produced products that stay in the region. - Percentage of wages paid by these agriculture- and food-based businesses that stay in the area. - Health indicators influenced by food. - Current local food procurement level, particularly at an institutional level. • Track and access impact of local food system projects on four categories (health, wealth, connection, and capacity).
<p>Education and Training to Build Awareness and Capacity</p> <p>Educate consumers on local foods, creating an understanding of regional agriculture and the needs for agricultural sustainability.</p> <p>Shift cultural values to appreciate local agriculture and foods.</p> <p>Increase consumer demand.</p> <p>Improve health and food access.</p> <p>Change behavior to prefer and purchase local foods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate consumers and institutional and retail buyers on local foods. • Offer Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and organic certification training on a regular, recurring basis. • Schedule cooking demonstrations using recipes featuring local foods. • Host a local food conference. • Establish internship and mentorship programs for individuals interested in agricultural production, connecting the intern with experienced farmers. • Partner with professors in higher education to develop student-led projects in collaboration with local farmers. • Expose youth to local foods. • Provide training for producers on creating consumer-demanded produce including value-added products. • Transition producers to create new techniques, thinking, and planning for differentiation and diversification of farm income and crops. • Extend growing season utilizing best-practice growing techniques. • Link producers to relevant conferences and programs, including the Virginia Association for Biological Farming conference. • Provide guidelines for organic and natural production.

Goals and Strategies Identified at January Workshops (cont.)

Goals	Strategies
<p>Network</p> <p>Create capacity for communication, cooperation, and collaboration.</p> <p>Establish a network and coalition of local food stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a liaison to link consumers to food resources with regard to accessing local foods, food safety, and food preparation. • Establish a network between buyers and producers. • Create a network of local farmers markets, sharing marketing, consulting, promotional costs, and other common expenditures. • Link local food producers to a communication network, providing access to resources and opportunities to exchange information. • Serve as magnet for funding and an incubator for implementation. • Cluster a network of businesses for long-term plan.
<p>Public Policy</p> <p>Represent local food and farm interest in public policy discussions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a policy council/coalition/working group representing all stakeholders in the local food system. • Review feasibility of land use value taxation for farmland and property. • Link value of local food systems to local economic development, health, and community viability impacts. • Engage VDACS, Virginia Department of Health, and USDA (education/assessment) in defining local food system’s value to the economy. • Promote community gardens for local neighborhoods. • Link community groups to local food systems, connecting farmers to underserved populations and low-income individuals and fostering a connection to the land.
<p>Staffing</p> <p>Build social and physical infrastructure for implementing regional/local food system priorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a working group and coalition to provide oversight for project implementation and serve as a local and regional contact for communication and networking. • Identify and submit grant proposals related to project priorities. • Explore and assess project staffing needs and available resources for employing a project coordinator.
<p>Potential Challenges and Barriers</p>	
<p>Markets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitioning to a new market or production method. • “Local” may not be defined. • Local operational hours of farmers market may not match consumer needs.
<p>Regulations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of regulations for retail use (e.g., eggs at grocery store).
<p>Traditions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural producers are aging with few younger producers entering agriculture. • Intergenerational transfer of farmland should incorporate a way to attract young people to a farming career.

Appendix B. Case Studies of Food-Based Entrepreneurship and Community Food Enterprises

Case Study of Regional Branding and Outreach: Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project

The Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in Western North Carolina that has a vision of strong farms, thriving local food economies, and healthy communities where farming is valued as central to its heritage and future. The ASAP mission is to help local farms thrive, link farmers to markets and supporters, and build healthy communities through connections to local food.

The “Appalachian Grown” symbol is displayed with farm products grown or raised in Western North Carolina and the southern Appalachian mountains. The Appalachian Grown logo indicates fresher foods that support family farms, strengthen the local economy, preserve rural culture, and protect the natural beauty of the Appalachian mountains.

The Appalachian Grown program of the ASAP certifies food and agricultural products grown or raised on farms in Western North Carolina and the southern Appalachian mountains. Displayed with food and farm products, the Appalachian Grown label helps consumers, retailers, and wholesalers better distinguish and identify local agricultural products.

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project

306 West Haywood Street
Asheville, NC 28801

Phone: 828-236-1282

Fax: 828-236-1280

www.asapconnections.org



Case Study of Aggregation and Distribution: Pilot Mountain Pride

At its roots, Pilot Mountain Pride (PMP) is a “local food movement” and business for the greater Winston-Salem area. This business was created for the purpose of being an aggregation center for small to medium farms, which builds their capacity for production and gives them access and connections to retail, service, and institutional markets that they would not have otherwise. The Pilot Agricultural Center is a 6,000-square-foot facility dedicated to increasing economic opportunity for area growers.

