

Chapter 7: Other Notable Initiatives from Across Ontario

This chapter presents summaries of initiatives that were included in the research, but were not profiled as regional case studies. The summaries are organized by region, with Northern Ontario presented first, followed by Eastern Ontario, the Golden Horseshoe, Southwestern Ontario, Southern Ontario, and province-wide initiatives. Within each regional section, initiatives are organized based on district or county.

Northern Ontario Region

Lee-Ann Chevrette, Connie Nelson, and Mirella Stroink

KENORA DISTRICT

Dryden

Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) Dryden – Locavore Box

The Northwestern Health Unit in Dryden is involved in a number of food security-related initiatives. In 2009 they helped initiate and pilot the Locavore Box program in Dryden. The program focuses on connecting local producers and consumers, and providing a solid market for locally produced goods. The pilot project included 30 people who paid \$20 every two weeks to receive the box with a number of locally produced items. The project was run again in 2010, maintaining the same number of participants (30 people). Due to the success of the program and the increasing interest in 2011, they expanded the program to include 60 boxes.

The program is now run by the Cloverbelt Farmers Market who hires an intern every summer to coordinate the farmers' market and administer the Locavore Box. The Northwestern Health Unit continues to provide in kind support. The main goals of the initiative are to increase producer and consumer connections, increase consumption of local food, and increase the amount of local farmland being utilized. Small quantities of meats are included in the box so that people can try the products, connect with the producers and hopefully purchase more products in the future.

The market has policies for three categories of vendors: 1) goods are produced locally/grown or handmade, 2) goods are produced organically (i.e. no spray), 3) goods are environmentally friendly products that support a sustainable lifestyle. For more information go to: <http://www.cloverbeltfarmersmarket.ca/index.cfm>

Dryden - Oxdrift

Cloverbelt Country Farmers Market (CCFM)

The Cloverbelt Country Farmers' Market is located in Oxdrift (15 min. drive west of Dryden) every Saturday morning, and every second Thursday afternoon in Dryden. The

market serves an area west to Vermillion Bay and East to Ignace. The market connects consumers directly with local food producers, and provides an alternative to the conventional food system by increasing access to healthy local food. Currently the market is run by a president and the secretary who are local farmers. The market has a partnership with the Northwestern Health Unit for the Locavore Box project, and recently received a \$5000 grant for signs, tables, and tents.

Ignace

Blueberry Initiative

The Ignace Blueberry Initiative aims to explore the feasibility of a processing facility in the community of Ignace. This would be a multi-community initiative that would include Wabigoon Lake, Sioux Lookout and Ignace. The processing facility would be located in Ignace, and would aim to purchase blueberries from pickers in the three communities, process them at the facility, and produce value-added blueberry products. The goals of the project include the diversification of the forest economy, the development of local food stores, community economic development, and job creation. This project may provide growth for northern communities in need of economic development. A graduate student at Lakehead University spent the summer in the communities conducting research, and will spend the next year developing a business plan for the initiative.

Kenora

NWHU (Kenora)

The Northwestern Health Unit is involved in supporting numerous local food system initiatives in Kenora, including: the Kenora Food Chapter, community gardens, two good food box programs, and a farmers market. There are also a number of food skills programs happening in Kenora, including community kitchens. There are two emergency food programs: the Salvation Army (the food bank is run out of there) and the Fellowship Center. There is a Plant a Row-Grow a Row Program, although it is not very well utilized. The donations that come out of this program go to the Minot Child and Parent Resource Centre. The primary goal of all of these initiatives is to increase physical and economic access to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate foods.

Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) (Big Trout Lake)

Market Garden Project with Reid Ridge Farm in Thunder Bay

This initiative is a partnership between KI First Nation and the Food Security Research Network, to establish a market garden at Reid Ridge Farms in Thunder Bay. The initiative provides gardening training to KI community members. With the assistance of a Garden Trainer and the Director of FSRN, five community members from KI were brought to Thunder Bay for two weeks in June, two weeks in July, and two weeks in August. The goal is to support gardening skills training and development so that these individuals can bring back and share their knowledge and skills with other community members, and start their own gardening programs. Some of the goals of the projects include learning how to garden, teaching other people in the community how to garden, to start prepping the land for gardens, to provide fresh healthy food in the community, and to provide alternatives to expensive, store-bought food.

Sioux Lookout

NWHU Sioux Lookout

The NWHU was involved in initiating the Northwest Farmers' Market in Sioux Lookout, but it is no longer involved; the Chamber of Commerce has taken over the management of the market. The farmers market has been very successful and has grown significantly in the last few years. There is a large transient population in the community (a lot of professionals coming and going), and so there is a greater interest in local food as these individuals appear to want greater accountability and sustainability. There is not a lot of local food production in the area so the vast majority of food products sold at the market come in from Clover Valley Farmers' Market / Fort Frances. However, there are several bakers, preserve makers, a honey producer and local artisans that sell at the farmers market. The market runs every Friday from May-September between 10am and 2pm.

The public health nutritionist in Sioux Lookout is a planner and her role (specific to local food) is to assist in the planning of regional food initiatives.

For more information go to: <http://www.nwhu.on.ca>

RAINY RIVER DISTRICT

Fort Frances

NWHU Fort Frances – Rainy River Valley Food for All (Rainy River), Apple Core (Atikokan)

Rainy River Valley Food for All is a group of local food enthusiasts, producers, consumers, researchers, and public health educators. The main goals of this group are to provide affordable access to local, healthy food, and to increase education and awareness of buying local.

Apple Core, a newly formed group in Atikokan, focuses on supporting the local food bank. Apple Core has just created a draft terms of reference. There are no producers in Atikokan, all the food for the food bank comes from the Regional Food Distribution Association (RFDA) in Thunder Bay.

Both groups are grassroots and receive no public funding. There are 5 to 6 different organizations involved in both groups, and each has a small budget from the Northwestern Health Unit, which varies from year to year depending on programs that are being developed.

Rainy River

Cornell Farms

Cornell Farms is a fifth generation, family-owned diverse beef farm located in the Rainy River District in Northwestern Ontario, along the Ontario/Minnesota border. Their business is divided into two components: beef breeding stock and natural beef products for the consumer. In 2008, Kim Cornell of Cornell Farms won a Premier's Agri-food Innovation Excellence award, which recognizes innovators who contribute to the success of the Ontario agri-food sector.

The Cornell's also run a good food box program that they market to several communities in their region. The program is run year-round: during the summer months they try to include as many local products as possible, and during the winter they purchase food from wholesalers in Minnesota and Manitoba. The geographic scope includes Kenora, Sioux Narrows, Nestor Falls, Atikokan, Fort Francis, Rainy River and Emo. They charge \$25 for each box and in a typical month they sell 150 boxes. For more information go to: <http://www.cornellfarms.ca>

Rainy River District Abattoir

The Rainy River District Abattoir was incorporated as a not-for-profit on February 17, 2010. It operates as a 'kill and chill' operation. In 2006 the Rainy River Cattlemen's Association started the steering committee to explore the potential of creating a cooperatively run local abattoir. They established a cooperative membership of about 90 local producers and supporters who all bought lifetime memberships. The abattoir provides the infrastructure necessary for producers to explore alternative marketing. Distance to the other abattoir in the district was a key point in establishing the need and getting support. The abattoir provides alternative marketing for producers, opportunities to produce local products, and quality product to the local community.

THUNDER BAY DISTRICT

Lappe

Willow Springs Creative Center

Willow Springs is a not-for-profit organization with a working board of 12 at present. Their mission is to promote growth through creative expression and community development. They focus on art and therapeutic gardening programming. They are trying to develop a training facility with the hope of providing training opportunities to others in the region. They regularly run horticultural therapy programs, mobile gardening programming and art classes. They have recently reopened their store, where they sell locally created arts and crafts, and locally grown food products.

The four women who started the center wanted to create a new model, one that is respectful of women, respectful of children's creativity and fosters connection to nature. The most important motivation for getting involved is accessibility: making a space where all people are able to produce food. The concept of horticultural therapy for health, healing, and developmental growth is central to the initiative. For more information, go to: <http://www.willowsprings.ca/>

Thunder Bay

Food Action Network (FAN)-Thunder Bay District Health Unit

FAN's mission is to provide a network of individuals and agencies from various sectors to work towards and advocate for community food security for the city of Thunder Bay and surrounding area through coordinated, community-led action. They work to improve community food security, create awareness of food security issues for those doing work in the field, for those who are food insecure, and for the general population. This allows

other agencies –who do similar work– to network and share their philosophy, so that resources can be pulled together, and impacts increased.

