

NEW HAMPSHIRE FOOD ALLIANCE

Regional Gatherings

A cross-sector conversation about creating a future food system that strengthens our economy, responsibly stewards our cultural and natural resources, and contributes to the health and well-being of all New Hampshire citizens.

April 2015

The NH food strategy development process is coordinated by the University of New Hampshire Sustainability Institute (UNHSI) with support from the Henry P. Kendall Foundation, the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, the John Merck Foundation, Jane's Trust, and Share Our Strength, in collaboration with the Interaction Institute for Social Change (IISC) and diverse stakeholders from around the Granite State. We thank NH Listens for their guidance and facilitation support.



NH FOOD ALLIANCE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION	3
REGIONAL GATHERING INFORMATION AND FACTS	4
Outreach.....	4
Map of Gathering Locations	5
Participation by Site	6
Questions Discussed	6
Additional Forms of Public Input	7
FINDINGS	8
Methods for organizing data	8
Data Summaries.....	8
Summary of Key Findings across the State	8
PARTICIPANT EVALUATION SUMMARIES	11
NEXT STEPS	11
APPENDIX A - OUTREACH FLYER	12
APPENDIX B - VISUALIZATIONS OF DATA CATEGORIES	13
Production	13
Processing	14
Farm & Food Enterprise Viability	15
Distribution & Marketing.....	16
Consumers & Public Health.....	17
Food Access & Security.....	17
Nutrient & Waste Management	19
Policy	20
Food System Networking.....	21
APPENDIX C - DISCUSSION GUIDE USED IN REGIONAL GATHERINGS	22
APPENDIX D - SUMMARIES BY REGION	39
Seacoast (Dover)	39
New London.....	42
Laconia	45

Manchester	47
Freedom	49
Gorham	51
North Haverhill	53
Colebrook.....	55
Littleton.....	57
APPENDIX E - FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY	59
APPENDIX F - OTHER FEEDBACK	61

OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

The New Hampshire Food Alliance (NHFA), formerly the New Hampshire Food System Network, is a growing network of organizations, initiatives, businesses, and individuals around the state who are working together to build a food system that is good for people, businesses, and the environment. With input and participation from citizens across the state, the NHFA is developing a food strategy that will guide network actions to create a NH community whereby:

1. citizens are aware of and value what it takes to create local food and see the interconnections among food choices, profitable businesses, natural resources, and healthy communities;
2. everyone has access to healthy, affordable, and culturally diverse food;
3. local farm, fisheries, and food businesses are profitable and rewarding to all involved;
4. policy, regulation, and infrastructure supports long-term local food production, distribution, and marketing; and
5. natural resources that underlie a robust food system are conserved and enhanced.

In the fall of 2014, the NHFA organized eight public gatherings across the state (and collaborated on two events in Laconia and Keene) to engage citizens in a conversation about strengthening our food system. The goal of the gatherings was twofold:

1. to **connect** people working in the food system to each other and to the growing statewide network, and
2. to **listen and learn** from citizens about priority challenges and opportunities that should be addressed in a food strategy.

The NHFA strategy will be based on the ideas and information collected at the gatherings; data from recent research reports; and input from key food system leaders, stakeholders, and focus groups. The data is available online in raw and summarized forms (see Appendix E for more information, or visit our website: <http://nhfoodstrategy.weebly.com/>).

We are striving to keep the process inclusive, transparent, and open. Food system leaders, entrepreneurs, and citizen activists around the state are all welcome to participate in the NHFA Strategy Team that will develop the strategy. You can also see a calendar of upcoming meetings, offer feedback about the process, learn about the network, and share ideas via our website: <http://nhfoodstrategy.weebly.com/>.

REGIONAL GATHERING INFORMATION AND FACTS

OUTREACH

The NHFA coordinated with local groups and organizations around the state to publicize and organize the gatherings including:

- Seacoast Eat Local
- UNH Cooperative Extension
- NH Farm Bureau
- Lakes Region Food Network
- Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition
- Manchester Health Department
- Vital Communities
- Colby-Sawyer College
- Center for Rural Partnerships, Plymouth State University
- NOFA NH
- Northern Community Investment Corporation
- Coos Networks Food System Working Group
- North Country Farmers' Cooperative

Neutral facilitation for eight of the ten gatherings was provided in partnership with NH Listens and The Common Space Project. The gatherings in Keene and Laconia were locally hosted events that partnered with the NH Food Alliance to gather input, and their own facilitation model was used.

While the gatherings were open to all citizens, we targeted people whose work or civic life was directly related to the food system. See Appendix A for Outreach Flyer.

MAP OF GATHERING LOCATIONS



Figure 1. Map of all 10 Regional Gathering locations, including the meetings led collaboratively in Keene and Laconia.

PARTICIPATION BY SITE

Table 1. Participation by site for the eight Regional Gatherings led by the NHFA as well as for the collaboratively led meeting in Laconia.

Location	Date	Number of Attendees
Seacoast	Monday August 18, 2014	14
New London	Wednesday August 27, 2014	33
Laconia	Tuesday September 16, 2014	38
Manchester	Wednesday September 17, 2014	21
Freedom	Wednesday September 24, 2014	17
Gorham	Wednesday October 1, 2014	16
North Haverhill	Thursday October 2, 2014	16
Colebrook	Monday October 6, 2014	19
Littleton	Tuesday October 7, 2014	16

QUESTIONS DISCUSSED

The NHFA partnered with NH Listens trained facilitators to facilitate small group discussions at each of the gatherings. A discussion guide (See Appendix C) provided a detailed outline for both facilitators and participants to follow during the gathering. Throughout the dialogue, facilitators and participants documented the conversation on large flipcharts and identified recurring statements and themes, as well as agreements and disagreements to assure that all

points of view were heard and recorded. Facilitators worked with the group to draft final language and prioritize key issues that emerged during the discussion.

The overarching, guiding question for the conversation was: *How do we create a food system that works for all in NH?* Key questions included the following:

- What are some ways in which the New Hampshire food system is NOT working for you, your business, organization, agency, etc.? What are some challenges particular to your region of New Hampshire?
- How IS the New Hampshire food system currently working for you, your business, organization, agency, etc.? What are some opportunities particular to your region of New Hampshire?
- What are some success stories of businesses, initiatives or groups contributing to a thriving local/regional food system in your area?
- How could a Food Strategy and New Hampshire Food System Network contribute to the profitability and sustainability of your business or organization? How could this effort work for YOU?
- Who needs to be at the table as a part of this effort (e.g. Individuals, businesses, organizations, agencies, networks, etc.)?

ADDITIONAL FORMS OF PUBLIC INPUT

In addition to the 10 regional gatherings listed above, the NHFA is engaging with other groups and constituents around the state to gather input for the Strategy. While not included in this report, other forums for gathering information have included: Farmers with the Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success, Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition Policy Forum, NH Farm Bureau Policy Committee, New England Farmers Union Annual Convention, NH Farm & Forest Expo, NH NOFA Winter Conference, Capital Area Wellness Coalition, NH Association for Agricultural Educators, NOFA Farmer Focus group in Carroll County, Keep Growing and the Northern Grafton and Coos County Food System Working Group.

FINDINGS

METHODS FOR ORGANIZING DATA

In addition to information recorded on the flipcharts, reports from each of the small groups were typed into a spreadsheet organized by question, group, and location. Researchers from the NHFA grouped and sorted the comments into large food system categories based on a diagram of the NH Food System. The comments were then further sorted into sub-categories that emerged from the data across the region, including relevant food system reports and research. See Appendix B for visualizations of how we categorized the data.

DATA SUMMARIES

We have made the data from the regional gatherings available on our website <http://nhfoodstrategy.weebly.com/>. We summarized the data in three different formats:

1. **Summaries of data by region** - Word document summaries of each regional summary including location, number of participants, and key themes discussed. For a summary for each region, see Appendix D.
2. **Summary of data by theme** - A spreadsheet document detailing key findings by theme; also includes gathering locations where a particular theme was discussed.
3. **Raw data by regional gathering** - Those interested in seeing un-synthesized data can view the raw data from each regional gathering.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS ACROSS THE STATE

The following summary reflects the top priorities (challenges/opportunities/actions) identified across the state. While each region highlighted their own unique priorities, the findings below represent themes repeated at each of the regional gatherings.

Production, Harvesting, and Processing

- Need to increase alternative production systems (school, community, and home gardens), make it easier and more accessible
- Increase farmland conservation and farmer access to land, ensure that zoning and regulations support agriculture, include marginal lands (urban, land owned by prisons)
- Need to develop infrastructure that supports local processing (community kitchens, use of existing facilities, etc.)
- Need for more research to increase understanding of what resources we currently have available (asset mapping), how much we could grow and where, and what are the best leverage points

- Better understand how to lengthen the growing season
- Need for skilled labor (but also, HOW do we attract skilled labor where there is land available but no one to farm?)

Farm and Food Enterprise Viability

- Ensure appropriate technical assistance for farmers
- Develop a farm viability program
- Farmers need fair wages to be profitable
- Scale (small v. large scale) is a limiting factor: Help small to mid-sized farms be competitive with large-scale
- Remove barriers for farmers including cost of land, equipment, labor, and insurance; and access to financing and credit

Distribution and Marketing

- Create a NH brand for local food; Market research needed to determine what drives consumer purchasing decisions
- Increase collaborative approaches (e.g. food hubs and cooperative distribution efforts) and develop infrastructure to support transportation and storage
- Increase connections/reduce barriers between farmers and institutions/retailers/food pantries, develop a directory of direct markets

Consumers and Public Health

- Food system literacy for consumers (including connections between production and human/environmental health, understanding how food is really grown to avoid NIMBY)
- Nutrition education, cooking classes, preserving food
- Misconception that food should be/is cheap
- Helping people understand the connection between food and health care (connecting the healthcare system with local food/farmers)
- Make local food more convenient for consumers (including infrastructure issues such as transportation)
- Increase institutions' ability to buy locally grown foods

Food Access and Security

- Increase accessibility to healthy foods for people at all income levels

- Increase federal program assistance (SNAP/WIC/EBT) use at all locations, including farmers' markets
- Regionalize food system to prepare for emergency management, including climate change (particularly as a challenge facing NH farmers)
- Enhance transportation infrastructure to support accessibility of markets

Nutrient and Waste Management

- Reduce food waste through composting (schools/institutions step up to be regional composters)
- Enhance gleaning efforts, including food rescue for animals

Policy

- Increase understanding of FSMA and other regulations that affect farmers/producers; these regulations can create uncertainty
- Require institutions (schools/prisons) to buy certain percentage of food locally, and to have nutrition education programs
- NH policies and regulations should match the scale of production/processing to support the local economy
- Build active engagement around policy (proactive v. reactive), including educating policymakers re: the food system
- Reduce barriers to bringing local food into schools, create policy that supports small/mid-scale farmers (level the playing field)
- Offer farmers incentives to mainstream markets and move the local food economy forward

Food System Networking

- Create an ombudsman/circuit-rider position to increase outreach and accessibility, support increased capacity, foster community connections
- Improve regional connections (specifically east-west with VT)
- Increase cross-sector collaboration (break down silos), promote communication, share best practices, continue conversation, centralize information, etc.
- Move beyond advocacy to action!
- Learn about other efforts in the region, look into other successful efforts (in other states/areas), and learn from their work to identify leverage points and understand where to focus energy
- Increase non-traditional participation and make sure that all voices are heard

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION SUMMARIES

At the end of each regional gathering, participants were asked to evaluate five statements.

1. The Discussion Guide, with associated data, provided sufficient information to guide today's conversation.
2. I know where to find more information about the NH Food Strategy process and NH food system data.
3. I feel that I have had, and will have, the opportunity to shape the NH Food Strategy and NH Food System Network.
4. I made at least one new connection with someone else doing work in the food system I will continue to stay engaged and active with the NH Food Strategy Development Process.

For each statement, participants could answer “Strongly Disagree,” “Disagree,” “Neutral,” “Agree,” and “Strongly Agree.” The responses to each statement were tallied and showed that 86%, 96%, 79%, and 90% of respondents chose “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” for statements 1 – 4 respectively.

NEXT STEPS

The NHFA will continue to engage individuals and groups around the state to develop the food strategy. The strategy will serve as a roadmap for collaboration and action among citizens and stakeholders throughout the state.