PMP is not a co-op; everyone has the same market share. The program is open to farms in the greater Winston-Salem area. Currently, 60 farms growing from 1/4 acre to 40 acres of produce are involved and have participated in GAP training, which teaches food safety handling and harvesting techniques.

Bill Imus, Facility Coordinator
Pilot Mountain Pride
612 East Main Street
Pilot Mountain, NC 27041

Phone: 336-444-8000

Fax: 336-444-8001

Email: sales@pilotmountainpride.com

<http://pilotmountainpride.com>



Case Study of Retail and Wholesale Marketing: Southwest Virginia Farmers Market

The Southwest Virginia Farmers Market consists of wholesale and retail operations. The retail market provides direct-to-consumer sales and is open to the public year round. Vendors bring a variety of farm fresh produce, produce-related items, in-season plants, and area arts and crafts. The Southwest Virginia Farmers Market provides a “home-grown” atmosphere, perfect for consumers’ shopping enjoyment and allows people the opportunity to buy local to support area growers.

The wholesale market warehouse operates year round and works to distribute local produce to grocery store chains and larger volume markets. Cooling, packing, and grading at the warehouse adds value to locally grown fruits and vegetables. Hydro coolers, forced-air coolers, and ice machines keep produce fresh and ready for transport.

Southwest Virginia Farmers Market
497 Farmers Market Drive
Hillsville, VA 24343

Phone: 276-728-5540

Fax: 276-728-5236

Email: farmersmarket@carrollcountyva.org

www.swvafarmersmarket.org



Case Study of a Farm-to-Institution Program: Ferrum College

Ferrum College has implemented several new green initiatives the past few years to increase its efforts to become more environmentally conscious. One of the most visible of these, in line with a change now underway at many colleges and universities, is the absence of cafeteria-style food trays in the dining hall. Studies have shown that eliminating trays reduces food waste, energy consumption, and water use.

Trayless dining may have another added benefit: controlling weight gain. New students often complain about the “freshman 15,” the pounds of weight many gain during the first year of college. Without trays, students choose less foods, food waste can decline up to 50 percent, and the college realizes substantial energy savings because bulky trays don’t need washing.

Along with getting rid of food trays, Ferrum College’s Dining Services has implemented more biodegradable paper options. Beginning September 1, 2011, 90 percent of the paper items stocked will be biodegradable. Dining hall staff has also switched cleaning products, and 90 percent of the chemicals now used in the dining hall are environmentally friendly. Dining Services is also partnering with the natural sciences department on campus as well as the grounds department to use compost for their flowerbeds and possibly their garden.

Ferrum College students take personal pride in what they eat in the college’s dining hall because many of the students are helping to grow some of the fresh pro-

duce on the menu. For example, the salad bar features yellow squash, cucumbers, green beans, tomatoes, and different varieties of lettuce — all being grown at a 1/4-acre garden located at the new Titmus Agricultural Center on the west side of campus. The garden is part of both the agriculture and horticulture programs and also ties into Ferrum’s new environmental planning and development program.

Mike Martin, Ferrum’s Dining Services operations manager, has also been working with area farmers to bring in fresh foods to serve to students. Dining hall menus will feature ingredients provided by local agriculture businesses, including Sweet Providence Farm of Floyd, Homestead Creamery of Wirtz, Locust Grove Farm of Check, and Waterbear Mountain Farm of Floyd. Cheryl Elkins, assistant director of Dining Services, says, “Mike has been instrumental in pushing our sustainable efforts forward and works tirelessly with the community to make sure we are moving in the right direction.”

Ferrum College is a four-year, private, co-educational, liberal arts college affiliated with the United Methodist Church. Ferrum offers a choice of nationally recognized bachelor’s degree programs.

For more information on these or other green initiatives being implemented by Ferrum College, please contact the public relations office.