The Thunder Bay District Health Unit was an original partner and took over the chair of the network in 1998. The geographic scope is mainly the city of Thunder Bay, although they have been reaching out to the region through an annual conference, and have made some progress in creating connections with others in the region. The network consists of many organizations in and around Thunder Bay whose programs the network supports, such as community kitchens, the Good Food Box, gleaning, Get Fresh Guide, community gardens, the Thunder Bay Food Charter, and the Northern Food Connections Conference. For more information go to:

<http://www.tbdhu.com/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating/FoodSecurity/FAN.htm>

Food Security Research Network

FSRN is a large network of over 60 community partners in northern Ontario including: (a) local agriculture organizations (TBARS, TBFA, TBSCIA and Cattlemen's Association), farm producers, emergent new farm markets, community gardens, CSA programs; (b) umbrella First Nations' organizations Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Mattawa First Nations, Independent First Nations as well as specific communities; (c) schools in the development of school gardens and related curriculum; and (d) charitable and social organizations. FSRN's network is based on complex adaptive systems theory which they call the Contextual Fluidity Partnership Model.

FSRN is firmly entrenched in collaborations with regional, provincial and national organizations.

FSRN and the Community Service Learning program is in itself a new way of addressing food security; it couples university resources – faculty, students and staff – with dedicated Northwestern Ontario partners in a Contextual Fluidity Partnership Model designed to foster growth in knowledge. The Food Security Research Network is acknowledged as an important catalyst for promoting agriculture and food security in the region, which has indirectly helped to support the growth of farm operations and other agri-related initiatives (e.g. small scale farming, community gardens) that have a specific focus on promoting local food production and consumption. For more information go to:

www.foodsecurityresearch.ca.

Good Food Box-Northwest Ontario Women's Centre

The Northwest Ontario Women's Center has been running a Good Food Box program for many years. It was started through the Food Action Network. It has created partnerships and workshops, connected people in vulnerable neighborhoods, and has become a community economic development tool. The GFB provides food to Thunder Bay and area and also has requests from outside the area. Some First Nations either order it through their offices in town or come into town to pick it up. The four primary objectives of the GFB are:

1. food security – to provide people with fresh, healthy appropriate food in their neighborhoods, especially to those who may be food insecure,

2. community building – to engage volunteers, partners and agencies in a joint community effort,
3. to provide people with skills and knowledge of how to use food – i.e. cooking and storage of food, and
4. to engage with local producers, and to use local food wherever possible.

Ogden Simpson and East End Veggie Garden Project

The Ogden Simpson and East End Veggie Garden Project was established in January 2006 with funding from Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC). One of the mandates of this project is to create a positive impact in the community. The vision is to revitalize the identified neighbourhood by building relationships over the backyard fence. Gardening is an identified strength in the community; this was focused upon in order to build community and increase community food security. The primary focus was to bring community members and other stakeholders together in a safe neutral environment around an activity that promotes communication, enhances relationship building, and builds strong community. The initiative has a grassroots, unincorporated, neighbourhood organizational structure.

The vision for the initiative is much larger than just providing food, though the food produced does fill a need in the community – as there are numerous community members who live in poverty and are food insecure. Community members are invited to participate by sharing tools, resources, knowledge, equipment and supplies for growing food either in the communal gardening space or in their own backyards.

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)

Rudy Butenhuis is the OMAFRA Agricultural Representative for the Thunder Bay District. He is not directly involved in any food hubs per se, but acts as a support person for anyone who wishes to contact him. He would like to see individual organizations step back and take a look at the bigger picture, to ensure that their goals are still appropriate given today's changing market. He feels that the most important factor in determining the effectiveness of a food hub is viability. Rather than speaking about profitability the focus should be on viability. All other points including accessibility for consumers, health and nutrition, contribution to community building in education, contribution to food security, linkages with other food systems, and contribution to environmental sustainability are simply the sales pitch. The bottom line is viability.

Regional Food Distribution Association (RFDA)

The RFDA's mission is "let no one go hungry in our midst". The RFDA operates as a food bank for food banks, by accessing food from public and local businesses, and as a designated hub through the National Food Share System. It supplies products to 29 food banks or feeding programs in Northwestern Ontario: 20 of these programs are in the City of Thunder Bay, others are located in Marathon, Schreiber, Nipigon, Greenstone, Kakabeka, Dryden, Ignace, and Atikokan. The RFDA is a charitable organization, run by a volunteer Board of Directors.

RFDA focuses on food distribution as well as education, and also serves as a meeting place for participating organizations including social justice groups and small-scale food producers. They are slowly expanding their goals to become a food center. They feel their mandate has to expand in order to improve the lives of people, as emergency food programs are not the solution to the broad problems of food security. The RFDA has strict national guidelines in terms of what foods can be distributed and they're all based on food safety. None are based on local foods but they do have a buying strategy and hope to incorporate more local food providers in the future. For more information go to: www.foodbanksnorthwest.ca.

Thunder Bay Country Market

The Thunder Bay Country Market just celebrated its 15th anniversary. The market's motto is: "We make it, bake it, or grow it". The market provides both indoor and outdoor space; the indoor market is open year-round. They have approximately 65 vendors from the Thunder Bay region participating. It is a self-supporting market, but has a strong economic impact each year, with general revenues at about \$2 million and economic impact in the city at around 5 million annually. The market has grown significantly within the last few years. The market provides a place where local and regional vendors can sell their products and consumers have increased access to safe, nutritious, local/regionally grown foods. John Graveson, Market Manager feels this market is a successful 'incubator' for fledgling local businesses. For more information go to: <http://www.thunderbaycountrymarket.com/>.

True North Community Cooperative (TNCC)

Formed in 2009, the TNCC is a non-profit community co-operative aimed at building resilience in Northern Ontario through a stronger localized economy. TNCC currently has 51 producer members, 298 individual members, and 8 commercial/organizational members. Producer members living in Northern Ontario are able to sell their foods, arts, and crafts within a pricing structure that ensures they receive true value for their products. In turn, individual, commercial, and organizational members are able to access regionally produced goods through pre-orders, in store, and/or mail-orders.

The co-op's governance structure is based on democratic control and is rooted in cooperative principles, autonomy being the most important. The board can have up to 11 members. Past board members or general members serve as Special advisers to the board. The geographic scope of the cooperative is the region of northern Ontario defined by FEDNOR: Muskoka/ Mattawa River, all of northern Ontario to Québec, Manitoba and the Nunavut borders. They have a store-front location in downtown Thunder Bay. The co-op is an active participant in the Nutrition North Program; they receive a subsidy for delivering healthy foods to remote northern Ontario communities. For more information go to: www.truenorthcoop.ca and www.facebook.com/truenorthcommunitycooperative

COCHRANE DISTRICT

Cochrane

Northeast Superior Community Forest

The Northeast Superior Forest Community (NSFC) is the term used to describe the regional community served by the Northeastern Superior Mayors' Group, a voluntary association of the mayors of six communities in the Northeastern Superior Region, including Chapleau, Hornepayne, Dubreuilville, White River, Wawa and Manitouwadge. In 2005, in the face of the growing crisis in the forestry sector, the mayors' group set out to develop a shared economic strategy for their communities. Recognizing that their future would continue to depend on the forests, they determined to make the forest resources of the region work for the people who live in the six communities.

The Northeast Superior Forest Community's mission is to encourage innovation in forest-based projects that builds regional partnerships and entrepreneurship in value-added areas including wood products, energy, and non-timber forest products by building capacity and First Nation partnerships through education, advocacy and public policy. The organization recently conducted a study that assessed the potential of Non-Timber Forest Products within their region. Markets for forest food products such as blueberries are currently being explored.

Hearst

AGRIVA (Agriculture and Value Added)

AGRIVA is a volunteer group and a subcommittee of the Hearst EDC. AGRIVA is involved with many local food initiatives, but its primary focus is the organization and management of the summer market. The Hearst EDC provides in-kind support and assistance in research and development, marketing, and promotion of products. Most of AGRIVA's activities are oriented towards education and providing the resources and infrastructure to facilitate the building of the relationships between the producer and the consumer. Through the market, they provide a physical space for that relationship to take place. Their overall mission is to support sustainable development for companies and/or for regional agriculture and value-added products.

The initiative covers a radius of 125 km from the center of Hearst, and includes the communities of Mattice, Val Cote, Kapuskasing, Moonbeam, Hornepayne, and Constance Lake First Nation. AGRIVA has only been operational since 2009 and there is recognition of its need to become more regionalized as opposed to local. For more information, go to: www.agriva.ca/.