The Data Synthesis Team, a group of twelve stakeholders from diverse sectors of the food system, met twice in winter 2015 to review the data from gatherings and other sources, and identified leverage areas. Leverage areas are places in a system where concentrated actions could produce multiple results. In Spring and Summer 2015, the Strategy Team will review and refine the recommended leverage areas, and form working groups to define priority approaches for each leverage area. These leverage areas and approaches will inform the first iteration of the strategy, to be circulated for review and public comment in late 2015.

Please join us and spread the word! Come to our Strategy Team Meeting on April 20, 2015 to connect with others across the state and provide your perspective on the NHFA strategy. You can also offer personal or collective input to the strategy via our website at:

<http://nhfoodstrategy.weebly.com/provide-your-input-to-inform-the-strategy.html> or by inviting the NHFA to host a focus group/information session at a meeting or conference in your network.

APPENDIX A - OUTREACH FLYER

The NH Food System Network & Strategy

Creating a food system that works for everyone



JOIN US!

Participate in regional gatherings

August 18th 6:30 pm-9:00 pm
Seacoast, NH

September 24th 8:00 am-11:00 am
Freedom, NH

October 6th 6:00 pm-9:00 pm
Colebrook, NH

August 27th 9:00 am-12:00 pm
New London, NH

September 30th 5:00 pm-7:45 pm
Keene, NH

October 7th 9:00 am-12:00 pm
Littleton, NH

September 16th 9:00 am-12:00 pm
Laconia, NH

October 1st 6:00 pm-9:00 pm
Gorham, NH

September 17th 9:00 am-12:00 pm
Manchester, NH

October 2nd 8:00 am-10:30 am
Haverhill, NH

Review and comment on the draft Strategy beginning December 2015

Learn more & share your ideas about the NH food system:
nhfoodstrategy.weebly.com

Or email:
NHFoodStrategy@gmail.com

The NH Food System Network & Strategy is coordinated by the University of New Hampshire Sustainability Institute and the Interaction Institute for Social Change in collaboration with a diverse group of stakeholder organizations and networks throughout the state.