Public Relations Office
Ferrum College
P.O. Box 1000
Ferrum, VA 24088

Phone: 540-365-4300
www.ferrum.edu



A Case Study of Diversification and Product Differentiation: Homestead Creamery

Homestead Creamery, located in Franklin County, Va., provides fresh, high-quality milk and dairy products produced locally and delivered directly from the farm. Surveys and research determined the most unique and important attribute of Homestead Creamery products was “fresh taste.” Branding, marketing, and advertising are designed to reinforce the product differentiation. Old-fashioned glass bottles, wrapping, and containers were designed to package milk, cream line milk, buttermilk, cheeses, yogurt, ice cream, butter, and dairy dips in a consistent, old-fashioned way. The branding statement, “The way milk should taste,” was used to emphasize the high quality and superior flavor of fresh-from-the-farm products.

Homestead Creamery
7254 Booker T. Washington Highway
Wirtz, VA 24184

Phone: 540-721-2045
Email: homesteadcreamery@juno.com



Case Study of an Online Virtual Farmers Market: Piedmont Local Food Program

Piedmont Local Food is a virtual farmers market linking growers to restaurant chefs and individuals through buying clubs. As orders are placed online, local growers process them and Piedmont Local Food program delivers them, so items are picked and shipped within 24 hours.

The goal of the Piedmont Local Food program is to provide the freshest and most flavorful local produce in a convenient and sustainable manner. Piedmont Local Food is currently serving members in the North Carolina counties of Rockingham, Stokes, Guilford, Caswell, Forsyth, and Surry.

Piedmont Local Food Program
North Carolina Hwy 65
Reidsville, NC 27320

Phone: 336-347-8278

www.farmersfreshmarket.org/rockingham



Other Examples of Food-Based Entrepreneurship and Community Food Enterprises

Hooper Foods LLC

Hooper Foods specializes in culinary craftsmanship and making tomato-based products in a renovated warehouse and commercial kitchen just outside of Martinsville, Va. Paul and Amy Hooper are the founders and owners of the operation and are involved in all aspects, from cooking and cooling to labeling and packing their four flavors of sauce: Marinara, Angry Tomato, Basil-licious, and Happy Hour.

In addition, Hooper Foods creates private-label, wine-based sauces for several Virginia and North Carolina wineries.

Hooper Foods LLC
6751 A. L. Philpott Highway
Martinsville, VA 24112

Phone: 276-670-2031
Email: sales@hooperfoods.com
www.hooperfoods.com



Rising Sun Breads

Rising Sun Breads, located in Martinsville, Va., is an organic, nutritionally evidenced-based bakery specializing in artisan breads and bagels baked locally with no preservatives and initially serving the wholesale markets within a 50-mile radius of Martinsville. Rising Sun Breads uses fresh fruit, imported Italian kalamata olives, and —when appropriate— plump dried fruits and individual quick-frozen fruit. There are no other baking facilities in the area that offer fresh, nutritionally dedicated, consumer-driven, and locally sensitive alternatives.

Rising Sun Breads' mission is to (1) provide top-quality, all-natural ingredients baked in an old world, bread-baking technique; (2) to create baked goods for everyone to love; and (3) to be sensitive to the often-overlooked allergy sufferers and cater to their needs for healthy, delicious baked goods. Rising Sun Breads buys local whenever possible.

Rising Sun Breads
1049 Brookdale Street, Suite D
Martinsville, VA 24112

Phone: 276-632-2292
www.risingsunbreads.com



Blue Mountain Organics

Blue Mountain Organics, located in Floyd, Va., was founded in 2005 by entrepreneur Jared Mizrahi. It is a mission-based company that demonstrates the holistic and symbiotic relationship between food, people, and the environment. The company is able to accomplish these objectives by sourcing, manufacturing, and distributing the very best in raw, organic foods at the wholesale and retail levels. It is trying to make a significant difference in the well-being of our health, our communities, and our environment.

Blue Mountain Organics currently offers seven unique product lines, including Better Than Roasted, The Raw Bakery, Blue Mountain Cashew Creamery, Love Raw Foods, Flour of Life, Earth Chips, and Agave Bear. Under each of these brands, they offer a wide variety of product lines that are available through their website as well as at a rapidly growing number of retail outlets.

Blue Mountain Organics makes every effort to educate others about the many benefits of eating organic foods.

Blue Mountain Organics
P.O. Box 898
Floyd, VA 24091

Phone: 866-777-7475

Email: customerservice@bluemountainorganics.com
www.bluemountainorganics.com/store/



Sweet Providence Farm Market and Bakery

John Paul and Rainey Houston, along with their seven children, own and operate Sweet Providence Farm — a 70-acre diversified farm in the beautiful mountains of Floyd County, Va. Sweet Providence Farm Market & Bakery is an on-farm store.