La Maison Verte (LMV)

La Maison Verte (LMV) is a not-for-profit organization that was started in 1982 by l'Association Parmis-Elles, a women's group located in Hearst, Ontario with the mandate to create financial opportunities and promote well-being for women in the area. In 1981

the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources awarded potential tree growers a five-year black spruce seedling contract. The Association was looking to invest in a project with greenhouses and, together with private funding, they created what was the beginning of LMV. Initially LMV was contracted by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources to grow 2 million seedlings; production has gradually increased to 9 million seedlings annually.

As a result of the sharp downturn in the forest industry in the 1990s, LMV lost 80% of its seedling business; consequently, they recognized the need to diversify their operations. In 1994 they started to produce tomatoes in the greenhouses. In 2009 they began to grow cucumbers. These tomatoes and cucumbers are distributed both locally and regionally. In 2011, LMV started a local food basket program (all food crops are grown in one of their greenhouses). It is similar to community supported agriculture (CSA), in that individuals purchase a share/weekly basket in advance. Thirty-two people purchased shares in 2011, and received 15 weekly baskets over the course of the growing season. LMV is planning to increase the shares to 50 in 2012.

For more information go to: www.lamaisonverte.info/index.html.

Moosonee

Moosonee Native Friendship Center

The Moosonee Native Friendship Center runs several food security-related initiatives including the Homelessness Initiatives Program, a soup kitchen, emergency food bank, Meals on Wheels, community kitchens for youth and families, and a breakfast program. A meal and/or healthy snack are made available to those individuals attending the drop-in center that is housed within the Moosonee Native Friendship Center. All programs through the Moosonee Native Friendship Center are guided by individual program mandates, as well as the Friendship Center's vision statement: "to serve the Aboriginal population of Moosonee through the seven stages of life by providing needed resources to assist them in establishing a better quality of life, spiritually, culturally, socially, and economically". The Homelessness Initiatives Program is a partnership with the Cochrane regional food bank.

Moosonee is an isolated community and faces numerous barriers. Fresh foods are prohibitively expensive, growing conditions are relatively poor, and transportation costs are extremely high. The Moosonee Community Plan recognized gaps in services available to the community homeless and at-risk of homelessness population; the food/meal support initiatives were created with the aim to contribute to food security and to provide a safe and nutritious meal/snack to the targeted clientele. For more information go to: www.onlink.net/~mcap/

Timmins

Urban Park Farmers' Market, Naturally Pure Farm, Taste of Timmins

The Urban Park Farmers' Market is an urban market that was initiated in 2011 by the Timmins BIA and a local grower from Naturally Pure Farm. One day per week, several downtown Timmins streets are closed to traffic, and several local and regional vendors participate in the market. This market increases access to healthy food for local residents

and the business community in downtown Timmins. The initiative has been very successful in drawing support from local businesses, local producers and community members alike.

Taste of Timmins is a website that seeks to connect producers and consumers, and provide education and support for the local food movement in the Timmins region.

For more information go to:

www.facebook.com/pages/Naturally-Pure-Farm/120820387988527.

ALGOMA DISTRICT

Sault Ste. Marie

Algoma Food Network

The Algoma Food Network (AFN) was started in 2008. AFN is “dedicated to building and supporting an autonomous, sustainable, healthy, local food system that is accessible to all: through education, advocacy, action, and relationship building.” AFN acts as a central network within the Algoma region and supports such diverse initiatives as the Sault Ste. Marie Farmers’ Market, the Johnson Township Farmers Market, local Community Supported Agriculture initiatives, Penokean Hills Farms, local producers, and the local abattoir. The network created the Algoma Marketing Alliance, and ‘Buy Algoma, Buy Fresh’, whose mission is “*to enhance economic opportunities for agriculture in the Algoma / Sault area by facilitating linkages between producers and consumers through promotion, education, and co-operation.*”

The AFN is run primarily through Algoma University’s NORDIK Institute. For more information go to: www.algomafoodnetwork.wordpress.com/

Wawa

Wawa Farmers’ Market

The Wawa Farmers’ Market is a local market that runs every second Saturday afternoon during the summer. The Department of Tourism within the Municipality of Wawa runs this market. This market is unique in that the city of Wawa has no local agricultural producers, so the majority of food items for sale come from a mobile farmers market established by Jack Tindle from Desbarats, Ontario. Jack is a beef producer who brings to Wawa his products as well as other locally produced items from the Desbarats area. Other individuals from Wawa vend such items as baking, preserves, and crafts. This market was started in 2010 and it has been received very well by the local community. There is only one grocer in Wawa, so prices for food are high as there is no competition. The market brings a welcomed alternative food purchasing opportunity to community members. A significant pool of volunteers helps with setup and takedown.

NIPISSING DISTRICT

Verner

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)

Julie-Poirier-Mensinga is OMAFRA's Agricultural Business Management Specialist for Northern Ontario. In her role she works primarily with businesses to promote innovation in agriculture. She feels there is a real distinction between food hubs that are led by producers and others that are led by consumers, and the goals of the hubs vary depending on who has initiated it. For example, if it is producer-driven, then the goals are marketing and profitability. If it is consumer-driven, the goals are access to healthy, local foods, and possibly environmental reasons like purchasing local food to reduce the ecological footprint. Also these goals include helping the local economy. She provides ongoing support to local food initiatives.

Eastern Ontario Region

Brynne Sinclair-Waters and Linda Stevens

PETERBOROUGH COUNTY

JustFood Box Program – YWCA Peterborough, Victoria, and Haliburton

Interviewee: Joëlle Favreau, YWCA of Peterborough, Victoria and Haliburton

Interview and description by Brynne Sinclair-Waters, August 9, 2011

“Belonging is really strong in food programs... Definitely at the heart of it for me is social inclusion and opportunities for people to get together, swap stories and start changing the world. Food is at the heart of what makes that happen.” – YWCA staff

The YWCA has been working on food security issues for over 20 years. Through their work with women and children fleeing from abuse and violence it quickly became clear that food insecurity was an important issue. First, they worked on providing community gardens in the city and surrounding area and then in 1996 they started the food box program. The JustFood Box program now delivers about 600 boxes a month to people living in the City of Peterborough and Peterborough County. They offer two boxes: a staples box, which combines fresh food and non-perishable items, and a fresh food box. The purpose of the box is to provide nutritious food to people living in the region.

Both of the food boxes are available at half price. This subsidized price is essential because it makes the food boxes accessible to people living on low-income. Every year they fundraise to cover the cost of that subsidy, which in 2010 amounted to \$51,000. Since they do not have any core funding for their food security work, the need to be fundraising constantly is challenging.

The JustFood Box program works with local farmers to get as much local food into the boxes as possible and always ensure that farmers get paid market price. As the number of boxes they distribute grows they have started to source from many different farmers in the area to fulfill their orders and have become a “mini-distribution centre” for local produce.

They are also working hard to bridge the gap between rural and urban communities and now distribute almost half of their boxes into rural areas.

By the Bushel Food Co-op

Interviewee: Hanah McFarlane, Staff

Interview and description by Brynne Sinclair-Waters, July 19 2011

The By the Bushel Food Co-op was started up by a group of people in the Peterborough area that had been meeting to discuss what could be done in their community to make

fresh, healthy food more accessible. In 2009, they bought By the Bushel Home Delivery, which had been running as an organic food basket business, and turned it into a co-op. Another CSA in the region was also folded into the new initiative. Today By the Bushel Food Co-op's mandate is to provide local and ecologically-responsible food, primarily produce, to people in the Peterborough region.

By the Bushel Food Co-op sells a fresh food basket for twenty weeks during high season. This year they will also have a winter basket that will be available until February. Each year By the Bushel puts out a production schedule and rough plan of what will be in the baskets, but it fluctuates depending on what is available and on other factors such as weather. Customers pick up their food basket at the co-op's new store location either weekly or bi-weekly depending on what they ordered.

The co-op has two types of memberships - producer members who grow the food and consumer members who buy the food. By the Bushel now has nineteen producer members who are all located within a roughly 25-30 minute radius of Peterborough. Most are farmers, although some are also selling value added products. Not all of the producers are certified organic, but they are all growing ecologically-responsibly.

A board of directors oversees the budget and activities of the co-op, while a small part-time staff team act as coordinator and product manager. In the summer of 2011, through a grant from the Ontario Co-operative Society, the co-op was also able to hire a full-time intern. In addition to paid staff there is a lot of volunteer time put into running the co-op each week.