APPENDIX B - VISUALIZATIONS OF DATA CATEGORIES

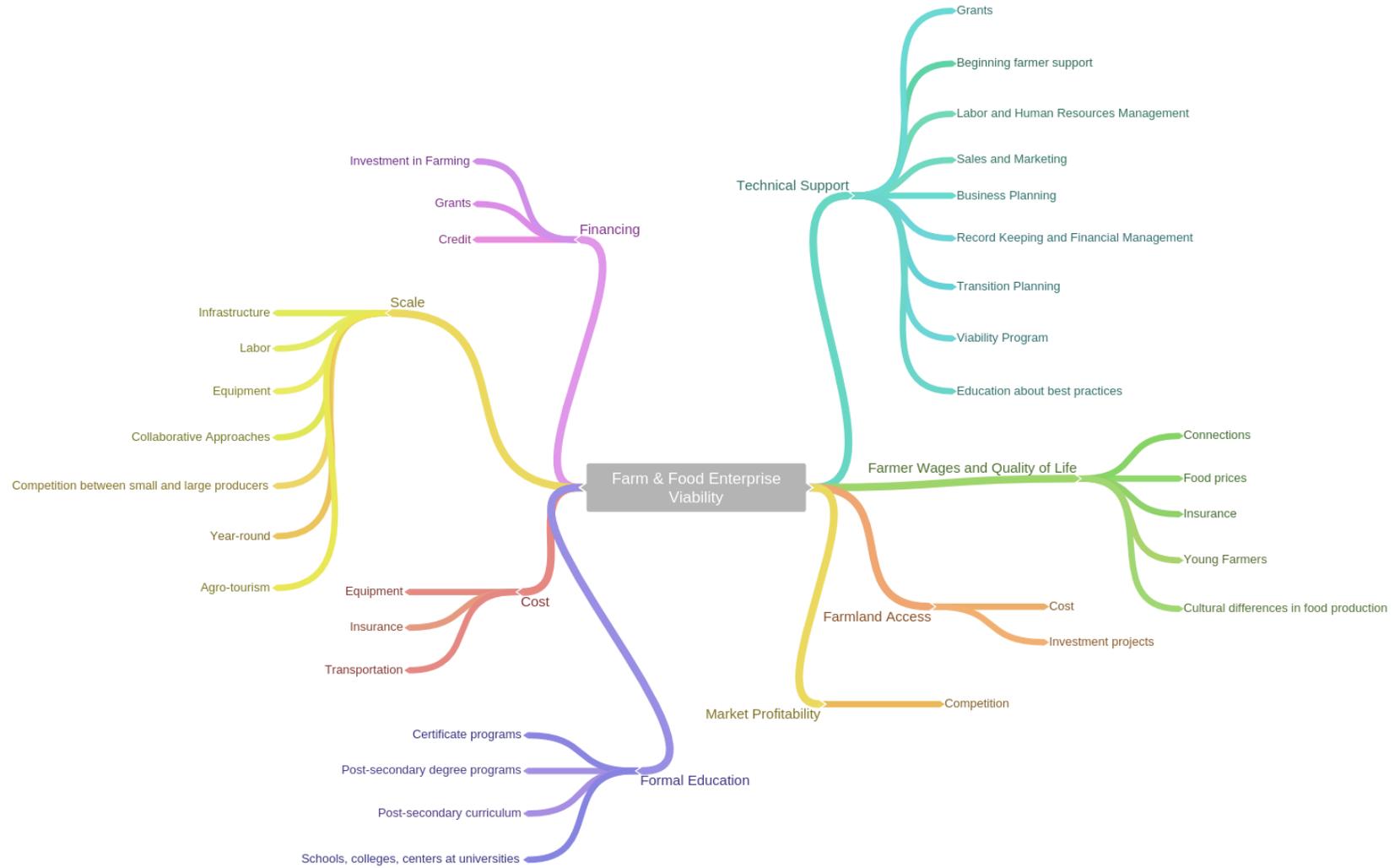
PRODUCTION



PROCESSING



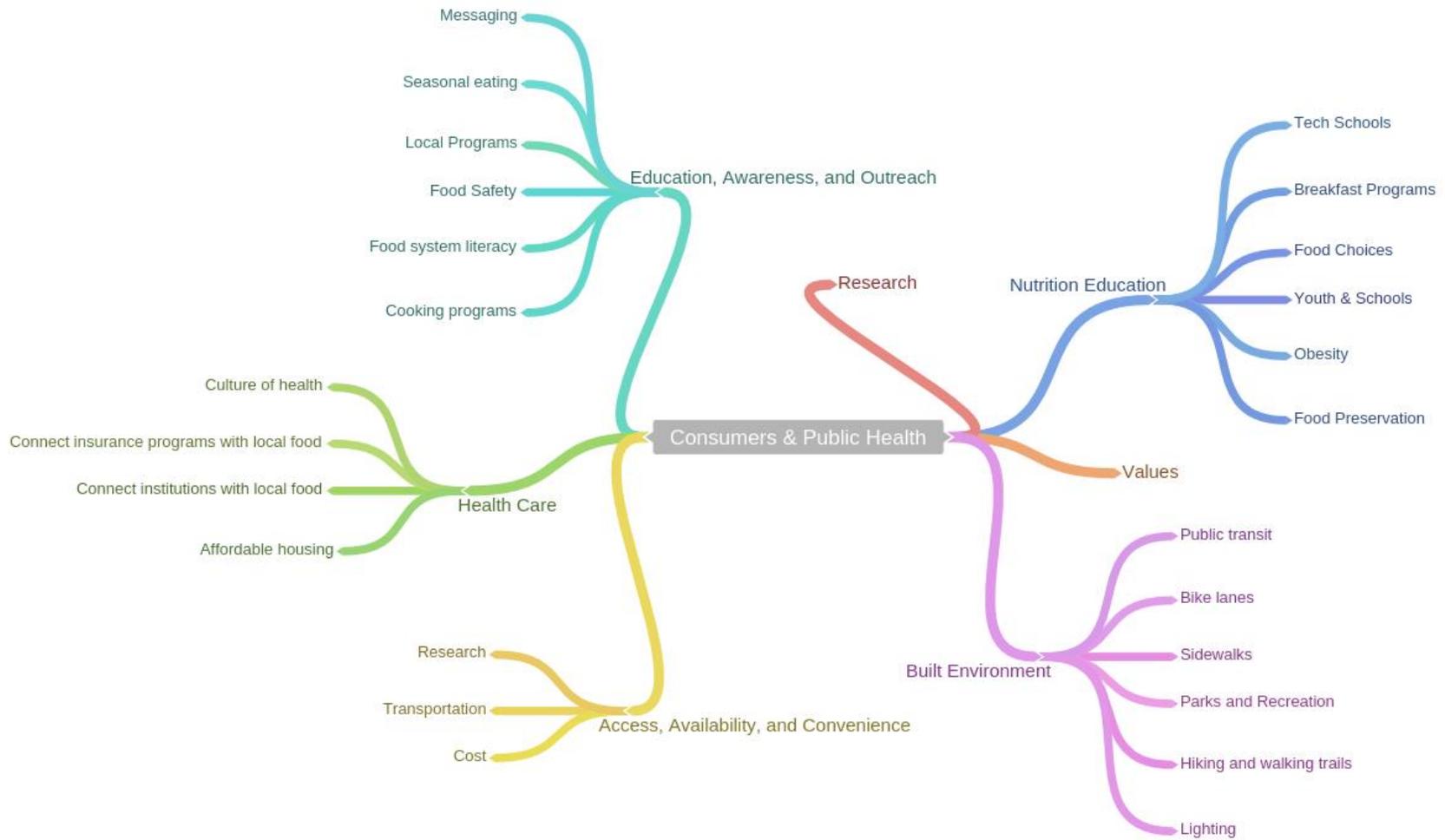
FARM & FOOD ENTERPRISE VIABILITY



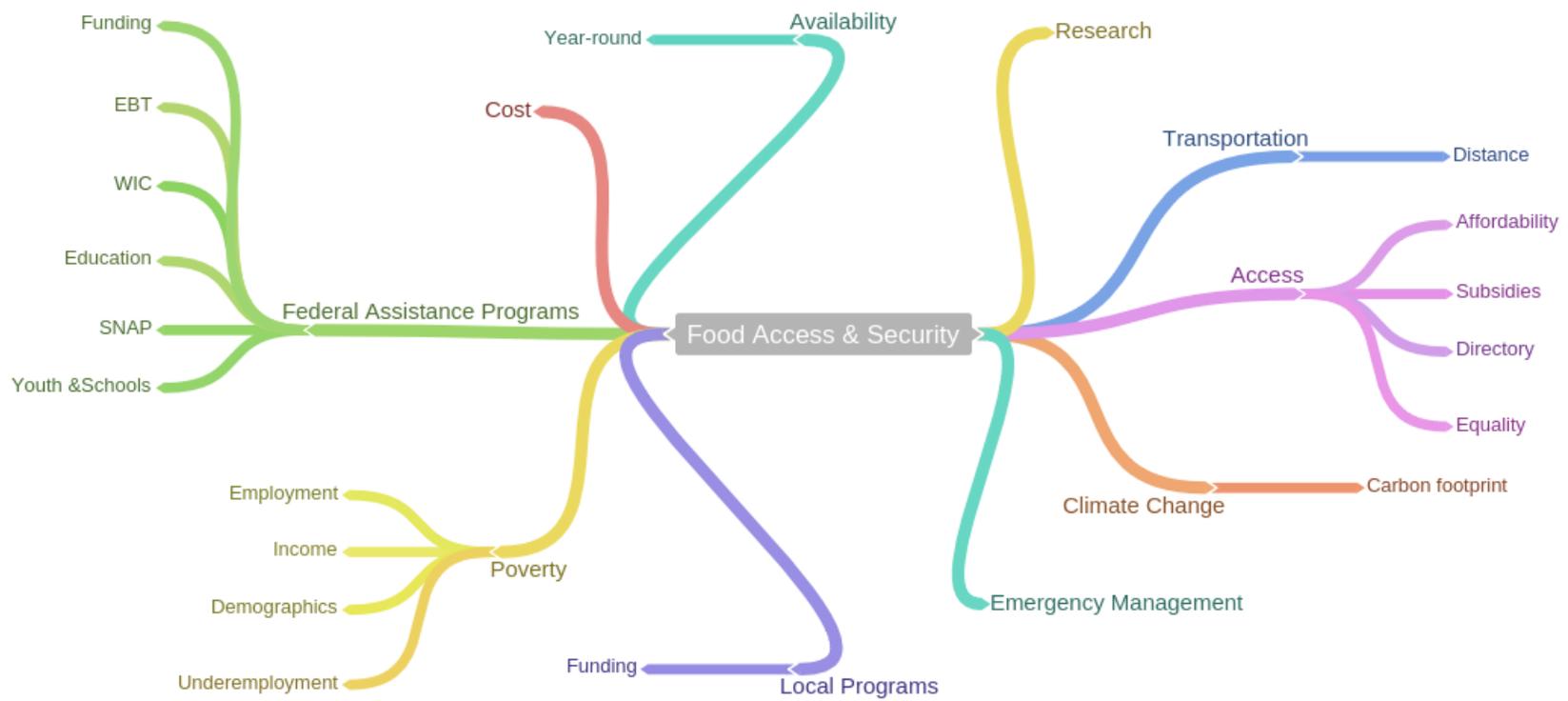
DISTRIBUTION & MARKETING



CONSUMERS & PUBLIC HEALTH



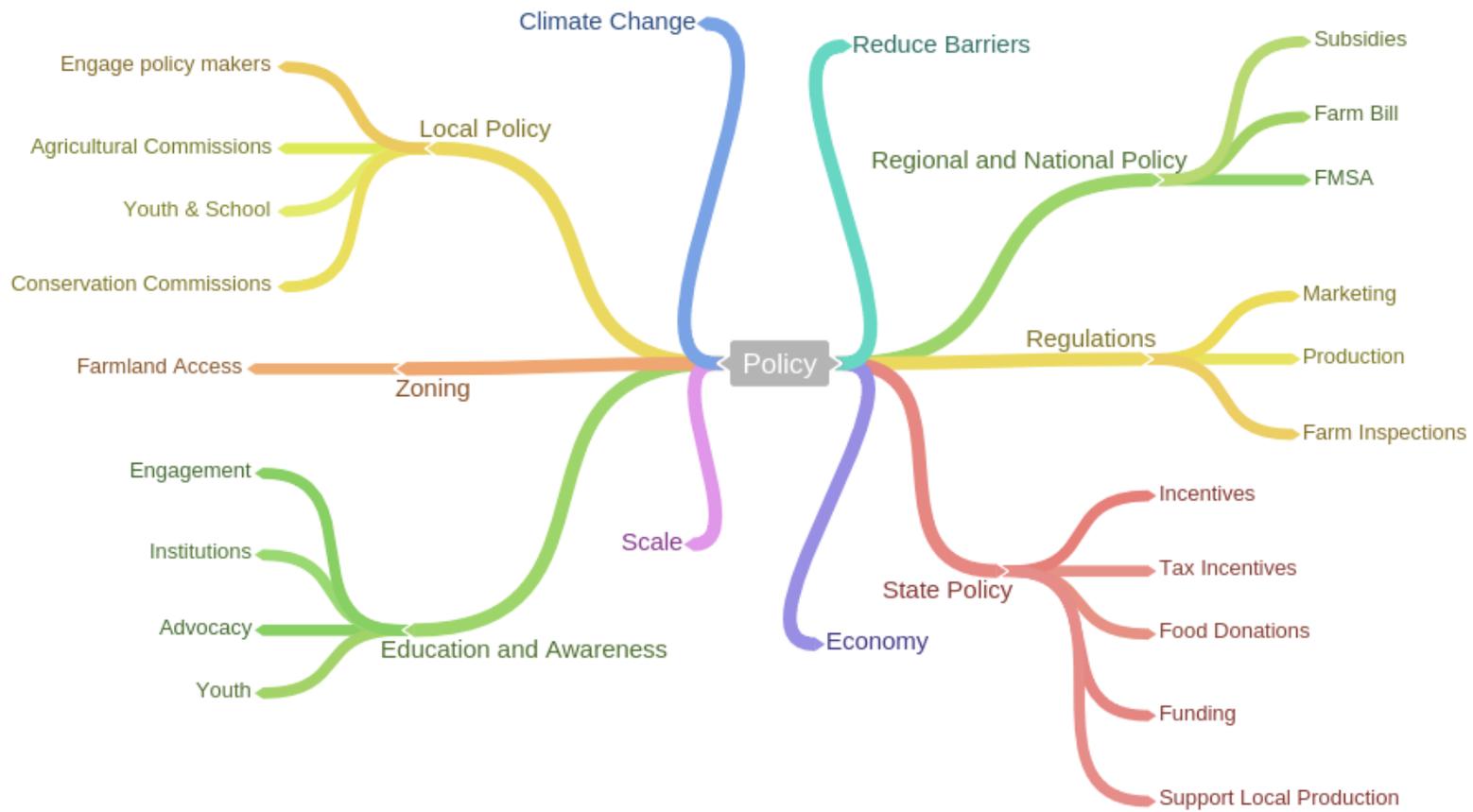
FOOD ACCESS & SECURITY



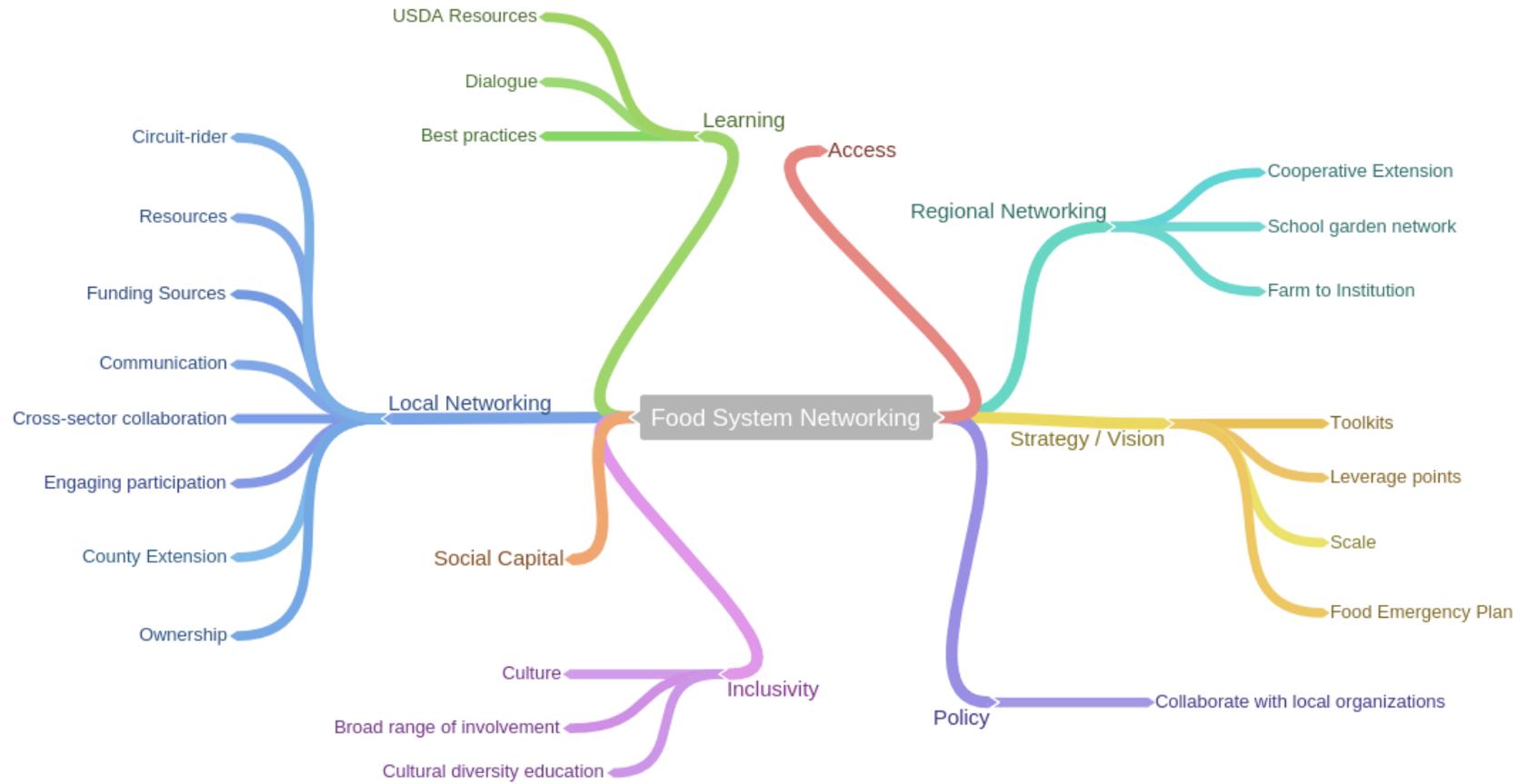
NUTRIENT & WASTE MANAGEMENT



POLICY



FOOD SYSTEM NETWORKING



A New Hampshire Food Strategy:

*How can we create a food system that works for all
in the Granite State?*

A cross-sector conversation about creating a future food system that strengthens our economy, responsibly stewards our cultural and natural resources, and contributes to the health and well-being of all NH citizens.

DOVER

NEW LONDON

LACONIA

MANCHESTER

FREEDOM

KEENE

BERLIN

NORTH HAVERHILL

COLEBROOK

LITTLETON

The NH Food Strategy Development process is coordinated by the University of New Hampshire Sustainability Institute (UNHSI) with support from the Henry P. Kendall Foundation, the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, the John Merck Foundation, Jane's Trust, and Share Our Strength, in collaboration with the Interaction Institute for Social Change (IISC) and diverse stakeholders from around the Granite State. We thank NH Listens for their guidance and facilitation support.

<http://nhfoodstrategy.weebly.com>

Welcome and thank you for joining today's conversation!

Table of Contents

Detailed Agenda	3
Welcome and Overview	3
Desired Outcomes	4
Guidelines for Productive Conversations	4
Key Questions and Priorities	6
Background Information	9

Agenda Overview

5:30 p.m.	Registration
6:00 p.m.	Welcome and Overview
6:15 p.m.	Orientation to Food System Resources
6:20 p.m.	Small group conversations
8:20 p.m.	Large group summary reports
8:40 p.m.	Take-aways and Next Steps
9:00 p.m.	Closing

This guide is the same for all participants and facilitators. The facilitators will help guide the conversation but we are all responsible for making sure the group is productive. Thank you!

Detailed Agenda

5:30 - 6:00 p.m. Registration

- Welcome and sign in at the registration table
- Please join your small group circle for the introduction and to start the dialogue immediately thereafter.

6:00 - 6:15 p.m. Welcome and Overview from the NH Food Strategy Team

- What is the New Hampshire Food Strategy?
- Who is coordinating the New Hampshire Food Strategy?
- Desired outcomes for today
- Agenda
- Guidelines for productive discussions
- Overview of information in discussion guide

What is the New Hampshire Food Strategy?

The overall goal of this initiative is to develop a strong and connected **Network** of organizations, institutions, agencies, businesses, and individuals that contribute to the New Hampshire food system. The ideas, concerns, and hopes that you share today will shape a statewide **Strategy** that identifies common goals, key leverage points, and action priorities to guide collaboration and action throughout the food system network. As a result of developing this Strategy and food system Network, we hope to accomplish the following:

- identify key leverage points to *create a food system that works for all in the Granite State*;
- increase networked collaboration across the state and food system sectors;
- identify new market opportunities for producers and food entrepreneurs;
- increase access to all forms of capital for business and community building; and
- support healthy communities, thriving local economies, and equitable access to food for NH citizens for generations to come.

Numerous innovative efforts are already underway across the state to support community and regional food systems; the strategy initiative will help to link and build on these existing efforts, not reinvent the wheel. We are striving to ensure that businesses, groups and individuals who do not often have a voice, are underrepresented in public policy conversations, or our most vulnerable, are also included and involved in appropriate, accessible ways. In order to capture and be informed by state-wide perspectives, we are reaching out across the state to hear directly from those who simply have an interest in food because they live in New Hampshire, to those formally engaged in food system work. Thank you for joining our conversation today. Your voice will help us to shape the future of food in New Hampshire.

Please review the supplemental information in this guide, and our website (<http://nhfoodstrategy.weebly.com>) to learn more about this process and similar efforts to develop food system strategies or plans in other New England states.

Who coordinates the NH Food Strategy initiative?

The UNH Sustainability Institute (UNHSI), with support from the Henry P. Kendall Foundation, the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, The John Merck Foundation, Jane's Trust, and Share Our Strength, serves as the 'backbone' organization for the NH Food System Network and Strategy Development initiative. As the backbone organization for the NH effort, UNHSI does not direct or dictate outcomes, but provides administrative and research support, and facilitates meetings and communications among stakeholder representatives across the state. The main roles for the backbone organization include gathering, communicating, coordinating, and organizing information and resources.