The Houstons raise Christmas trees, natural, free-range chickens and turkeys, seasonal vegetables, and beef. Chickens and turkeys are processed and prepared for customers on their farm. In addition to the goods they raise on their farm, the store features an eclectic mix of local items such as:

- Home-baked artisan breads, pies and pastries.
- Sourwood honey.
- Dark Hollow Roasters locally roasted coffee.
- Natural beeswax and artisan candles.
- Langston hand-cast pewter sculpture.
- Local certified organic produce.
- Fresh-pressed seasonal cider.
- Copper kettle apple butter and much more.

Sweet Providence Farm Market and Bakery
3263 Floyd Highway North
Floyd, VA 24091

Phone: 540-745-4000

Email: houston@swva.net
www.sweetprovidencefarm.com



Case Study of Capacity Building: Spencer-Penn Centre Community Kitchen

The Spencer-Penn Community Kitchen is a state-certified commercial kitchen and culinary incubator available for rent to budding chefs, caterers, and entrepreneurs interested in marketing retail food products (as well as canners who need to process large volumes of produce and cooks who need to cook for large groups or a special event). As a culinary incubator, the Spencer-Penn Community Kitchen offers many special advisory services, such as business planning, certification processes, contacts, and necessary forms. The Spencer-Penn Community Kitchen can be a springboard for culinary business success.

Carrie Denny
Spencer-Penn Centre Community Kitchen
475 Spencer-Penn Road (P.O. Box 506)
Spencer, VA 24165

Phone: 276-957-5757

Fax: 276-957-5757

Email: spckitchen@yahoo.com

www.thecentreatspencerpenn.com/community_kitchen.html

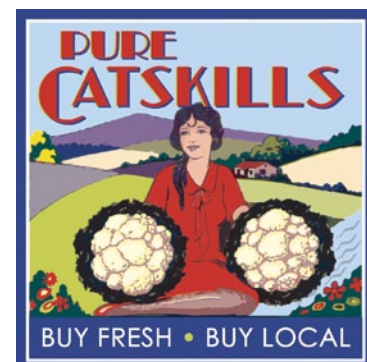


Appendix C. County-Based and Regional Branding Efforts

County-Based



Regional-Based



Virginia-Based



Visit www.vdacs.virginia.gov/vagrown/index.shtml to register a farm, agritourism operation, or food-based business with Virginia Grown.



Appendix D. Characteristics of Area Farms

County	Number of farms	Acres of farmland	Average farm size (acres)	Farm products sold (\$ million)	Sales of crops (\$ million)	Sales of Livestock (\$ million)	Prevalent farm size	Acres of forage crop
Carroll, Va.	1,001	123,678	124	\$34.5	\$8.6	\$25.8	50 –179	25,564
Floyd, Va.	864	128,872	149	\$3.0	\$18.7	\$24.6	50 –179	27,590
Franklin, Va.	1,043	166,592	160	\$53.9	\$7.0	\$46.7	50 –179	36,227
Henry, Va.	340	50,779	149	\$10.9	\$1.2	\$9.7	50 –179	9,241
Patrick, Va.	613	80,027	131	\$15.9	\$7.5	\$8.4	50 –179	14,949
Pittsylvania, Va.	1,356	274,289	202	\$62.6	\$23.4	\$39.2	50 –179	47,008
Caswell, N.C.	562	102,299	182	\$20.7	\$9.3	\$11.2	50 –179	9,463
Rockingham, N.C.	863	117,113	136	\$31.9	\$21.5	\$10.4	50 –179	13,147
TOTAL	6,642		157		\$97	\$177		

Appendix E. Potential to Meet Retail Market Demand

Agricultural product	Per capita production needed (pounds)	Per capita consumption (pounds)	Potential for area farmers to meet retail market demand (total pounds needed)	
			Martinsville/Henry County	Patrick County
Apples	50.57	30.82	3,545,803	954,184
Beef	93.79	39.68	6,576,425	1,769,731
Cabbage	8.19	4.02	574,400	154,572
Cantaloupe	9.57	2.40	671,177	180,615
Carrots	11.52	6.61	807,913	217,411
Eggs	32.76	25.24	2,297,357	618,224
Honey	1.12	0.79	78,202	21,044
Lettuce (head)	20.17	10.56	1,414,013	380,514
Lettuce (leaf)	14.98	7.23	1,050,633	282,728
Onions	21.56	9.17	1,511,533	406,757
Peppers	7.01	3.52	491,238	132,193
Potatoes	103.96	40.90	7,290,089	1,961,781
Raspberries/blackberries/blueberries	1.63	1.13	114,488	30,808
Strawberries	7.79	5.25	546,065	146,947
Sweet potatoes	4.57	2.12	320,553	86,262
Tomatoes	84.4	32.94	5,918,945	1,592,803
Watermelon	15.91	4.03	1,115,292	300,128
Yogurt	11.03	7.76	773,383	208,119

Appendix F. Additional Resources

Community Food Enterprises

National Good Food Network – www.ngfn.org/.