Getting their new store up and running has been their primary focus this year. Since the store opened in the Spring of 2011, it has been open 3 days a week and they are now selling a wider variety of products. Many of the new products are non-perishables ordered through the Ontario Natural Food Co-op. In the future they would like for their members to be able to use the new store as more than just a place to buy food, but also as a place to gather, have community meetings, and organize. They would also like to expand their mandate over the next few years and would love to work in conjunction with a community food centre in the region if one is established.

"You can't be stable and build and grow if you're always scrambling, looking for the next funding opportunity." – Staff, By the Bushel Food Co-op

Most of their funding comes from basket sales. They also get support from the Ontario Co-operative Society. However, they are still also constantly fundraising, mostly through grant writing. It has been a challenge for the co-op to find long-term funding so they spend a lot of time seeking short-term funding opportunities.

It is also challenging to make the food they sell accessible to those with lower incomes. This is particularly important for them to work towards because the city of Peterborough has a high poverty rate.

KAWARTHA LAKES

Kawartha Choice

Interviewee: Karen Jopling, Agricultural Development Officer at the Greater Peterborough Area Economic Development Corporation

Interview and description by Brynne Sinclair-Waters, June 8 2011

Kawartha Choice FarmFresh is a non-profit that functions as an arm of the Greater Peterborough Economic Development Corporation (GPA EDC) in partnership with the City of Kawartha Lakes. The project got started after the BSE crisis to support local beef producers and has now expanded to promote all local producers. Their main goals are to increase awareness that local products are available and help farmers to increase their revenue. Kawartha Choice promotes food that is grown, processed, or prepared within the counties of Peterborough and Kawartha Lakes. To be promoted by Kawartha Choice, producers must be selling food products of which 80 percent is grown in Kawartha or selling value-added products of which 51% or the defining ingredient is produced on their farm, while restaurants must spend a minimum of \$25,000 on local produce between May and October. Kawartha Choice promotional activities include a buy local guide and map and advertising campaigns through local television stations.

One of the primary challenges to building effective local food networks in the region is a disconnect between consumers and producers - many people do not know that they can buy healthy, safe products directly from local producers. Kawartha Choice views its efforts as contributing to the education and awareness building that is necessary to create a stronger connection between consumers and producers.

In addition to promoting existing products, the coordinators of Kawartha Choice also recognize a need to strengthen value chains by identifying gaps and showcasing them to entrepreneurs as opportunities for creating new revenue streams. In their region, existing gaps in value chains include manufacturing and processing. As a result, there is a real demand for teaching skills such as canning, preserving, and cooking. Kawartha Choice also tries to communicate with its farmer members about barriers that they face and identify strategies for overcoming these barriers. Regulation has been identified as one key barrier. Staff at Kawartha Choice understand the need for regulation, but would like it to be streamlined so that it does not pose time and financial burdens for farmers. Having staff with a farming background has helped the organization gain credibility and trust among farmers.

In response to past communication with farmers, many events have been organized by the staff working at the GPEAD and City of Kawartha Lakes including workshops for farmers on marketing, business planning, succession planning, and using social media; networking events with chefs and farmers; and an adventures in agriculture program geared towards grade 8 students.

In the past Kawartha Choice has been funded primarily through provincial and federal government grant programs but they are always seeking third party funding to support their programs.

Kawartha Ecological Growers

Interviewee: Mark Trealout, Founder and Member

Interview and description by Brynne Sinclair-Waters, July 11 2011

“No organic farm really exists on its own. A strong community of farms around you will make your farm stronger.” – Farmer, Kawartha Ecological Growers

Kawartha Ecological Growers (KEG) is a collective of small-scale farms in the western Kawartha Lakes. KEG was founded in 2005 to develop capacity to distribute food from the western Kawarthas throughout the region and to surrounding areas, including the city of Toronto. It started with just eight farms, but has grown to include over twenty members.

The collective was founded because farmers were not getting the prices that they needed for their produce locally, but they could if they went to Toronto. On their own, however, each farmer did not have enough goods to make the trip worthwhile, so they founded KEG to pool resources and goods. More recently, they have also focused on marketing and selling their products within the western Kawartha Lakes.

The collective now sells its produce through a winter and summer CSA, to restaurants and butchers in Toronto and the Kawartha Lakes, and at a number of winter and summer Farmers' Markets in Toronto and Lindsay.

All of the farms are located in the western Kawarthas within about a thirty minute radius of the founding producer's farm. They get requests from farmers outside the region to move their goods, but they turn them down. They are trying to do something really regional. Not every KEG farm is certified organic, but they all grow “good, clean, fair food”. The produce is always fresh and locally produced in a manner that is environmentally sustainable and ethically sound, and prices are fair to everyone. The collective does perform farm visits to check that each farmer is farming sustainably and ethically, but they really believe in the integrity and honesty of all the growers.

KEG has been a worthwhile initiative for farmers because it allows them to increase their revenue and the founder is keen for the model to be replicated in other areas. The driving motivation for establishing the collective was profitability for those involved and they have achieved that.

Financially, KEG is sustainable. They won a Premiers Award for Agri-food Innovation Excellence worth \$5000 in 2008 and in the beginning stages the founder borrowed some money to buy a refrigerated truck, but overall they have tried to put out as little money as possible. The only assets that the collective requires are a refrigerated truck and laptops that connect the producers with each other and to consumers. Otherwise, they rely on individual farms to process their own goods and then they pick up and distribute from there.

By building a community of farms, they have been able to support each other and pool resources in creative ways. In addition to their primary efforts around distribution, they have also worked together in other ways (e.g. sourcing and trading inputs, such as fertilizer among members).

HALIBURTON COUNTY

Haliburton County FoodNet

Interviewee: Rosie Kadwell, Chair and Dietitian at Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit

Interview and description by Brynne Sinclair-Waters, July 12 2011

Even though Haliburton is not known for its agricultural land or farming community, local food is coming to the forefront in the region in recent years. Efforts of groups like the Haliburton Farmers' Association, Haliburton County Farmers' Market, and Haliburton Highlands Local Food Coalition, and initiatives like the Haliburton Fresh website are supporting local producers and connecting them to consumers in the area.

Meanwhile, Haliburton County FoodNet is focusing on raising awareness about poverty and hunger in their community. The group is bringing together organizations interested in food security to network and share resources. They meet 4 times a year, but there is also a lot of networking between meetings (e.g. finding transportation to get food from here to there, sharing of food if one agency is able to access a lot of something) and sharing of resources (e.g. applying for funding together, collaborating on advocacy). The network is chaired by the public health dietitian at the Haliburton and Kawartha District Health Unit. The issues they deal with do go beyond food because they recognize the social determinants of health. The network brings together many charitable organizations but highlights the importance of moving beyond the charity model and empowering the people they are feeding and looking for lasting solutions to hunger.

Haliburton County FoodNet and the other organizations working to promote local food in the region have very little funds and more resources are needed to continue efforts to raise awareness about the availability of local food and food security issues in the region so that they can get more buy-in from the local community.

LANARK COUNTY

Lanark Slow Food

Interviewee: Janet Duncan, Chair

Interview and description by Brynne Sinclair-Waters, July 8 2011

“Food is supposed to be fun too.” – Chair of Lanark Slow Food

Upon returning from Slow Food International's first Terra Madre, which is now a bi-annual conference, two beef farmers in Lanark County and a group of “foodies” from Lanark County founded Lanark Slow Food in spring of 2005. Slow food is a reaction to fast food and is based on the principles of good, clean, and fair food. Lanark Slow Food

tries to promote consumer connections with farmers and food and works to ensure that indigenous foods are highlighted and protected. They have had support, especially philosophically, from Rare Breeds Canada and EcoPerth.

Lanark Slow Food is run entirely by volunteers. They are all busy people, so they usually do quick projects, which vary based on the current priorities and ideas of those involved. Most recently, they collaborated with a cycling group from Mississippi Mills to organize FarmGate bike rides. Another project they have done is Meat Matters. For this event guests brought food items to a potluck and a chef from Kingston came with some of her students to show those who attended how to cook unusual cuts of meat.

The group is primarily self-funded through membership fees. They also get a portion of international membership fees, collect a small fee of two to five dollars from Friends of Lanark Slow Food at events, and host some fundraisers. Their fundraisers usually involve a guest speaker and are always food related. In the past they have had a very successful local beer and sausage night. They featured local beers, brewed within 100km, and local turkey, beef, pork, and lamb sausages. A “home” brewer also joined them to talk about the beer and local farmers spoke about their sausage. The organization always pays farmers a fair price for their products, even at fundraising events, because they understand the need for farmers to make a living.