In 2013, a diverse group of over 30 food system stakeholders from across the state and food system sectors, met during six, day-long meetings to design the process for developing the NH Food Strategy. This group decided that engaging a broad spectrum of businesses, non-profits, producers, and other citizen leaders, as well as learning about existing efforts around the region, was key to developing a food Strategy for New Hampshire. This team of people (changed somewhat to reflect more diverse perspectives), now called the Strategy Team, will meet again this fall to review the reports from each of the regional gatherings throughout the state and discuss the priority goals and actions to be included in the statewide Strategy. Beginning in 2015, all stakeholders will have the opportunity to review and provide input on the draft Strategy.

More information about the Strategy Team members and the Strategy Development Process can be found on our website: <http://nhfoodstrategy.weebly.com>.

Desired outcomes for our conversation today

1. Identify the value of being involved in the Strategy and Network development process.
2. Identify short-term and long-term actions that will positively influence the food system and all that depend on it.
3. Develop a shared understanding of trends, data, challenges, and innovations in our food system.
4. Have opportunities to connect with others doing work across the food system.

A summary report will be created after all 10 gatherings about our conversation today and shared with all participants. You will have the opportunity to provide feedback about that report this fall as well as the draft Strategy beginning in January 2015.

Guidelines for productive conversations

This conversation today is...

- Designed to focus on what is important to *you* related to the food system in the state of New Hampshire.
- Designed for participants to be here the whole time (please do what you need to do to be most present: feel free to take a break or step outside for a phone call if needed).
- About a constructive focus and looking forward to desired actions and solutions.
- Organized to allow the greatest possible time for everyone to both speak and listen, which is why we use small, facilitated groups where ideas can be explored, differences understood, and preferences for action expressed.

Group agreements for a productive conversation...

- Share “air time.”
- If you disagree, consider asking a question rather than arguing to prove your point.
- It’s OK to disagree, but don’t personalize it. Stick to the issue, not the person who is disagreeing with you.
- Speak up if the process doesn’t seem fair.
- Speak for yourself, not for others and not for an entire group (use “I” statements).
- Personal stories stay in the group unless we all agree we can share them outside of the group.
- We all share responsibility for making the group productive.
- Be respectful and use respectful language.
- Respect the facilitator’s role.
- Listen first.

Please note: We are delighted to have this event covered by the press and local bloggers and want to balance that with a participant’s ability to express an incomplete or experimental thought as a part of this process. We respectfully request all representatives of the news media (formal and informal) ask permission to tape, photograph, identify, or quote an individual participant directly. We are happy to answer any questions about this request.

6:15 - 6:20 p.m. Orientation to Food System Resources

- Brief orientation to the data and resources available to you, including the figures at your table, the NH Food System Diagram, Infographic, and state data, as well as other New England food system reports. Quantitative data helps give us a more comprehensive understanding of the food system, allows us to see the gaps and understand challenges, as well as guide us in the development of the NH Food Strategy. *You will have time in your small groups to respond to and discuss this data.*

Small Group Discussions

6:20 - 6:35 p.m. Introductions in small groups

Your small group has a neutral facilitator whose role is to

- help with the process and keeping time,
- serve as a reminder of our agreements to be fair and respectful,
- make sure everyone gets a chance to participate, and

- record key information for the Summary Report.

Reminder: Your group will need someone to *report out* to the large group at the end.

Introductions: Please share...

- Your name
- Your role within the NH food system (reference diagram p. 10). For example: community leader, business owner, producer, health care provider, volunteer, etc.
- A brief hope you have for New Hampshire's food system

***RECORD: Please note the hopes for the NH Food System during introductions (#1).**

6:35 - 6:45 p.m. Review Figures

Review the NH Food System Diagram, Infographic, and figures at your table within small groups. These data sources are intended to provide background for the NH food system. Take a few minutes to review these figures and note any thoughts, questions, or concerns that come up for you. Feel free to pose questions to your small group, and write any questions that you have about the data on the cards provided at each table. These cards will be collected toward the end of the gathering. We will respond to all questions, posting a list of both the questions and answers on www.NHFoodStrategy.Weebly.com.

6:45 - 8:20 p.m. Key questions and priorities

Consider the overarching question:

How do we create a food system that works for all in the Granite State?

We'll begin to address this question by talking about our experiences and perspectives regarding **opportunities and challenges** we see in the food system, **priority actions or solutions** we might take to address those issues, who in the group or elsewhere in the state might be able to take on some of the identified priority actions or solutions, and how a **statewide Network** can help us to collaboratively achieve our goals.

It might be useful for **each person to speak briefly about their perspective and key questions.**

The following questions may be helpful to prompt your thinking:

6:45-7:10 p.m. Building a Food System Network in NH

Share some of your experiences, stories, current projects, etc. relating to the food system in NH. Who are you working with? What are you doing?

- How would a more connected network function? What would it look like?
- What has been your experience with collaborating with other food system sectors/regions to achieve mutual goals?

- In what ways could you envision yourself collaborating more closely with others across your region/NH to create win-win scenarios for the food system?
- How could your work enhance the work of others across your regions/NH?
- How/what could work from other regions do to enhance your work?
- What are the barriers to working across sectors/across regions in NH?

7:10-7:35 p.m. Opportunities and Challenges

- Going back to your role - Who IS the food system working for/Who ISN'T it working for? IS it working for you? If yes, how? If no, how?
- How IS the food system working/How is it NOT working? How IS/ISN'T the food system working for your organization/business, etc.
- What are some challenges or opportunities particular to your region of NH?

7:35-8:00 p.m. Actions and Solutions

- If you had all the resources necessary, what would you do? What would you change? What would you be working on?
- What are some "low-hanging fruit" actions or solutions to the challenges you see in the NH food system?
- What are some goals we want to achieve, and strategies for accomplishing those goals (NH region or state)?
- What can be done so the food system works better for you, your organization, business, agency, etc.?
- Who on the ground is working on or could help make suggested actions happen? Think sub-state regional and/or state level. Who = YOU, your business, organization agency, etc.

****RECORD:*** Note the primary concerns and priorities mentioned when people discussed the key questions (#2, #3, #4).

Spend time here exploring differences and commonalities in your group. *What questions remain? Has anyone gained insights or new understandings? Are there any new ideas to note?*

We are hoping to build a network of organizations, businesses, and individuals like you whose work intersects with the food system in fundamental ways. *Where do you think we can be most effective?*

8:00 - 8:20 p.m. Final Priorities

Based on your group conversation, ask each other: *"Are there any common-ground thoughts or ideas in this group? If so, what do we want to say at the end of the evening? If not, what diverse points of view do we want to convey?"*

- How can we continue to work effectively as a network?

A single consensus is not required, but if one emerges, or perhaps if the group wants to put forward two or three primary points of view, that is fine. These will represent your **key findings and recommendations**.

Your group will need to prioritize their top insights, etc. to report out to the large group and *select someone*

to speak. The reporting out should include no more than **two or three** specific statements. To arrive at this point, the group should take a step back and look for *both the unique ideas and those that seemed to recur*. Group ideas together that seem to be related, but don't lose track of the unique ones.

The small group written report will convey a more complete view of your group's ideas for the overall gathering report (this will be taken directly from the flip chart notes and will be included directly in the report as finalized by your group). You will likely not have time to represent **all** of your ideas in the large group report out (two minutes!).

RECORD: *What are your group's key findings and recommendations? (#5)

If you have time...

RECORD: *Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along in the summary report (#6):

8:20 - 8:40 p.m. Reporting Out

Each group will be asked to provide a VERY BRIEF summary of their *most important findings, concerns or recommendations*. If you are asked to speak for your group, please be brief and share what has been compiled *by your group*, including common ground and divergent views. (You will have two minutes!)

8:40 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. Next Steps and Closing

Quick share across the room- popcorn style: One key takeaway from this event

Next steps - for the UNHSI backbone team and Strategy Team

- The UNHSI Backbone organization will pull together all of your input and feedback from today's gathering and compile into the first draft of a food strategy identifying key leverage points, goals, and strategies.
- This draft strategy will then be reviewed by YOU and the Strategy Team to help us distill the input even further.
- A follow up gathering will be held involving all interested stakeholders to identify next steps for expanding goals, honing in on short-term and long-term strategies to achieve those goals, and identifying a structure for implementing this strategy.
- In parallel to the strategy development, a network structure will be developed as identified by your needs and suggestions today. UNHSI aims to provide guidance, support, and technical assistance for this network as needed moving forward.

Next steps - for all of you

- Encourage others who you feel should be a part of the conversation to attend a regional gathering, visit us on the web to provide feedback, or call a Backbone Organization or Process Team member to share your thoughts.

- Review the draft report when it is posted on the website.
- Attend future gatherings of this developing Network to further refine our goals and strategies and to help carry them forward.

Please fill out the evaluation – it matters to us! We read these and always work to incorporate your feedback. Thank you!

The report from this event will be posted on the NH Food Strategy website by early fall.

THANK YOU!

Background Information

The information in this section is a compilation of data, graphics, and indicators related to the food system in NH. The data provided is meant to serve as a snapshot of NH’s food system to provide some perspective across the state, across the region, and across food system sectors. Additional data and reports will be made available on our website, www.nhfoodstrategy.weebly.com.

Who are the Process Team Members?

This team of people from around the state will be instrumental in continuing to design the process for developing the NH Food Strategy as well as guide the structure for the NH Food System Network. They will assist with synthesizing input from around the state to draft the NH Food Strategy.

- **Rebecca Brown**, Executive Director, Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust, New Hampshire State Representative, Grafton County District 2
- **Dr. Lynda Brushett**, Senior Partner, Cooperative Development Institute
- **John Hamilton**, Vice President of Economic Opportunity, New Hampshire Community Loan Fund

Who are the Backbone Organization Members?

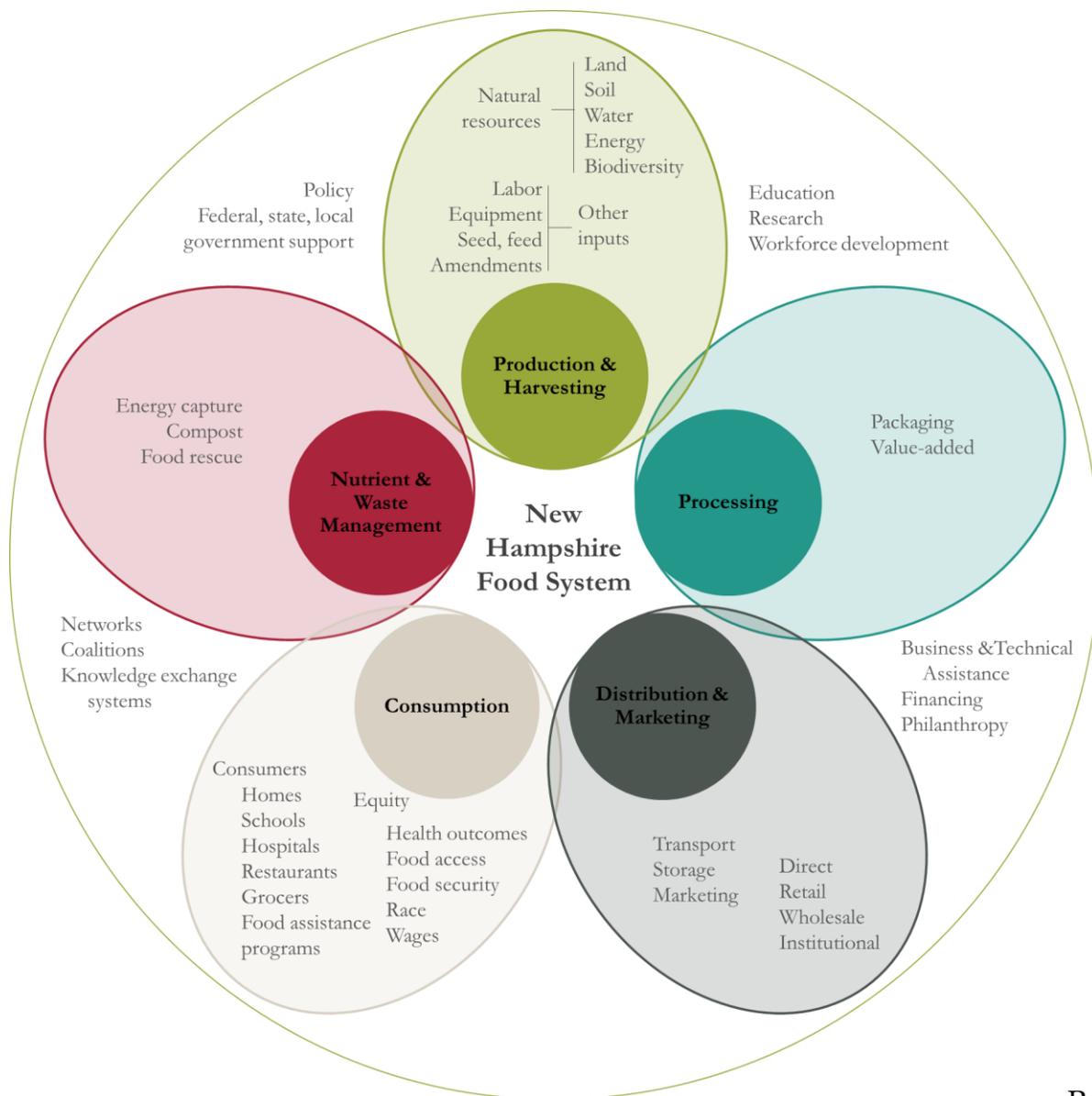
As the backbone organization for the NH effort, UNHSI does not direct or dictate outcomes, but provides administrative and research support and facilitates meetings and communications among stakeholder representatives across the state. The main roles for the backbone organization include convening, communicating, managing, and organizing resources.

