

"For 50 or 60 years, we have let ourselves believe that as long as we have money we will have food. This is a mistake. If we continue our offenses against the land and the labor by which we are fed, the food supply will decline, and we will have a problem far more complex than the failure of our paper economy. The government will bring forth no food by providing hundreds of billions of dollars to the agribusiness corporations."

- Wendell Berry (Fall 2008)

Hamm's Principles for a Healthy Food System (2009)

Insure community food security for all residents | Be community based
Be locally integrated | Be reasonably seasonal in nature | Be diverse
Present primarily opportunities rather than problems
Connect "healthy" across the layers of the system

A local story: The parking lot of the Key Bank Building at 300 W. Michigan in Ypsilanti doesn't look special on a normal day. But on Tuesday afternoons from May to October, it becomes a hub of health and opportunity. In 2006, the Ypsilanti Healthy Food Initiative determined that people living in the downtown and south side of Ypsilanti, where the median income is about half that of the rest of Washtenaw County, had insufficient access to fresh food. So a collection of local organizations, including Growing Hope, Washtenaw County Public Health, the Ypsilanti Food Co-op, and MSU Extension, launched the Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers' Market. In its first season, an average of 13 vendors sold to about 300 customers each week, generating total sales of around \$23,000. But in 2009, after just 4 years of momentum, sales topped \$120,000, over 500 customers attended each week, and new vendors lined up to sell.

It's not a just farmers' market – it's a weekly community event. Artists exhibit and sell there; musicians perform regularly. The businesses in downtown Ypsilanti see more customers on Tuesdays. Washtenaw County Public Health hosts health education events for seniors from the nearby apartment community. Farmers – some full-time growers, some backyard hobbyists – have a reliable source of income throughout the growing season, so they can keep farming organically and caring for their land. And because of a focus on outreach to low-income individuals, over 20% of the sales at DYFM are made using food stamps, WIC/Senior Project FRESH vouchers, or another form of food assistance currency. This powerful little market illustrates how efforts to promote local food can improve economic opportunity for vendors and surrounding businesses, promote health and fair access to food, contribute to responsible preservation of farmland, and create a vibrant community gathering place.



The 2nd Annual Homegrown Local Food Summit

March 2, 2010 | 8am - 4pm

Dana Building, University of Michigan

LocalFoodSummit.org

Why Local Food?

Local food is more than just farmers' markets, heirloom tomatoes and community gardens - it's about improving the health, security, environment, and economy of our entire community. In Washtenaw County, a small but growing local food movement has taken hold in the form of dozens of pioneering efforts by dynamic individuals and groups.

We have programs that improve food access and build community:

- 2 community gardening organizations, supporting over 60 gardens at schools and parks countywide
- 7 farmers markets, 3 of which accept SNAP/Food Stamp benefits to help make local healthy food more accessible to all
- An innovative food bank that grew 21,000 pounds of emergency food on its front lawn in 2009
- A growing Farm-to-School and Institution network bringing healthy food to lunch trays
- The HomeGrown Festival, which drew over 5000 participants to the Ann Arbor Farmers Market

We have initiatives that preserve land and create farms:

- City land use programs committed to protecting prime, close-at-hand farmland
- Townships working to link rural landowners with new farmers, instead of real estate developers
- 2 Land Trusts working to add farmland to their conservation portfolios
- A community-supported micro-lending fund to allow local farmers to build hoophouses

We have businesses that bring local food to the table:

- Several locally-owned restaurants pioneering farm-to-table dining in our area
- More than 20 CSA (direct to consumer) Farms, including several with innovative, beyond-produce models
- Creative entrepreneurs concocting added-value products like fresh roasted coffee, preserves, beer, wine, breads, and cheeses.

And the hardworking people behind all these efforts are here – have you heard their stories?

Why a Local Food Summit?

There are many separate actors working on our local food system. The Summit is an opportunity to gather and plan the future of the movement. Together we can do what none of us can do alone.



The 2009 Local Food Summit brought together 120 local food activists to begin conversations, forge new relationships, and imagine changes that strengthen our food system. The 2010 Summit will invite 200 participants to build on last year's visions and ideas, generating concrete action plans to get us there – together. We still have a long way to go.

Working Together: The 10% Campaign

In Washtenaw County alone, we spend over \$1 billion a year on food. Yet despite all our innovative efforts to promote local food, less than 1% of those purchases are grown in our county. Growing 10% of our food would result in over \$90 million in new direct economic activity, and increased community food security. This increased food supply could be generated by hundreds of new small farms, thousands of new jobs, and comprising a mere 5 percent of our present county farmland. That's growth, literal and figurative!

At the Local Food Summit we will create the programs and projects that will meet the 10% goal. But we need your help and input.

Why do we need you?

Maybe you were already on board with the local food movement, and you can see clearly how joining a unified campaign will help your mission or bottom line. Or maybe you don't work specifically on food issues, but you want to promote health, education, economic growth, or environmental conservation - for you, the 10% campaign could help engage more people in your efforts. Even if you don't think what you do affects our community's food system, you can help this campaign – food is key to all of us. We're made of it, after all.

We're proposing an economic and community development plan made up of a diverse set of initiatives that all need resources and energy. *We need your help, your insight and your expertise to expand existing efforts, and to move forward with new projects, including:*

- A farm incubator program to train new farmers
- A community credit union for financing new food ventures
- School and community food-educational programs
- Expanded land preservation efforts that focus on agriculture
- New ways to bring healthy, local food to our neighbors in need

Thank you for joining us to start this important conversation. Let's keep talking about how we can move together toward the 10% goal.