Perth and District Food Bank

Interviewee: Nancy Wildgoose, Coordinator of the Stop Pilot Project at the Perth and District Food Bank

Interview and description by Brynne Sinclair-Waters, June 8 2011

"I would like to see a broader understanding of poverty, food accessibility and what constitutes healthy eating in our community. I really think it's vital and the time is right."

– The Stop Pilot Project Coordinator, Perth and District Food Bank

The goals of the Perth and District Food Bank are to bring the community together to access, to share, to prepare, grow and advocate for accessible, just food. Their focus is on offering support to low-income people who are having trouble accessing good, healthy food. They try to get as much fresh food as possible coming through the food bank. They now give out eggs, milk and buy fresh produce from a commercial provider. They also have a "grow-a-row" program for people who want to grow for the food bank.

“The issues we are addressing (at the Food Bank) are broad system issues. It would be interesting to see some of our goals embedded more clearly into municipal, provincial, and federal policy” – The Stop Pilot Project Coordinator, Perth and District Food Bank

Throughout the province many people are working independently to reach the same kinds of goals as the Perth and District Food Bank. There is a real need for structural support for these kinds of initiatives including the creation of stable funding lines.

At the Perth and District Food Bank, respect for sustainable, local agriculture is considered part of providing good food. It is difficult to put this commitment into

practice, however, because it can be costly. Consequently, it is not yet a top priority. The food bank, however, will soon be hiring a person to focus on food sourcing and would like to continue to consult with producers about how to source local foods in a cost effective way.

Another challenge, which is particularly difficult in rural communities like Perth, is accessibility and transportation to programs and services. Meanwhile, lack of education and awareness about food among their client group is also a challenge.

“To be effective our programs must meet needs of the community, garner and maintain community support, and build partnerships with other groups in the community.” – The Stop Pilot Project Coordinator, Perth and District Food Bank

Working with other groups in the community and creating partnerships has been crucial to the Perth and District Food Bank’s success. In the past, many of those involved knew that the food bank was not addressing the root causes of poverty and hunger, such as lack of skills. Now, as their programs expand, that is changing. The Stop Community Food Centre in Toronto has recently kicked off an effort to replicate its model in other parts of the province and with help from EcoPerth, a local environmental NGO, the Perth and District Food Bank was able to put forward a compelling application and was chosen to be a pilot site. With experience, expertise and funding from the Stop Community Food Centre, the Perth and District Food Bank will be starting up a set of new programs in January 2012 including a commercial kitchen, community garden, and cooking classes. These programs will broaden their mandate and help them to address the root causes of poverty and hunger.

LEEDS AND GRENVILLE

Food Matters Coalition

Interviewee: Carole Chang, Chair and Dietitian at the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Health Unit

Interview and description by Brynne Sinclair-Waters, July 8 2011

The Food Matters Coalition was established in 2009 in response to a recognition of the need to provide a venue for agencies and individuals to work on issues related to food security in Leeds and Grenville, Lanark and the surrounding area. The coalition is chaired by a dietitian at the Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark Health Unit and its main goal is to create a sustainable and resilient community food system that is accessible to everyone. Steering Committee members include the Brockville Climate Action Group, Food for All, House of Lazarus, United Way, and two county health units. They meet about once a month with a minimum of eight meetings per year. They also have other general members, which include local organizations that participate in specific initiatives and projects but may not have time to attend their monthly meetings. The coalition funds their programs through the budgets and resources of the member organizations.

The small group of people that make up the coalition are very passionate and this helps them to get things done. Their recent projects include a food calendar, which lists all the

free meals that are offered in Smith Falls, Perth, Brockville, and Prescott; a listing of community gardens in the tri-county area; the distribution of 3000 vegetable seeds to municipalities, schools, and workplaces with an information card on container gardening (with the Healthy Communities Partnership); and a “Do the Math, Eat the Math” campaign, which aimed to raise awareness about issues of poverty and food security.

The “Do the Math, Eat the Math” campaign, held in November 2010, generated excitement and media coverage. It was based on a Toronto campaign held earlier that year. The first component encourages people to go on line to calculate and compare the cost of living to social assistance amounts. Then, eighteen leaders in the community were recruited to live off a food bank hamper for a week and then to reflect on their experience in a journal that was available to the public on the web. The Food Matters Coalition also added a third component, “Work on the Math”, which gave participants opportunities to come together, de-brief, and come up with other actions that can address food security issues in their community.

The majority of the members in the coalition are food bank based. In the future they hope to see the network start making connections with local farmers, but they have found it difficult because farmers are so busy. Other barriers include funding, and transportation, which is particularly challenging in rural areas.

CITY OF OTTAWA

Canadian Organic Growers – Ottawa Chapter and Growing Up Organic

*Interviewee: Torry Simpson, Project Manager of Growing Up Organic in Ottawa
Interview and description by Brynne Sinclair-Waters, July 6 2011*

"They are so keen to eat spinach when they have grown it themselves."

– Coordinator, Growing Up Organic

"It is important for farmers to have a say because they are the ones providing the food."

– Coordinator, Growing Up Organic

The Ottawa Chapter of Canadian Organic Growers has a dual focus on promoting both local and organic food. Currently, they are working primarily on two projects. Their farmer outreach coordinator is working with a group of about fifteen farmers that are interested in forming a farmers’ cooperative. They are looking to pool resources and distribute their produce to individual customers and institutional buyers. By working together they will also try to support small-scale farmers who find it difficult to become certified organic due to time and cost limitations. Because farmers’ are active in identifying how to move forward with this project, the hope is that they will also be able to negotiate ways to receive a larger portion of the profit made on sales than they would selling to conventional buyers.

Second, on the education and awareness side they are working with over twenty schools in Ottawa on implementing school vegetable gardens. They have developed curriculum-connected lesson plans to accompany the gardens so that it is not a burden for teachers

but rather a compliment to existing curriculum and a way to get kids more involved and excited about learning. The lessons teach kids about growing organic food including units on seed starting, soil discovery, preparing the garden for planting, and harvesting the food. They try to host harvest parties so that kids get to eat the food in early summer before the summer holiday (e.g. greens) and in the fall (e.g. tomatoes and squash). They also host farm field trips and summer camp programs where kids spend three days camping out on an organic farm. The main goal of these programs is to increase awareness among youth about where their food comes from and who grows it. As the average age of farmers increases, it is really important to get kids involved so that growing food becomes a career option for them. Funding for the coordinator of this program comes from Trillium, while they also receive funds from the Ontario Market Investment Fund (OMIF). Annually, they also conduct a fundraiser with Bridgehead Coffee in Ottawa, which helps to pay for some of the school gardens.

Fitzroy Beef Farmers Co-operative

Interviewee: Ken Stewart, Founder and Coordinator

Interview and description by Brynne Sinclair-Waters August 9, 2011

The Fitzroy Beef Farmers Co-operative sells beef that is produced within approximately a 6-7 mile radius of Fitzroy Harbour to consumers in the region, including the City of Ottawa. All of the beef sold through the co-op is free of artificial growth hormones and antibiotics.

The co-op was founded in 2005 in response to the BSE crisis, which had serious financial impacts on local beef producers. In the early stages they had no plans to become a co-op, but were looking for ways to provide social and financial support to struggling farmers in their community. Selling beef locally as a co-op ended up being the best way to do that. They started with ground beef and took orders and sold at local churches. Soon after they got in touch with a similar initiative that was selling combinations of cuts in boxes of varying sizes and they began to do the same. Now they also deliver to restaurants every Thursday morning and sell at the Ottawa Farmers' Market on Sundays. The Ottawa Farmers' Market is quite an up and coming market and it has been working out quite well for them. Selling at farmers' markets, however, does take a lot of resources because they have to have two people working at the booth all day. For farmers this means a lot of time away from the farm. Consequently, they would prefer to expand with more sales to caterers and restaurants rather than selling at more markets.

The initiative has been spearheaded by a local retired farmer (not a beef producer) who decided it was important to support local beef producers as more and more of them were struggling to earn a living. His efforts have been supported by a small group of committed volunteers and two part-time paid staff. They pay one part-time staff person to put together orders and look after inventory and another to look after orders coming in through the cell phone and web.