- **Dr. Tom Kelly**, UNH Chief Sustainability Officer, UNH
- **Jessica Boynton**, Project Coordinator, NH Food Strategy, UNHSI
- **Jackie Cullen**, Communications Program Support Assistant, UNHSI
- **Dr. Erin Hardie Hale**, Research Associate, NH Food Strategy, UNHSI
- **Jennifer Wilhelm**, Research Associate, NH Food Strategy, UNHSI
- **Dr. Joanne Burke**, Clinical Associate Professor in Nutrition, Director of Dietetic Internship Program, UNH

NH Food System Diagram

This food system diagram was drafted in August 2014 by the Process Team as a way to better understand the elements of our food system and how various key players might interact across food system sectors.

Definition: “A food system includes all processes and infrastructure involved in feeding a population: growing, harvesting, processing, packaging, transporting, marketing, consumption, and disposal of food and food-related items. It also includes the inputs needed and outputs generated at each of these steps. A food system operates within and is influenced by social, political, economic and environmental contexts. It also requires human resources that provide labor, research and education.”



NH Food System Infographic

This Infographic depicts a subset of facts about the six indicators chosen to describe the New Hampshire food system. Specifically, the facts help paint a picture of the food system and provide us with reference points for later developing benchmarks and metrics for tracking our progress. This Infographic frames the format of our data collection efforts, and is intended to stir thoughtful discussion about NH's food system. It was developed by the Process Team with input from the Strategy Team, and will be updated periodically as a result of your input and as new data becomes available.

***For the latest version of the NHFA infographic, please visit <http://nhfoodstrategy.weebly.com/>.**

<h3>PRODUCTION</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federally inspected slaughterhouse facilities have increased from 1 in 2011 to 4 in 2014¹ Total land in agricultural production increased by >5%² In 2000 there were 60 active groundfish vessels, by 2014 there were 14³ There are NO value-added processing facilities for local fish in NH⁴	<h3>DISTRIBUTION & CONSUMPTION</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total value of agricultural products sold directly to individuals for human consumption increased by >26%⁵ There are 2 composting operations in the state, 1 does commercial pickups⁶ There are 99 farmers' markets including 30 winter markets⁷ In 2013, >14 tons of food was gleaned and delivered to 36 organizations across the state⁸	<h3>FARM & FISHING VIABILITY</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As of 2012, 52% of farmers worked a second, off-farm job⁹ NH is the only northern New England state that does not have a Farm Viability program¹⁰ The allowable catch limits for 9 of the 13 groundfish stocks were substantially reduced in 2013¹¹ >79% of farmers owned the land they farmed in 2012, comprising ~33% of harvested cropland¹²
<h3>FOOD ACCESS AND SECURITY</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SNAP participation increased by >46% between 2009 and 2013¹³ Amongst U.S. States, NH ranks 49th in providing school breakfast programs¹⁴ 38% of food insecure people in the state are children¹⁵ 9.9% of households are classified as food insecure¹⁶	<h3>PUBLIC HEALTH</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NH ranks 45th in the nation for public healthcare funding¹⁷ In 2013, the Food Bank distributed 8.5 million pounds of food to over 400 NH food agencies¹⁸ 9% of NH residents had been diagnosed with diabetes as of 2012¹⁹ Adult obesity rates nearly doubled in the last 15 years²⁰	<h3>POLICY & NETWORKING</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As of 2013, 13,590 acres are protected in easements²¹ As of 2011 there were 25 agricultural commissions in operation²² A federally mandated climate hub in Durham, NH will help farmers and fishermen prepare for and adapt to climate change²³ On August 8, 2014, Governor Hassan signed the Granite State Farm to Plate Program²⁴

Agricultural Production and Farm Viability

Figure 1. Change in the number of farms and acres of farmland per county in New Hampshire. Data show the number of farms by percent change over time. Of the 225 new farmers between 2007-2012, 121 were female.

County	No. of Farms 2012	No. of Farms 2007	% Change Farms	Acres of Farmland 2012	Acres of Farmland 2007	% Change Acres
NH	4391	4166	0.05	474065	471911	0.00
Belknap	302	270	0.12	23887	23387	0.02
Carroll	291	274	0.06	29362	32040	-0.08
Cheshire	407	419	-0.03	63292	48241	0.31
Coos	293	262	0.12	56797	50895	0.12
Grafton	500	552	-0.09	82372	99964	-0.18
Hillsborough	688	615	0.12	47707	50238	-0.05
Merrimack	600	583	0.03	64950	64642	0.00
Rockingham	658	594	0.11	36003	33570	0.07
Strafford	354	303	0.17	30680	25744	0.19
Sullivan	298	294	0.01	39015	43199	-0.10

*Data are from the USDA Agriculture Census, 2012

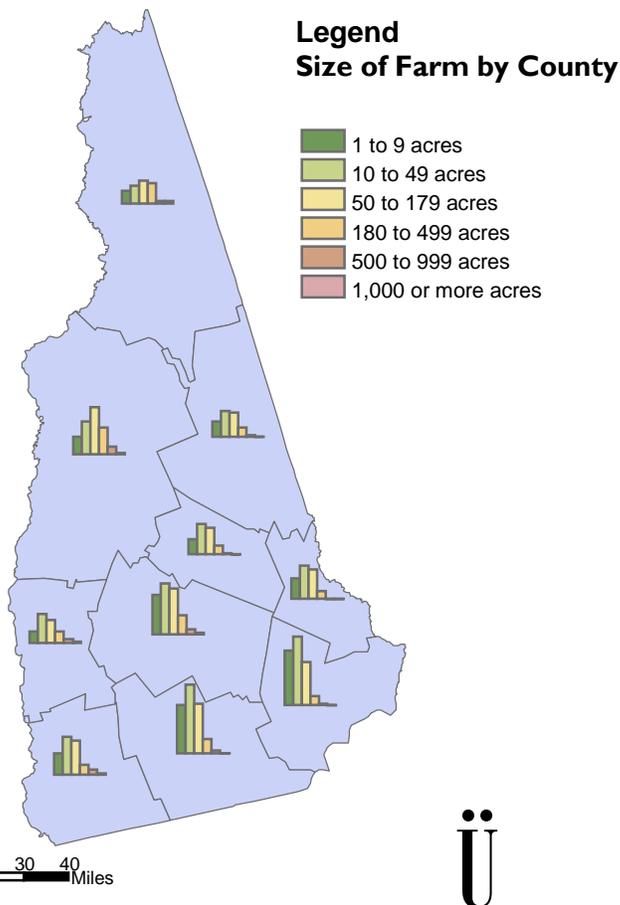


Figure 2. Number of farms by size per county. In NH, over 85% (3,727) of farms are under 179 acres in size. While the southern and eastern parts of the state follow this trend, northern and central NH has larger sized farms. Small-scale farming correlates with the high percentage (>50%) of famers working a second, off-farm job.

*Data are from the USDA Agriculture Census, 2012

Distribution and Consumption

County	2012	2007	% change
Belknap	\$1,195,000	\$964,000	23.96%
Carroll	\$1,312,000	\$945,000	38.84%
Cheshire	\$2,482,000	\$1,355,000	83.17%
Coos	\$417,000	\$383,000	8.88%
Grafton	\$1,265,000	\$1,147,000	10.29%
Hillsborough	\$5,061,000	\$3,706,000	36.56%
Merrimack	\$2,803,000	\$1,864,000	50.38%
Rockingham	\$3,301,000	\$3,685,000	-10.42%
Strafford	\$1,169,000	\$1,189,000	-1.68%
Sullivan	\$1,315,000	\$784,000	67.73%
NH	\$20,321,000	\$16,021,000	26.84%
NH Total Ag	\$190,907,000	\$199,051,000	-4.09%

County	2012	2007	% change
Belknap	\$7,765,000	\$7,668,000	1.26%
Carroll	\$5,471,000	\$5,279,000	3.64%
Cheshire	\$17,331,000	\$15,406,000	12.50%
Coos	\$14,199,000	\$13,003,000	9.20%
Grafton	\$29,831,000	\$34,393,000	-13.26%
Hillsborough	\$22,538,000	\$17,097,000	31.82%
Merrimack	\$45,266,000	\$55,286,000	-18.12%
Rockingham	\$18,400,000	\$26,035,000	-29.33%
Strafford	\$12,795,000	\$9,912,000	29.09%
Sullivan	\$17,311,000	\$14,972,000	15.62%

Figure 3. Direct-to-consumer sales—from farmers’ markets, CSA’s, and farm stands—are one indicator of local food consumption. NH is following the trend in New England of increased direct-to-consumer sales, increasing the total value of direct sales by >26% between 1997 and 2012. Direct to Consumer sales are 10.6% of total agricultural sales in the state.

Figure 4. Total value of agricultural sales by agricultural sector. Merrimack County had the highest total agricultural sales in NH, at \$45,266,000, of which crop, nursery, greenhouse, and vegetables sales accounted

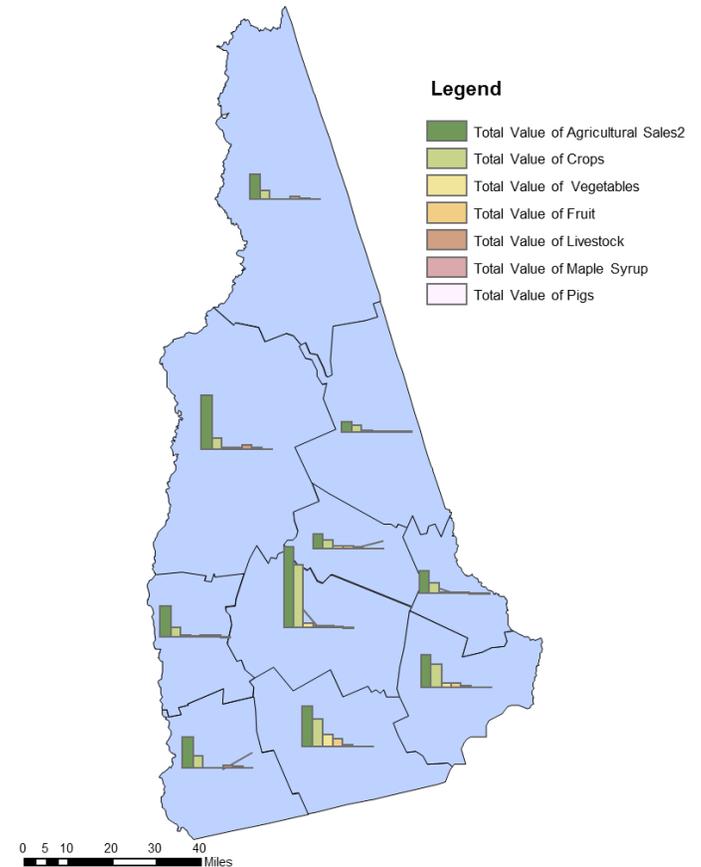
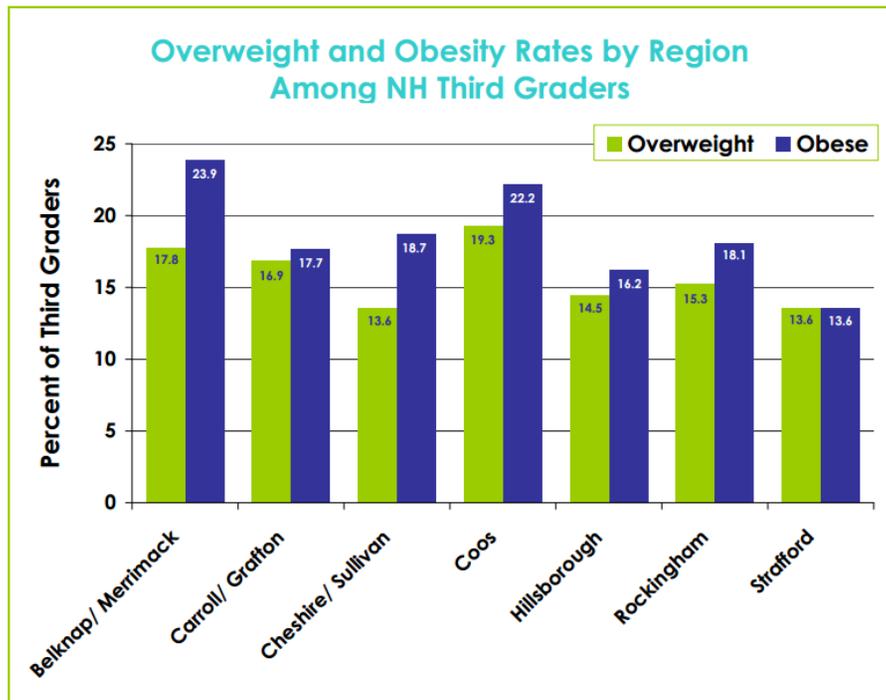


Figure 5. Total value of agricultural products sales by county. Strafford county saw a 29% increase in the sales, while neighboring Rockingham county saw a >29% decrease in sales.

