



Southeast NC Regional Food Council Report



February 12, 2016

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

More than 60 people investing and supporting local food initiatives came to Community Food Strategies' food council track as part of the 6th Annual Feast Down East conference. This series of sessions was well aligned with the increasing interest in food councils in the region and the keynote speaker, Dr. Samina Raja, a distinguished researcher and advocate in local food policy work. Dr. Raja advocated for the need for and power of increased collaboration between food systems stakeholders and local government planners.



Regional Visioning Workshop

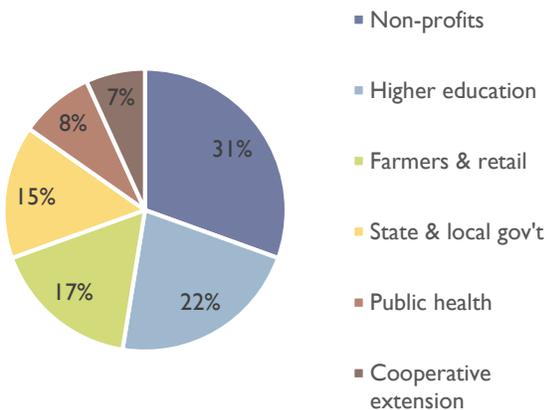
Community Food Strategies facilitated a process to develop regional priorities so that communities and organizations can better align programs and contribute to common goals. Small groups of 15 to 20 people used a similar shared result or goal: *a thriving, sustainable community-based food system in every NC county*. They developed indicators to track the shift toward that result and ranked the following as priorities:

1. ↑ % of population with a healthy weight
2. ↓ % of population with obesity or chronic disease
3. ↑ in sales of local foods

The new connections, ideas, and resources attendees gathered throughout the conference will help advance local food and farm initiatives across the region. Review more data from this process on the next page or the full summary of this event at communityfoodstrategies.org.

Wes MacLeod, a local planner at the Cape Fear Council of Government commented that "Dr. Raja's approach to combating the issues facing our food system is refreshing and all-encompassing. For planners, the issue of food is often outside the scope of our daily purview. Dr. Raja can help us better understand where the food system overlaps with our long-range planning projects and day-to-day regulatory tasks. Tackling the food systems challenge from a collective set of perspectives – planning, economic development, and public health – will better prepare us for initiating policy change and investment that will have long lasting impacts on our communities."

Sectors Represented at the Workshops



Food Council Sessions

The conference sessions specific to food council work provided leadership tools, resources, and trainings for engaged community members working to make change in their community. Below is a listing of the presenters and workshops offered at the conference:

- Cultivating Community, John Parker
- Council Leadership & Structure, Aaron Newton
- Food Systems Planning, Dr. Samina Raja
- Regional Visioning, Community Food Strategies

Selection of Participant Data from Regional Visioning Exercise

Shared Result:

A thriving, sustainable community-based food system in every NC county.

Experience

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

- More people being active
- More consumer interaction w/food producers
- More community and backyard gardens
- Greater sense of community
- People have pride in their jobs
- More accessible grocery stores in biking distance
- More diversity in products grown/made locally
- Retail stores selling local products
- Experience less stereotyping in communities
- More people eating seasonally
- Local government involved in local food policy
- Open recognition of colonialism & slavery history
- See revitalization of youth involved with farming
- See older farmers in mentor roles for younger farmers
- Recognition of the economic importance of food system
- Increased collaboration and communication around aggregation of regional food & resources
- See people knowing how to cook food

Indicators

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

- % of population with a livable wage
- % of food secure families
- % of population with healthy weight
- % of population with chronic disease
- # of farmland acres in (food) production
- \$ of local food sales
- # of households growing their own food
- # of food deserts
- Availability & participation in early childhood intervention
- SNAP \$ spent on local food
- # of pounds of food diverted out of landfills
- % of community members satisfied with leadership and their ability to be heard
- # of pollinator gardens

This is a portion of the ideas generated at this regional gathering. Local food networks plan to continue collaboration and encourage more community involvement. View more at www.communityfoodstrategies.org.

Resources

- Southeastern NC Regional Food Assessment, www.sencfood.org
- [Growing Food Connections](#), a partnership to help build the capacity of local governments to better support community food systems
- johndempseyparker.org, John Parker's, community development consultant, website
- [Structuring Your Food Council](#), John Hopkins Center for Livable Future
- [A Community and Local Government Guide to Developing Local Food Systems in North Carolina](#) by the Center for Environmental Farming Systems