The co-operative is financially self-sustaining. In the past, however, they have received a number of grants from the City of Ottawa through the Rural Association Partnership

Program, which has helped them to acquire assets, such as scales and a trailer for transporting their produce to the farmers' market.

RENFREW COUNTY

Ottawa Valley Food Co-operative, Upper Ottawa Valley

Interviewee: Christina Anderman, Coordinator

Interview and description by Brynne Sinclair-Waters, June 2 2011

“People with all kinds of different views are interested and involved in the co-op... Food (and the OVFC) is a place where people can find common ground”

– OVFC Coordinator

The Ottawa Valley Food Co-operative (OVFC) provides food produced in the Upper Ottawa Valley (within approximately a 100-200km radius) to consumers in the region. Every month, producers list available food online, then consumers browse listed produce and make their order. Producers then prepare their orders and co-op volunteers deliver them. They have computer software modeled from the Oklahoma Food Cooperative that makes the process more efficient (i.e. by providing a web-based system for orders and labels for producers). The OVFC never takes ownership of the products, but rather acts as a liaison between consumers and producers – collecting the money and then paying out to producers. The OVFC primarily sells food, but they also sell some other products that are made locally including solar lamps, body care products, and manure for gardens.

In 2008 the OVFC received a couple of grants that helped them get started by paying for two part time coordinators, a computer, and other expenses including marketing. Financially, the co-op is now self-sufficient. Their operating costs include paying a quarter-time coordinator and a webmaster, and mileage for deliveries. They are able to cover these costs with membership fees and by collecting 10% from producers' and 5% from consumers on all sales.

“We didn't have to do anything really big. Enthusiastic people just get together and provide a system where you get the food from one person to the other.”

- OVFC Coordinator

The OVFC is an exciting way to support small and mixed organic and family farms in the area without having to tackle changing government policy. Their success also depends on profitability for producers and processors and the ability to create enough revenue to cover its operational costs. Recognizing that contributing to community building will make their initiative stronger, the OVFC has also made a real effort to reach out to different people and organizations in their community and has put on some educational events. With the initial grants they received they were able to fund and host educational programs that included 100-mile lunches, a local food buying guide, and meet the producer events. Since these grants ended they do less events like these, however, they would love to have more of them in their community.

In 2009, the OVFC was a regional winner of a Premier's Award for Agri-food Innovation Excellence.

“Supply management is a very good idea, but it needs to be adjusted to work for small scale producers and sellers”
– OVFC coordinator

For several reasons there are gaps in what the OVFC is able to sell. For example, they have insufficient production of some items for demand in the region. They would like to sell more fruit, fruit juice, grains, beans, oils and oilseeds. At certain times of the year they also do not have enough vegetables. More local processing in their region would help to fill the demand for all of these items. In addition, government policy, including abattoir regulation and supply management (both designed at that moment to fit only large-scale operations), make it difficult for the OVFC to sell larger quantities of meat, or any dairy products, chicken, and eggs – all products that their consumers would like to buy.

UNITED COUNTIES OF PRESCOTT-RUSSELL

Eastern Ontario Agri-Food Network

Interviewees : Kathy Chaumont, Vice President and Project Officer at Réseau de Développement Économique et d'Employabilité (RDÉE) and Carole Lavigne, President and Project Officer of Economic Development and Tourism at the United Counties of Prescott-Russell

Interviews and description by Brynne Sinclair-Waters, June 23 2011 and August 12 2011

The Eastern Ontario Agri-Food Network was founded in 2007 to help groups working on food issues in the United Counties of Stormont-Dundas-Glengary and Prescott-Russell to better work together. The president and vice president of the network are the Project Officer for Economic Development and Tourism for the United Counties of Prescott-Russell and the Development Officer at Le Réseau de Développement Économique et d'Employabilité (RDÉE Ontario). The network is made up of producers, distributors, consumers, grocery stores, and some other stakeholders. They meet every six weeks and have some sub-committees that meet independently.

Overall, the aim of the network is to conserve existing initiatives and support new ones. Currently, one of their main efforts is to get more local meat in the grocery stores. They want a year round counter of local meat marked with the Eastern Ontario Agri-Food Network logo in all the local grocery stores in the region. This has been a challenge for them given policies that are currently in place, but they hope to have a pilot project off the ground in Prescott-Russell soon.

They also host events each year that aim to promote products that are available locally. These events include Agri-Tours, which guide people along a set route in the region to visit farms, meet local producers and buy produce, and the annual “Foire Gourmande

Ouatouais-Est Ontarien”, which attracted over 6000 guests to taste and buy food from over 60 local producers last August.

They have network and project specific funding from various places including Trillium, Ontario Market Investment Fund (OMIF), the Community Futures Development Corporations and the counties. They hope that in five years time they can be financially sustainable based on the income generated from the sales of the products marked with the EOAFN logo.

UNITED COUNTIES OF STORMONT-DUNDAS-GLENGARRY

All Things Food Network/Bouffe 360°

Interviewees: Dana Kittle, Coordinator and Devorah Belinsky, Founder

Interviews and description by Brynne Sinclair-Waters, June 23 2011 and July 8 2011

“We want to be the hub for all things food.”
– Coordinator, All Things Food/Bouffe 360°

The All Things Food Network was founded in 2007. The network brings together individuals and organizations interested in food issues in the United Counties of Stormont-Dundas-Glengarry (SD&G). The network’s mission is to make local, healthy food accessible to everyone in SD&G.

The network has one full-time coordinator whose salary is funded by the Trillium Foundation and she reports to a five member collaborative group made up of representatives from member organizations including the House of Lazarus Food Bank; Healthy Eating for Better Learning; the Social Planning Council of Cornwall and Area; Le Centre de Santé Communautaire de L’Estrie; and the Eastern Ontario Health Unit. Their programs include community and school gardens; a farm-to-school program; a garlic growing project; Healthy Food, Healthy Kids which encourages organizations (outside of schools) to institute healthy food policies for feeding children; and workshops to build skills including gardening, preserving, cooking, and composting.

“This idea that kids don’t like healthy food... She’s heard it so many times. The truth is, kids love healthy food. It’s just about access.”
– Member, All Things Food/Bouffe 360°

“It’s neat that it’s some of these kids’ families that are growing the local food that they might end up eating at school.”
– Member, All Things Food/Bouffe 360°

The network is trying to increase awareness about the need for changes to the current food system. One of their top priorities has been getting youth involved in hopes that it might increase their awareness of sustainably produced local food and encourage them to consider agriculture as a viable career option. The founder of All Things Food is also the manager of Healthy Eating for Better Learning, the student nutrition program serving the United Counties of Stormont-Dundas-Glengarry and Prescott-Russell. The student

nutrition program is growing quickly. Since much of the region it serves is struggling economically, those involved with the program believe that it makes sense for the program to buy local food and support the local economy. With support from Healthy Eating for Better Learning, All Things Food recently launched their first farm-to-school program and is collecting baseline data to better understand how schools can access local food and connect with local farmers. Since there is no extra funding for farm-to-school programs, these are currently based primarily on the strength of relationships that can be built building between schools and local producers.

“We would like to connect with other groups across Canada, especially in rural Canada, to hear about best practices.”

– Coordinator, All Things Food/Bouffe 360°

The network is keenly aware that they are serving a rural community and that this means that effective solutions and programs may differ from those offered in urban areas. Consequently, they would benefit from sharing resources with and getting support from other groups working on making local, healthy food accessible in other rural areas.

In their region much of the infrastructure needed to make effective distribution networks is lacking. They are also seeking more financial support for farmers’ markets, local food co-operatives, and getting local food into grocery stores.

FRONTENAC COUNTY

Desert Lake

Interview and description by Linda Stevens

Desert Lake is a well-known CSA in the area - Frontenac County, Kingston and into Lennox and Addington – (also reaches into Leeds Grenville and Lanark through connection to Wendy’s Mobile Market). Desert Lake brings together area producers’ products to provide a more diverse local selection for area consumers/eaters. Pat is a vocal advocate for local food and expresses her frustration that there isn’t a greater awareness of food safety and the real costs of sustainable food production. Pat lives her work as does her family -- her children, partner and mother- in-law all participate in the business. The CSA is not growing as quickly as Pat had hoped so she feels marketing would help with growth, although the time for marketing has not been a priority given other work that needs to be done.

Key Motivators

There is concern with what people in the area eat. Pat recognized there could be more options and wanted to offer a choice. Another goal is to develop a more sustainable food system with a lower carbon footprint and impact on the resources of the community. Finally, there is strong motivation to give a hand to help improve the viability of local agricultural producers.