Public Health

Figure 6. Childhood overweight and obesity rates by region. Overweight and obesity rates among youth in NH is on the rise and correlates with the rise in food insecure children. The lack of funding within school food programs, particularly breakfast programs, may also be a contributing factor to the increase in childhood obesity. According to the CDC, in the US children aged 6–11 years who were obese increased from 7% in 1980 to nearly 18%



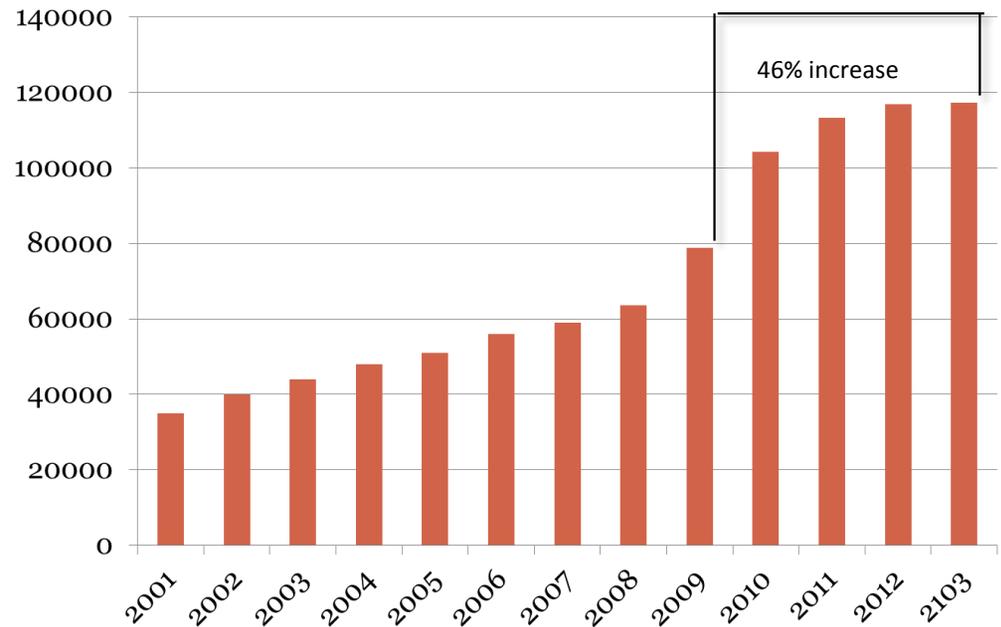
Source: Obesity Prevention Program, NH Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services Dec 2010. Childhood Obesity in New Hampshire, 2008-2009

Food Access and Security

Figure 7. NH has seen a 46% increase in SNAP participation between 2009 and 2013. There are now 56,201 SNAP participants in NH.

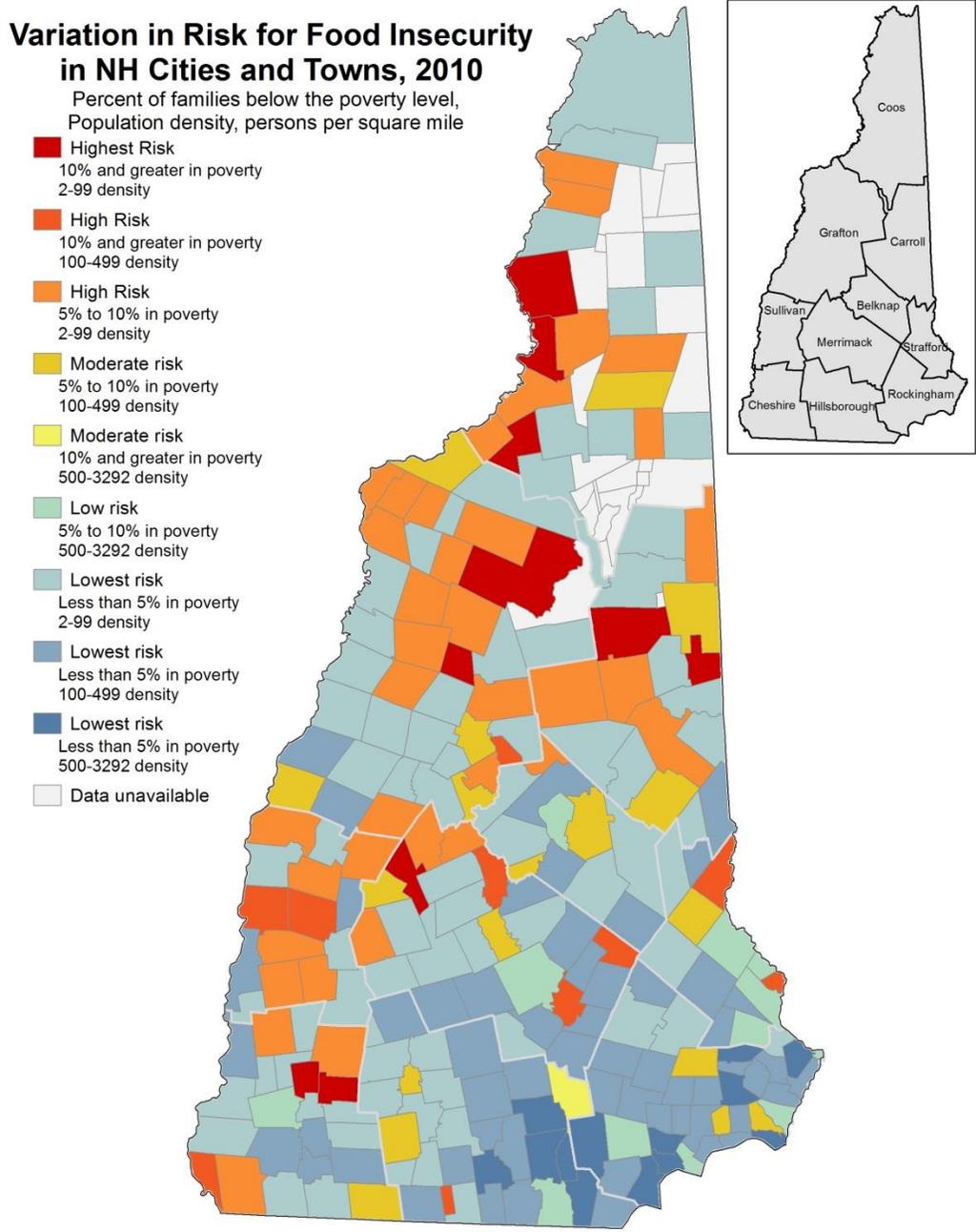
New Hampshire Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Participation Rates 2001-2013



*Data are from the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, updated August 8, 2014

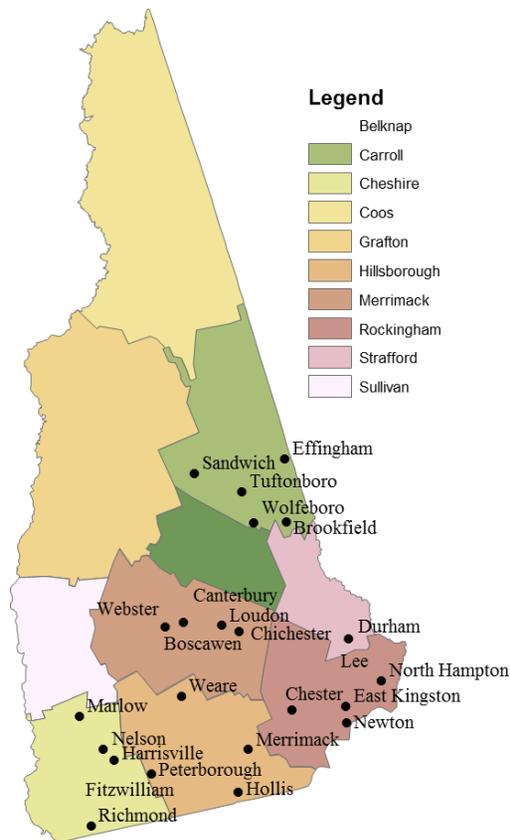
Figure 8. Map of risk of food insecurity by town within the state. The majority of towns at highest risk of food insecurity are located in the northern and western regions of NH. Over 24% of the municipalities in NH are at risk of food insecurity.



Source: Carsey School of Public Policy, University of New Hampshire, 603-862-2821, <http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/> ;
New Hampshire Kids Count, 603-225-2264, <http://www.nhkidscount.org>

Policy and Networking

Figure 9. As of October 2011, NH had 25 agricultural commissions in operation, mainly concentrated in the southeastern region of the state. According to the UNH Cooperative Extension, any NH municipality “may establish an agricultural commission to recognize, promote, and encourage farming and agricultural-based economic opportunities, and conserve agricultural land and resources. An agricultural commission has advisory and review authority to work with the boards and agencies of local government. The purpose of an agricultural commission is to protect agricultural lands, preserve rural character, provide a voice for farmers, and encourage agriculture-based businesses and activities.”



Infographic Citations

1. Lewis, C.B., Peters, C.J., 2012. A capacity assessment of New England's large animal slaughter facilities as relative to meat production for the regional food system. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems* 27, 192-199; Gail McWilliam Jellie, DOA, personal communication, May2, 2014
2. USDA Agriculture Census, 2012
3. Josh Weirsma, NH Groundfish Sectors Manager and David Goethel, Fisherman, Hampton, NH F/V Ellen Diane, personal communication April 16, 2014
4. Erik Chapman, personal communication, April 8, 2014
5. USDA Agriculture Census, 2012
6. Rian Bedard, Chief Executive Composter, Mr. Fox Composting, Personal communication, May 27, 2014
7. USDA Agricultural Marketing Service. Accessed 6/3/14. <<http://search.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/>>
8. NHFTS, NH Gleans report, December 2013.
9. USDA Agriculture Census, 2012
10. John Hamilton, personal communication, April 8, 2014
11. Josh Weirsma, NH Groundfish Sectors Manager and David Goethel, Fisherman, Hampton, NH F/V Ellen
12. USDA Agriculture Census, 2012
13. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: average monthly benefit per person, data as of April 4, 2014, accessed May 1, 2014.
14. Food Research and Action Center, School Breakfast Scorecard: 2012-2013 School Year, accessed May 1, 2014.
15. Feeding America, Calculated from Map the Meal Gap data for NH, accessed May 1, 2014.
16. USDA report, Household Food Security in the United States in 2012.
17. Trust for America's Health, 2013, accessed May 1, 2014. <<http://healthyamericans.org/>>
18. New Hampshire Food Bank, 2014, accessed May 1, 2014. <<http://www.nhfoodbank.org/>>
19. New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, accessed May 1, 2014. <<http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/>>
20. Obesity Prevention Program, NH Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services Dec 2010. Childhood Obesity in New Hampshire, 2008-2009
21. Purchase of ag conservation easements, status of state programs as of January 2013; Farmland Information Center <<http://www.farmlandinfo.org/statistics>>
22. UNHCE Accessed 5/30/14. <<http://extension.unh.edu/New-Hampshire-Agricultural-Commission>>
23. USDA's Climate Hubs: Providing Targeted Solutions to Modern Challenges, White House Blog, February 5, 2014, accessed May 1, 2014.
24. Citizen.com, accessed August 8, 2014. <<http://thecitizen.villagesoup.com/p/governor-signs-farm-bill-into-law-in-tilton/1223777>>

Small Group Report Template

Group Letter:

Facilitator Name:

Submitted by:

Number of people in your group:

1. Please list the hopes that people have for the NH Food System mentioned during introductions.
2. Please note all of the primary concerns and priorities mentioned when people discussed “Opportunities” and “Challenges.”
3. Please note the primary “actions” / “solutions” discussed by the group.
4. Please note the ideas discussed regarding “networking” and “collaboration.”
5. Please note your group’s **key findings and recommendations**.
6. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along in the summary report.