Cooperatives, Alliances, and Aggregation Models

Appalachian Sustainable Development and Appalachian Harvest in Abingdon, Va. – www.asdevelop.org.

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project in Asheville, N.C. – www.asapconnections.org.

Firsthand Farmers Cooperative (six farms in Albemarle, Nelson, and Rockbridge counties that provide members with locally produced food) – www.firsthandfarmerscooperative.com.

Good Natured Family Farms, based in Kansas City – www.goodnatured.net.

Local Food Hub – www.localfoodhub.org.

Lynchburg Grows – www.lynchburggrows.org.

Pilot Mountain Pride – www.pilotmountainpride.com.

Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction, 2839 Lumber Mill Road, Dayton, VA 22821; Phone: 540-879-2211 – www.shenandoahrcd.org/ProjProduceAuction.htm.

Faith-Based Initiatives

Appalachian Sustainable Development’s Healthy Farms, Family Farms Initiative – www.asdevelop.org/hfff.html.

Come to the Table: How People of Faith Can Relieve Hunger and Sustain Local Farms in North Carolina – www.cometothetablenc.org/guide.pdf; a publication of the Come to the Table Project – www.cometothetablenc.org.

Lulus Local Food’s Pounds of Plenty Program – www.luluslocalfood.com.

Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy in Richmond – www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org.

Farmers Markets

Farmers Market Coalition – www.farmersmarketcoalition.org.

Farm-to-Institution

Farm to School – www.farmtoschool.org.

Real Food Challenge – www.realfoodchallenge.org.

“A Guide to Developing a Sustainable Food Purchasing Policy” – www.sustainablefoodpolicy.org.

Food Safety

“Management of Food Safety Risks: Canning and Preserving,” video of presentation by Assistant Professor Renee Boyer, Virginia Tech – www.youtube.com/watch?v=yUcDG72xXVA.

“Cooking Demonstrations: Providing the Perfect Ingredient to Season Your Farmers Market,” Kansas Rural Center, Sustainable Agriculture Management Guides, Publication No. MB10B.1 – www.kansasruralcenter.org/publications/ChefDemo.pdf.

Grants and Financial Assistance

USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program – www.ams.usda.gov/AMSVL0/FMPP.

USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture Community Food Project – www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/communityfoodprojects.cfm.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Cost-share Program at your local USDA Service Center.

USDA Rural Development Value-Added Producer Grants – www.rurdev.usda.gov/ga/tvadg.htm.

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Specialty Crop Grant Program Virginia Foundation for Agriculture Innovation and Rural Sustainability – www.vafairs.org.

Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission.

Growing Season

“The Winter Harvest Handbook: Year Round Vegetable Production Using Deep Organic Techniques and Unheated Greenhouses,” by Eliot Coleman, Four Season Farm, Harborside, Maine.

Policy

Community Food Security Coalition – www.foodsecurity.org.

Farmers Market Coalition – www.farmersmarketcoalition.org.

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition – www.sustainableagriculture.net.

Virginia Food System Council – www.virginiafoodsystemcouncil.org.

Woodbury County, Iowa, Local Foods Purchasing Policy – www.sustainablefoodpolicy.org/example-policies-and-plans/woodburycounty.

Scaling Up the Local Food System

Agriculture of the Middle Task Force – www.agofthemiddle.org.

Michigan Food and Farming Systems – www.miffs.org/index.asp.

University of Wisconsin Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems – www.cias.wisc.edu/.

Sites for Listing Farms and Food Enterprises

Buy Fresh, Buy Local – www.buylocalvirginia.org.

Farm Foody (a social networking site for farms) – www.farmfoody.org.

Local Dirt – www.localdirt.com.

Local Harvest – www.localharvest.org.

New Hampshire Farm to Restaurant Connection – www.nhfarmtorestaurant.com.

Rural Bounty – www.ruralbounty.com/listing.

Virginia Grown – www.vdacs.virginia.gov/vagrown/index.shtml.



www.ext.vt.edu

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