Constraining factors

The costs of sustainable food production make it hard to compete with low cost imported/processed foods. There are limited incentives for sustainable but there are supports for cheap/imported/processed food. The alternative (for example, a CSA) is still a niche market – not mainstream so it is difficult to get traction.

Enabling factors

Possible enabling factors could be changes to the taxation system to alter incentive focus to be more favorable to sustainable/organic/local production.

Increased collaboration across producers to improve choice and reduce the amount of effort people need to put into finding foods, for example on line ordering and delivery, could also help facilitate access.

Policy

Provision of funding support to make grants for things like marketing accessible for alternative, small scale farmers.

Food Providers Networking Group and the Community Harvest Networking Group

Location: Kingston

Interview and description by Linda Stevens

Sisters of Providence, Justice, Peace and Integrity Office (SofP) staff have been able to be active in a number of food initiatives, particularly those with a focus of food security and social justice. Tara Kainer is well connected to food issues through her work with SofP but also through her long history of involvement in community action on poverty issues, inclusion and social justice. This group brings together food provider partners to coordinate, share resources and information towards improved coordination and planning across the emergency/hot meal programs system in Kingston.

Community Harvest Networking Group, works in close coordination with KCHC and other partners. The Community Harvest Market is coordinated by the group and brings a Farmers Market (providing a market opportunity for local producers) to the Rideau Heights area of north Kingston (high concentration in area of public housing and individuals and families living on low incomes) , From Earth to Table – organic gardening and workshop series was established under this group

Key motivation - Fighting for social justice around the provision of food in community (social justice is SofP mandate)

Constraining factors

The most restrictive factors for this project are a lack of coordination. Municipal policy also constrains work by the two groups. There is also the need for more education. Finally, cost is a barrier, especially as the processed, commercial is relatively inexpensive versus sustainable, local food produced by smaller scale producers that tends to cost more for consumers.

Enabling factors

Factors that facilitate the success of the two groups include networking groups that help to improve coordination and collaboration on projects and through resource sharing. It is interesting to note this is largely informal. Inclusive, grass roots processes including a community building dimension also help these projects succeed.

Policy

Several policy initiatives could be undertaken to facilitate community food projects in Kingston. First, less restrictive zoning by the municipality, for example in regulations for farmers' markets/food stands, would help make food more accessible. There is also an overall need for scale appropriate regulations - small scale farmers are challenged to complete the paperwork and other requirements that are written for large scale producers. Insurance coverage also needs to be less of a barrier. Perhaps the municipality could consider underwriting this expense. Finally, the creation of a Food Council and that could work towards food charter would help to institutionalize and embed these initiatives in the community.

Good Food Box

Interview and description by Linda Stevens

Community development, direct program and clinical based food services are a significant part of what Kingston Community Health Centre (KCHC) offers through its many sites within Kingston and Lennox and Addington. The CHC through improved access to nutrition and community involvement in food initiatives through staff, facility and some funding support including Healthy Eating Working Group of the PHU, Loving Spoonful/Community Harvest Working Group and Food Worker staff in the coordination of the Good Food Box Program www.kchc.ca/community.shtml.

The Good Food Box Program is a community driven initiative that allows anyone to purchase a produce box for less than the grocery store cost. Bulk buying and the work of volunteers keeps prices down. Participants pay for and pick up food boxes once a month at a neighborhood volunteer or agency host site. Boxes are prepared and packed by volunteers at the back of a local secondary school. The program is available at sites across the Kingston, Frontenac, L&A catchment and refers to the GFB programs in Belleville and Portland.

The bulk of the program runs in urban or small urban communities through agency and residential host sites and reaches into villages into 32 outlying rural communities.

Key motivation(s)

Initially social justice and food security for everyone. More recently the goals have been extended to include sustainability and surviving the food crisis.

Enabling Factors

There is agency support through resources and staffing. Partner support provides volunteers. There are also inclusion projects, for example, partnering high school with

student volunteers, other agency volunteers. These cross-connections increase and help facilitate across community food initiatives.

Constraining factors

Sustained core funding is needed to support the program. There is also a lack of awareness about and recognition of the health impacts of relative having access to fresh produce. Finally, there are challenges associated with buying local food. It tends to be more expensive and distribution networks are still quite new.

Policy

It would be more effective from a cost and long-term health perspective if there was better coordination between provincial ministries to increase funding for nutrition based prevention rather than dealing with the outcomes of poor eating (for example, helping to fund the Good Food Box instead of dealing with heart disease).

Healthy Eating Working Group

Interview and Description by Linda Stevens

Under the direction of the Kingston Public Health Unit, the Healthy Eating Working Group (HEWG) brings together partners from across a number of sectors (health, social, social justice, agriculture, institutional procurement [Queen's] and municipal staff) to work towards the development of a local food council (which will ideally enable further/wider sector involvement in work local food system development) and the creation of a local food charter. This group is in its beginning stages. The City and the PHU are driving the process.

Key motivations

The primary motivations are to meet Public Health Unit (PHU) standards and its mandate with an emphasis on social justice through improved food access.

Constraining factors

There is a lack of community capacity to build awareness and use marketing to engage the community in this project. There are also constraints for organizations as they deal with limited, short-term funding that threatens the long-term sustainability of projects/programs and community based organizations. Where these organizations in some cases have permanent staff as coordinators, much of their time is used fundraising. This limits their capacity to work on new initiatives such as HEWG.

Other barriers are associated with PHU. First, there is resistance to seeing the potential for community engagement within PHU. There is also reluctance about the role for local food in the context of community health. In some cases there is more focus on healthy eating exclusive of local food. Finally, there needs to be more leadership and staffing to bring community members and PHU together.

Enabling factors

On the community side, there is momentum and a commitment to work on food issues collectively. This commitment to local food policy/program development is explicitly stated in City sustainability plan. There is accountability for ongoing participation and

effort until the goals of both a food council and a food charter are achieved. On the PHU side, there is 'Healthy Communities' funding and organizational focus through community consultation process to focus on healthy eating. This allows staffing, administrative and resource support to be allocated to the development of HEWG and to encourage the achievement of project goals.

Policy

There is an endorsement for the development and implementation of a Food Charter that is being put into practice in City operated facilities.

Local Food - Local Chefs

Interview and description by Linda Stevens

Local Food - Local Chefs is an urban-based economic development project with multiple partners coordinated by the Kingston Downtown Business Improvement Association. It brings together and supports farmers from surrounding local, rural communities in the environs of Kingston, Lennox and Addington and Frontenac. The program is working to generate extra income and support through: culinary tourism programs; by including more local food in area restaurants; through campaigns with well-known local chefs at the farmers' market (e.g. Fare in the Square); and, networking meet and greets. A related goal is to develop Kingston as an authentic culinary tourism destination and increase consumer awareness of local foods.

Enabling Factors

This process is facilitated by the growing interest in local food. Improving networks and partnerships are also helping this process. The FDTR initiative helped build critical mass in this respect by pulling together and cementing many diverse and not well connected sectors/organizations/businesses/producers. The project now has a new enthusiasm thanks to receiving a significant Ontario Market Investment Fund (OMIF) grant to grow the Local Food local Chefs Initiative.

Constraining Factors

Three key challenges to maintaining and growing this initiative were identified. The first is volunteer fatigue. There is also a desire to get things done and move beyond the planning stage. The final important challenge that was raised is a lack of access to city facilities.

Policy

Key informants commented on the need for increased municipal resources, appropriate policy and funding for a central storage space/warehousing/food centre that would allow aggregation and centralized distribution of local food. The creation of a commercial kitchen would also help build local processing capacity as it would provide testing opportunities for emerging businesses. Finally, a Public Health policy focused on healthy eating specific to this region would give this project a boost.

Loving Spoonful

Interview and description by Linda Stevens

Loving Spoonful (LS) is a recently incorporated not for profit organization community food organization. LS works on a variety of projects and within multiple partnerships to make healthy food more accessible to all regardless of income. The organization is urban based with a relationship with rural residents and producers but does not reach into rural communities for food distribution. The organization's primary role includes gathering/reclaiming surplus foods that they redistribute to the community through emergency meal and hamper/pantry programs that support persons on lower incomes. They also provide education and skills development around food, food production, gathering, handling, preserving and cooking through community gardens and workshops. As a food security initiative with limited funding and a reliance on "whatever is donated" LS prioritizes local food whenever possible. LS is also involved in local food initiatives to try to better connect the food security, social justice and local producer worlds.

