Eat 10 for your Town

People are beginning to realize, in this time of financial turmoil, how great an impact eating locally can have on our economy. In Washtenaw County alone, we spend over 1 billion dollars a year on food. Yet less than 1 percent of those purchases are grown in our county. Growing 10 percent of our food would result in over 90 million dollars in new, direct economic activity. Modeling on existing, innovative small farms, such as Eliot Coleman's "Four Season Farm" in Harborside, Maine, and the Student Organic Farm at MSU, this new food supply could be generated by hundreds of new small farms, employing thousands of workers, and would comprise a mere 5 percent of our present county farm land. This happens because "food dense" farming practices result in a thousand-fold increase in jobs per acre and over 200 times the food value per acre when compared with commodity crops such as corn and soy beans. Of course, many other benefits would also follow such as improved health outcomes, less dependence on fossil fuels, locally owned value-added food businesses and a strong, resilient community. One can begin to see the roots of a "tourist grade" local food eco-system with educational, gastronomical and bucolic benefits.

Although many communities around the country are beginning to see the benefits of local food production, a great many obstacles including counter-productive national farm policy and high local land prices stand in the way of the many who would love to grow us our food. At the same time, there may never be another opportunity this ripe.

A campaign is being launched in Washtenaw County to reach this 10 percent goal within the decade. Success will depend on the publicity of these potential benefits and a wide acceptance of these goals. It will depend on the cooperation of individuals, companies, organizations and institutions. All of our efforts can combine to teach, reach and track this important benchmark in food security and economic self-reliance. Meet us at tenpercentwashtenaw.org to get on board.

Please join this first phase of the campaign. By signing below, you are agreeing with this goal and making a personal commitment to help shape your own community.

Name Contact info (optional, if you wish to know of or work on upcoming initiatives)

Don't you want a piece of the pie?