APPENDIX D - SUMMARIES BY REGION

SEACOAST (DOVER)

GATHERING DETAILS

Location: Wentworth Douglass Hospital, Dover, NH

Date: 6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., Monday, August 18, 2014

Number of Participants: 41

SUMMARY

a. Production & Harvesting

- Increase alternative food production through home, community and school gardens; meat from hunters
 - Associate alternative food production systems with food pantries
 - Develop gardening in schools, similar to how sports teams work--value the physical activity of gardening
 - Grow on marginal/underutilized land (e.g. land owned by prisons)
- Need to rebuild fishing industry
 - Educate consumers about different types of fish that are currently more abundant in waterways, but not as well known to consumers
- Increase farmland access / get farmland into the hands of farmers
 - Include urban spaces
 - Inventory resources and data
- Build infrastructure to support farmers scaling-up, both through collaborative and individual approaches (e.g. to sell wholesale)

b. Processing

- Increase infrastructure to process food. This would create jobs and ensure less edible food is wasted

c. Farm & Food Enterprise Viability

- Develop a farm viability program to ensure farmers receive a livable wage and have quality of life, without food prices increasing
 - Ensure that farmers have access to affordable land
 - Remove barriers that limit farmers' access to consumers

- Include appropriate technical support (business planning, legal services, etc.)

d. Distribution & Marketing

- Increase collaborative approaches (e.g. food hubs and cooperative distribution efforts)
- Educate consumers about what foods are available locally
- Enhance Farm to School efforts to make healthy, local foods available to students

e. Consumers & Public Health

- Educate consumers about food systems and what it means to produce foods (both in terms of human and environmental health)
 - The average consumer thinks food should be cheap
- Develop nutrition education programs for consumers
 - Many people do not know how to prepare fresh foods or what the nutritional value of foods is
 - How to preserve foods
- Enhance education in schools, both related to nutrition and the food system (place-based education)
- Transportation to markets is a hidden cost of accessing food

f. Food Access & Security

- Enhance distribution, transportation, and availability to make food more accessible to all people (e.g. across age, race, and socio-economic groups)
- Recognize climate change as a challenge facing NH farmers, and ultimately consumers (e.g. develop a statewide agency focused on food in natural disasters)

g. Nutrient & Waste Management

- Create a closed-loop system to reduce food waste
 - Enhance gleaning efforts both from commercial farms and alternative production systems (e.g. home and school gardens)

h. Policy

- New policy needed to address food standards, threats of climate change, inequality between producers (e.g. to level the playing field between large

and small-scale producers)

i. Food System Networking

- Increase connectivity within the network to break down silos, increase efficiency, leverage funding, and share knowledge
- Ensure that all voices are heard and that people are met “where they are,” including non-English speakers, and a diversity of cultures
- Ensure that stakeholders are engaged and taking action, want to work together for the common good
 - Understand where to focus energy
 - Centralize information and create space for all pieces to come together

GATHERING DETAILS

Location: Colby-Sawyer College, New London, NH

Date: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon, Wednesday, August 27, 2014

Number of Participants: 33

SUMMARY

a. Production

- Increase alternative food production systems (school gardens and farmers collaborating with one another)
- Increase farmland conservation
- Understand what NH is capable of producing (what are the current metrics and how might they change?)
- Increase supply
 - Support local farmers in production process (increase scale, incentives)

b. Processing

- Increase infrastructure for processing local foods and make existing infrastructure available to local farmers (e.g. schools and other commercial kitchens)
- Build more cold storage to preserve perishables
- Increase the amount of food processed in institutions (replace prepared/packaged foods)
- Invest in breaking barriers to food processing

c. Farm & Food Enterprise Viability

- Increase technical assistance to support local farmers and make farming a viable occupation
 - Develop incubator farms
 - Create a farm viability program in NH
 - Help small and mid-sized farms be competitive with large-scale

d. Distribution & Marketing

- Create a NH brand for local food, make it “mean something” to consumers

- Develop infrastructure for distribution, particularly food hubs
- Support farmers' ability to provide local food, have farmers drop off food (enhance mid-scale farms)
- Increase support and incentive for farmers to grow/sell wholesale

e. Consumers & Public Health

- Increase education of consumers
 - Include school programs to teach students about healthy eating
 - Reach the average customer about healthy food choices, help them understand the "bigger picture"
- Increase institutions' ability to buy locally grown foods
 - Decrease barriers that prevent schools/hospitals from connecting/working with farmers and local food

f. Food Access & Security

- Increase local food accessibility to all people geographically and economically
 - Cost of local food is expensive, making it difficult for many access
 - Increase SNAP/WIC opportunities
 - Regionalize the food system to better prepare for emergency management

g. Nutrient & Waste Management

- Support more composting operations to decrease waste streams
 - Have schools become bigger players in composting, become a catalyst to move the community (keep ecology in mind)

h. Policy

- Advocate with policy-makers
 - Host a conversation in Concord to educate legislators about the food system and our effort
- Require all schools to have school gardens and nutrition education programs
- Offer farmers incentives to move local food economy forward
- Create policy that supports small and mid-sized farmers (prevents them from being "muscle out")
- Ensure policy supports environmental responsibility within the food system

i. Food System Networking

- Build a network that is inclusive and hear all voices
- Build excitement and enthusiasm for effort (perhaps a board or non-profit group to spearhead this)
- Increase collaboration across sectors and break down silos/show connectivity
 - Connect health care with food system/ municipalities, government elections
- Enhance communications through different avenues (e.g. local television)
- Think and network regionally (across border with VT)
- ID NH's unique opportunities/leverage points

GATHERING DETAILS

What's on Your Plate? Lakes Region Food Network

Location: Laconia, NH

Date: 9/16/14

Number of Participants: 35

SUMMARY

a. Production & Harvesting

- Increase alternative production options
 - More community gardens and cooperative growing (for homeless, ethnic diversity, etc.)
 - Engage public in growing food
 - Improve season extension
- Increase local supply
 - Increases food security / community resilience
 - Food is more nutritious

b. Processing

- Create infrastructure for processing and storing local foods
 - Community food storage options

c. Farm & Food Enterprise Viability

- Increase grant resources for new business starters

d. Distribution & Marketing

- Get healthy food choices to where people live
 - Locate farmers' markets closer to people
 - Mobile markets / popups
 - **Improve distribution transportation system
- Encourage grocery stores to source locally
 - Conduct market research to know what local food consumers want

e. Consumers & Public Health

- Increase transportation infrastructure to improve access to healthy food options
- Reduce processed foods, which are often the cheapest but least nutritious

- Develop food system literacy programs
 - Food system demos
 - Home garden education
 - Education in schools

f. Food Access & Security

- Increase locations where SNAP / EBT is accepted
 - Reduce regulations around SNAP / EBT
- Research studies focused on accessibility

g. Nutrient & Waste Management

- Increase composting
- Increase gleaning programs
 - Collective gleaning from restaurants
 - Reduce food gaps

h. Policy

- Increase funding for the Department of Ag
 - DOA needs to support local farms
- Give tax breaks to farmers who donate and grow their own food
 - Reduce subsidies for commodity crops
- Reduce regulations

i. Food System Networking

- Develop an emergency plan for food supply distribution
 - Possible scenarios for potential shut downs in food distribution system

GATHERING DETAILS

Location: Manchester Health Department, Manchester, NH

Date: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon, Wednesday, September 17, 2014

Number of Participants: 21

SUMMARY

a. Production

- Community gardens offer many benefits in urban areas including building community, creating green space, food production, etc.
- Understanding how much food can be produced and where, given short growing season and poor soils

b. Farm & Food Enterprise Viability

- Need to increase technical support for farmers, particularly related to financial support (e.g. grants and loans), and to make resources more readily available.

c. Distribution & Marketing

- Increase collaboration among farmers and distributors
 - There is interest in developing a food hub in Manchester
 - Improve transportation infrastructure
- Increase connections between farmers and institutions

d. Consumers & Public Health

- Increasing food system literacy through several avenues
 - Consumers need to be more aware of food choices and healthy eating
 - Youth and students should be involved in nutrition programs in schools, after school programs, and youth servicing organizations
 - Help people understand and navigate the healthcare system
- Develop conversations between farmers, consumers, and institutions

e. Food Access & Security

- Increase access to local food for all income levels
 - Ensure WIC/SNAP is accepted at farmers' markets

- ID gaps where people are “falling through the cracks”
- Develop infrastructure to support transportation to local markets

f. Policy

- Build active engagement around policy (proactive v. reactive)
- Educate policymakers about the food system!
- Reduce barriers to bringing local food into schools
- Ensure producers and processors understand regulations

g. Food System Networking

- Increase non-traditional participation to ensure all cultures, backgrounds, age groups are involved
 - Increase engaged participation across the board
- Identify and learn from successful examples (existing models)
- Continue statewide conversation, increase communication to determine what scale would be most effective

GATHERING DETAILS

Location: Camp Calument, Freedom, NH

Date: 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m., Wednesday, September 24, 2014

Number of Participants: 17

SUMMARY

a. Production & Processing

- Need technical support for alternative production methods such as season extension techniques (i.e. high tunnels)
- Community kitchens as an option for adding value to local food – will it help keep local farmers more profitable?
- Identify underutilized buildings for commercial kitchens

b. Farm & Food Enterprise Viability

- Low wages and profitability make it difficult to make a living in farming
- Increasing farm profitability needs to be carefully balanced with goals of ensuring access to healthy, local food
- Need robust technical support and training/education options for young people who want to become farmers; creative ways to transition farm ownership to younger generations

c. Distribution & Marketing

- Need new ways to connect growers to local markets: a directory of direct markets, retail, restaurants, institutional options
- Collective/cooperative approaches to distribution: shared transportation, cooperatives could make reaching wholesale and institutional markets more cost effective
- Storage and commercial kitchens needed

d. Consumers & Public Health

- Importance of nutrition education about healthy food choices and preparation of healthy, local foods
- Emphasis on making local foods more convenient for consumers to buy and prepare

- Food system literacy: consumers need to understand where food is coming from and the value of consuming local foods both for personal and community health

e. Food Access & Security

- Local food needs to be convenient for consumers – transportation to markets is also an issue for consumers
- Increase availability with more green grocery stands, market trucks, etc.
- Social service providers also need a directory to help connect clients with healthy food options, farm stands, etc.

f. Nutrient & Waste Management

- Entrepreneurial opportunities in composting
- Food rescue: Need to make full use of locally grown food including distribution of excess to food pantries or food banks, food processing, and composting
- Excess and seconds can go to animals as well!

g. Policy

- FSMA: Food Safety Modernization act could make cooperative processing, composting, and direct marketing very challenging
- NH regulations make commercial composting difficult
- Need to review state level policy to see what laws/regulations impede local food production/distribution and retool state to get behind local foods

h. Food System Networking

- Engage local citizens in conversations and dialogue about food issues (i.e. egg production and related issues)
- Learn about other efforts in the region and what's working (i.e. best practices here in NH or in other New England states); recognize role that local context plays in what "works"
- Promote communication, collaboration and information sharing across the network
- Need for public education about the benefits of buying local food for economy, health, environment

GATHERING DETAILS

Location: Libby's Underground at Libby's Bistro, Gorham, NH

Date: 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., Wednesday, October 1, 2014

Number of Participants: 16

SUMMARY

a. Production

- Collaborative approaches would benefit farmers and consumers
 - E.g. Reduce costs for farmers through cost-share of equipment, grow at prisons, share best practices, increase production through home and community gardens
- There is a need to lengthen the growing season
- There is a need for skilled labor and an opportunity to attract more labor to the area
- Conserve agricultural land and increase accessibility to affordable land
- Research can help answer questions re: what and how much can/should be grown, and how best to scale-up production

b. Processing

- There is a lack of processing facilities (infrastructure) available
 - Community kitchens
 - Use of existing infrastructure (e.g. schools)
- Access to a commercial kitchen would allow businesses to scale-up processing

c. Farm & Food Enterprise Viability

- Technical support, specifically related to business planning and procuring financial support, could help food system enterprises
 - The support needs to be accessible and convenient (i.e. there needs to be the appropriate staff support available)
- Market profitability is affected by scale of competition

d. Distribution & Marketing

- There is a need for developing infrastructure to aggregate and sell food year-round (e.g. food hubs, co-ops, local markets, storage, etc.)
- Direct-to-consumer sales, through farmers' markets, etc., vary in level of success
- Farm-to-institution: getting food in can be challenging, but also presents opportunities

- Availability of wholesale
- Getting food from school garden programs
- Building a local/NH brand and selling to regional markets could expand opportunities for farmers/value added

e. *Consumers & Public Health*

- Consumers are accustomed to inexpensive food that is easily accessible. There is a need to change that culture and to make local foods more readily available.
- There is a great need for educating the public to increase food system literacy, to develop a culture of valuing local food
 - Nutrition education: consumer food choices, cooking classes, etc.
 - Raise consciousness about the connections between the food system, environment, farmer wages, etc.
 - All ages/levels (e.g. elementary school to nursing homes)
- Connect local food with health care, make local food available in hospitals

f. *Food Access & Security*

- Ensure that healthy food is accessible and available to all income levels
 - Increase locations where EBT can be used for local food
- Find ways to make local food available year-round
- Develop infrastructure to make local food available in rural/hard-to-reach areas

g. *Nutrient & Waste Management*

- Compost and waste systems are currently lacking

h. *Policy*

- Food policies and regulations should match the scale of production/processing to support the local economy (some policies and regulations can be an obstacle to producing and selling local food)

i. *Food System Networking*

- Increase local networking to
 - Share best practices
 - Step outside of silos and engage cross-sector and develop partnerships
 - Streamline communication
 - Increase funding and sponsorship
 - Create a “circuit-rider” position to increase outreach and accessibility, support increased capacity, foster community connections (this would need funding)

GATHERING DETAILS

Location: UNH Cooperative Extension, Grafton County Complex, North Haverhill, NH

Date: 8:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m., Thursday, October 2, 2014

Number of Participants: 16

SUMMARY

a. Production & Processing

- Zoning and land use changes to support farmland conservation and agriculture use or transition from forest to agriculture
- Issues of scale and supply are critical in area where most farms are small
- Need creative ways to support dairy sector
- Asset inventory to identify areas of priority and leverage

b. Farm & Food Enterprise Viability

- Financing and credit are challenging for producers who want to innovate; need community investment support and ways to connect producers and entrepreneurs to capital
- Cost of equipment, land, labor and insurance is high
- Need collaborative approaches to ensure market profitability; connect businesses and farmers to make new products, find niches
- Technical support needed for new, beginning farmers

c. Distribution & Marketing

- Market research needed to determine what producers will support, what drives consumer purchasing decisions
- Develop stronger ties with conventional retail stores; most are not currently farm friendly
- Need branding and a collaborative approach to advertising, emphasizing how food issues are connected to public health, business and economy

d. Consumers & Public Health

- Emphasis on making local foods more convenient for consumers to buy and prepare; including understanding that food doesn't have to be blemish free or perfect to be healthy and delicious

- Food system literacy: consumers need to understand where food is coming from and the value of consuming local foods both for personal and community health
- Also, public needs to understand realities of farming, a tendency to support local food in theory but “NIMBY” when it comes to expanding agricultural businesses in a community (i.e. processing plant)

e. Policy

- FSMA: Food Safety Modernization Act is creating uncertainty and market investment is on hold because of it
- State policy needs to offer incentives to mainstream markets to support local food

f. Food System Networking

- Learn from success stories and best practices in region: i.e. Vermont community kitchen programs are successful with support of local business community but NH Cooks program closed down.
- Local networking needed to encourage cross sector collaboration and product innovation; Example: can't expect dairy farmer to produce cheese - need to connect farmers to cheesemakers.

GATHERING DETAILS

Location: Colebrook Country Club, Colebrook, NH

Date: 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., Monday, October 6, 2014

Number of Participants: 19

SUMMARY

Production & Processing

- Increase alternative production through home and school gardens, make them easier to start and more accessible
- Simplify production to increase efficiency and use less energy
- Increase farmland conservation and promote production as a valued land use
- Need to understand what resources we have for production
- Need to develop infrastructure to support processing within the state

Farm & Food Enterprise Viability

- Need to ensure a living wage for farmers
- Ensure access to technical support and financing for farmers

Distribution & Marketing

- Cut out middleman and sell directly to consumers
 - Develop infrastructure to connect farmers to processing, storage, distribution, and marketing
 - Increase advertising for local food
- Infrastructure also needed to connect food pantries

Consumers & Public Health

- Consumers are accustomed to cheap food, what is the real cost?
- Need to educate consumers across the board (consumers, growers, regulators, elected officials, students, parents, etc.)
- Increase food system literacy with cooking programs (how to preserve food), nutrition education (which foods are healthiest), education in schools (breakfast programs), etc.

Food Access & Security

- Increase use of EBT/WIC at farmers' markets/for local food

- Extend healthy foods to families in need

Nutrient & Waste Management

- Glean surplus food at harvest time and from “backyard” growers

Policy

- Increase understanding of FSMA and other regulations that affect farmers/processors
- Require institutions (schools/prisons) to buy a certain percentage of food locally
- Need state approved processing facility (legislation that supports necessary infrastructure to improve “farm to plate”)

Food System Networking

- Improve regional connections, specifically east-west (VT border)
- Increase cross-sector collaboration
- Create an ombudsman program to circulate between agencies and support farmers

LITTLETON

GATHERING DETAILS

Location: Littleton Community Center, Littleton, NH

Date: 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon, Tuesday, October 7, 2014

Number of Participants: 16

SUMMARY

a. Production & Processing

- Need to keep farmland open and make it accessible to those who want to farm it
 - At the same time, there is a lot of farmland open, but no one farming it.
How do we attract skilled labor?
- Develop infrastructure to support processing foods locally

b. Farm & Food Enterprise Viability

- NH needs a farm viability plan
- Farmers need fair wages to be profitable, how do we change this?
- Increase technical support to farmers in general

c. Distribution & Marketing

- Market research will help determine consumer interest in local food
- Need infrastructure to increase availability of local food (e.g. provide transportation to the FM, reach more rural areas)

d. Consumers & Public Health

- Educate consumers across socio-economic spectrum
 - General food systems literacy (e.g. where food comes from)
 - Nutrition education, eating healthy, etc.
 - How to prepare and cook local foods
 - Shifting perspective on the true cost of food (e.g. “industrial food is artificially cheap”)
- Educate a skilled labor force to attract people to the region

e. Food Access & Security

- Focus on making food accessible to all, not just those who can afford it, create a more equitable food system

- Provide subsidies to farmers to provide low income residents
- Improve accessibility to rural residents
- Restore WIC and SNAP/EBT for buying local, fresh foods

f. Food System Networking

- Move beyond advocacy to action!
- Increase local networking and communication, and aggregate resources to be more accessible to stakeholders
- Look to other successful states and programs to learn best practice

APPENDIX E - FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

GATHERING DETAILS

Madison Farmer Focus Group

Location: Private Home, Madison, NH

Date: 9/15/14

Number of Participants: 12

ORIS Farmer Focus Group

Location: Manchester, NH

Date: 9/15/14

Number of Participants:

SUMMARY

a. Production & Harvesting

- Labor is a major cost for many small-scale farmers
- Need to increase the number of farmers to increase supply in the state
- Farmers should collaborate to trade vegetable waste as food scraps for livestock

b. Processing

- Build community kitchens for local food processing
 - Could also help market and sell products
- Some farmers need help with food preservation

c. Farm & Food Enterprise Viability

- The cost of equipment can be a barrier for farmers
- Cultural differences in production/marketing practices make it difficult for some farmers (ORIS farmers)
- Competition with wholesale is a challenge for small-scale farmers
- Farmers need the appropriate technical support to be viable
 - Beginning farmer support
 - Transition support
 - Need training opportunities for GAP certification
 - Education for best practices
- How to keep farming alive between generations?

d. Distribution & Marketing

- Increase collaborative approaches to distributing and marketing local foods
- Create food sovereignty and increase community resilience by increasing local food consumption
- Need more places to sell local food
 - No traffic near some roadside farm stands
 - Increase cold storage to decrease barriers to distribution
- Need to increase demand in less populated areas of the state
- Need to better understand the nature of small-scale markets
 - Are we supply the right things?
 - How can we connect with the right consumers?

e. Consumers & Public Health

- Take a health care approach to increasing vegetable consumption
 - Consumers need to reduce processed food consumption and increase buying locally produced food
- People need to be educated about consumer choices

f. Food Access & Security

- Make sure that WIC and SNAP are accepted at all farmers' markets
- Some people lack transportation to get to markets

g. Nutrient & Waste Management

- Reduce waste through food rescue (find creative reuse solutions for surplus foods)

h. Policy

- Engage policy makers
- Some regulations make it illegal to sell local food, which creates barriers for local producers

i. Food System Networking

- Engaging in local networking to share best practices
- Need to engage participation of all stakeholder groups
- Develop a database for what people within markets want/need

APPENDIX F - OTHER FEEDBACK

GATHERING DETAILS

Virtual Gathering Feedback

Location: Online and via email

Date: 8/26/14--1/12/15

Number of Participants: 6

NOFA NH

Location: Rundlett Middle School, Concord, NH

Date: 1/31/15

Number of Participants: 7

Farm and Forest Expo

Location: Radisson Hotel, Manchester, NH

Date: 2/6/15

Number of Participants: 10

SUMMARY

a. Production & Harvesting

- Need to ensure that farmland is conserved for farming
- Need to develop ways to extend the season

b. Processing

- There is a lack of infrastructure necessary for processing
 - Develop food hubs with commercial kitchens that could also be used for distribution
 - Mobile flash freezers
- There is a lack of NH state inspection agency for slaughterhouses

c. Farm & Food Enterprise Viability

- Farmland is expensive for farmers. We must find ways to make farmland accessible and affordable to farmers
 - High property taxes are a barrier (make some farmers leave the state)
 - Match farmers with available agricultural land
- Make sure that the appropriate technical support is available to farmers
 - Sales and marketing, as well as business planning education for farmers

- Provide formal education programs for farmers: Create a certificate program that ensures basic knowledge about safety regulations for production and processing

d. Distribution & Marketing

- There is a need to increase advertising of local food, as well as create regional branding.
- Infrastructure related to distribution is a challenge
 - Food hubs could help to address problems with distribution
 - Increase available outlets/options for getting products to consumers
- Producer-consumer relationships need to be built/strengthened
 - How do farmers find people/customers who want to buy their product?
 - Farmers need to understand the market (e.g. what products will sell and where?)
 - How do we get local food into the supply chain?
- Getting food pantries more involved could help with distribution challenges.

e. Consumers & Public Health

- For many people, the cost of food is a barrier to buying locally grown food
- There is a need to increase food system literacy among consumers. Many people don't know about local food or where to buy it; there is a need to get people to show up!
 - Consumers need to be educated about the types of food produced in NH

f. Food Access & Security

- Cost of local food can be a burden for consumers\
- Incorporate SNAP into farmers markets

g. Nutrient & Waste Management

- Decrease food waste
 - Home composting
 - Gleaning

h. Policy

- Legislation / regulations are difficult for entrepreneurs to understand
- Educate the public more about policy issues
 - Use town Ag commissions as a part of education

- Get conservation commissions more involved in legislation for farmland protection
- Reduce regulatory barriers for farmers and processing
 - Regulations can stand in the way of operations scaling-up
- There is a lack of state funding for ag in NH

i. Food System Networking

- Ensure that the NHFSN&S is inclusive
 - Involve policy makers, food service directors, grocers, etc.
- Open dialogue to share best practices
- Increase local networking, engage participation of all the organizations and individuals working in the NH food system to ensure ownership is with the stakeholders
- Gather resources into one area and make easily accessible to stakeholders