Loving Spoonful hosts the: Community Harvest Networking Group, is a partner in the Community Harvest Local (north end) Farmers Market (to promote access for lower income individuals and families), recipients and partners in Grow a Row.

Key motivation

Fighting for social justice around the provision of food in the region. Loving Spoonful is a demonstration project begun through Food Down the Road (FDTR). FDTR was developed to connect the farming and social justice communities and build channels to distribute food from local farmers to emergency food shelters and support food security initiatives. LS was started to address a number of the issues identified by FDTR and help to bridge some of the tensions between the food security and the social justice organizations locally. The motivation was to keep these aspects of FDTR going despite an end to the formal FDTR Project.

Constraining factors

Access to facilities is a problem for LS as the costs are prohibitive. As well there is only office and minimal storage available through the City. Logistically, the transportation and perishability of food creates some limits around what can be picked up and distributed.

Enabling factors

Existing networking groups improve coordination and collaboration on projects and through resource sharing. This process is largely informal but tends to be inclusive, founded in grass roots activity. There is a strong emphasis on community building components whenever possible.

Policy

Policy could facilitate less restrictive municipal zoning for farmers' markets and food stands in general. Scale appropriate regulations would facilitate the creation of SMEs by local entrepreneurs. Having the support of the municipality to underwrite insurance coverage would make organizations more viable. The development of a Food Council

with the vision of moving towards food charter would help to provide the larger community context to nurture these types of projects.

New Farm Project

Interview and description by Linda Stevens

The New Farm Project (NFP) is a 4-year initiative funded by Heifer International (September 2008 until June 2012). It operates as a project under the administrative umbrella of the NFU National Farmers Union (NFU) Local 316 with oversight by a small committee of producers. There is a full-time funded Coordinator position shared by 2 individuals. This project is largely focused on rural communities but also reaches into opportunities through urban-based markets. It includes an education and skills building program that works to increase producer infrastructure, by for example, trying to increase number of local producers. Increasing the viability of family farms and building the supply of local farm products for local eaters are key component of the project.

This farmer-initiated project aims at building a sustainable, local food system in Kingston and its countryside. “The NFU New Farm Project is a farmer education, training, and support program aimed at strengthening the region’s farm community and local food system. By engaging new and established farmers in the opportunities and benefits that come from producing food for local markets, the project aims to increase the viability of family farms and build the supply of local farm products for local eaters. The project focuses on ecologically-sound farming methods and supports participating farmers in making farm management decisions that will lead to long-term sustainability of their farms.” (NFP web page) The NFP is a recipient of the Premier’s Award for Agri-food Innovation Excellence.

Projects sponsored by the NFP include:

1. CRAFT Kingston (internship program), farmer training with over thirty workshops
2. Equipment Sharing Coops
3. Plan to Grow community engagement project
4. Fall Gathering – annual event to bring together producers and partners
5. Re-launch of the Local Harvest Newspaper as the Food Down the Road Newspaper as a communication tool to carry the spirit of connections and awareness forward from the history of the FDTR project

HASTINGS AND PRINCE EDWARD COUNTIES

Food Security Network (FSN) of Hastings and Prince Edward Counties

Interview and description by Linda Stevens

The Food Security Network of Hastings & Prince Edward Counties is coordinated by the Hastings Prince Edward Health Unit and provides a forum for information sharing and collaboration on actions that will contribute to food security and support a sustainable local food system. The group is non-profit and is comprised of 20 – 25 members from across partner organizations in the area, largely interested in food security and health. The Network provides a forum for information sharing and collaboration on actions that

will contribute to food security and support a sustainable local food system.

Key Motivations

The primary motivation for FSN is fighting for social justice around the provision of food in the community recognizing that food security is multifaceted and is broader than being free from hunger.

Constraining factors

The large size of the region and accessibility to food for those on lower incomes due to transportation cost and infrastructure is challenging especially for residents in northern reaches.

Enabling factors

FSN Hastings and Prince Edward Counties is facilitated by the significant partner involvement. Public health provides important coordination support. There is also a well-coordinated emergency food system in region.

Policy

The most important policy initiative identified in the FSN research was the consideration to work towards a local food charter.

LANARK COUNTY

Smiths Falls Farmers' Market (SFFM)

Interview and description by Linda Stevens

Smiths Falls is a small farmers' market located the small urban centre of Smith Falls. The market has a reach through the north western section of Leeds Grenville County and into Lanark County. The market is rebuilding after a few years of inactivity linked to the loss of staff support from the Downtown Business association. The market is now coordinated by a volunteer with space provided by a service club. It is solely funded through vendor fees.

The business functions as a hub/cluster in that it provides a central location for vendors to come together to sell their product and to attract consumers. Advertising/marketing is provided for the Farmers' Market as part of the vendor fees.

Despite the renewal, the SFFM is struggling. In addition to the period of inactivity and the loss of staff support from the DBA, the community culture is not highly supportive of access to fresh and local foods. This could be related to the fact that Smith Falls is an economically challenged community that has had considerable job loss in over the past 5 years. Finally, a large construction project has limited traffic to the new market location.

Key Motivation(s)

The most important goal for the SFFM is to give a hand to help improve the viability of local agricultural producers. The market was re-established to make sure there is an opportunity for farmers to sell their products locally but also with the hope the community will begin to see the value of supporting local farmers. In more general terms,

the area is interested in developing a more sustainable food system.

Enabling Factors

A key enabling factor for this project is a committed volunteer. Without this individual the project would not have its current momentum. RCAF support has also been important.

Constraining Factors

As previously mentioned, community support for SFFM is low. The culture in the community is more “big box shopping” than farm fresh. As well, key informants noted a lack of municipal support for the project.

LENNOX AND ADDINGTON COUNTY

Hunger Elimination Project (HELP) (based out of Salvation Army, Napanee)

Interview and description by Linda Stevens

The Hunger Elimination Project is a network focused on bringing partners together to address food security needs through some coordination and more recently, advocacy. The Project is functioning mostly as a coordinated program of Salvation Army (SA) then a shared activities network at this time.

Key Motivation(s)

The primary motivation is to improve our ability to help individuals deal with the coming food crisis. As part of this goal, the key informant is personally motivated to develop a more sustainable food system with a lower carbon footprint and impact on the resources of the planet.

Enabling Factors

Several factors contribute to the viability of the project. First, the Salvation Army provides coordinating staff. As well, organizations allow their staff to partner with the project. There is also are growing partnering activities in L&A in part due to CHC coming to the area and promoting the community development approach. Finally, there are many farmers in the area who have been contributing to Food Bank. HELP staff try to “return the favour” by referring to farmers when able, and are also looking for ways to purchase more food for food skills programs through local farmers.

Constraining Factors

As in many communities, the volunteer base is decreasing. In addition, there is a lack of awareness in the community about hunger/low income challenges especially the challenges low income households face getting access to healthy food. This is compounded by the need for more skills and/or awareness about healthy eating. The final constraint identified during the interview is the lack of food based activity and action in L&A. However, there is a beginning awareness that is just beginning to build in the County, which offers the potential to change the tide.

Policy

On the policy front, there is the need to get food security higher on the political agenda. Food needs to become a primary area of funding and policy focus so there is more equitable access to healthy foods for lower income families. It was suggested that a subsidy system to provide fresh produce that could be purchased through local farmers could help enable this. Initially, this could be undertaken through food banks.

UNITED COUNTIES OF LEEDS AND GRENVILLE

Local Flavours

Interview and description by Linda Stevens

Local Flavours (LF) of Leeds Grenville and Frontenac County operates as a program under the administrative umbrella of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve (FABR), a non-government, non-profit organization. Local Flavours was developed to make the local food system more visible and accessible by “making delicious, healthy foods widely available”. This was achieved by generating and providing a list and map of producers and outlets through the development and circulation of the *Savour the Arch*. Ten thousand copies were printed as well as the creation of an electronic brochure. These resources enabled networking through electronic based linkages and community based events. The organization is predominantly rural-based but reaches into urban centres - Brockville (Kingston to a lesser degree)- to map outlets that provide locally produced food. Web access is open.

Local Flavours is “a network of farm producers, restaurants and outlets which use locally produced ingredients insofar as possible”. Participants are located in and around the Frontenac Arch Biosphere, which encompasses Leeds and Grenville and Frontenac County. The network began in 2005 and with approximately 114 members including farmers, B&Bs and restaurants. Notably, it is one of Canada's largest local food networks. The programme is open to producers using a variety of production methods ranging from conventional to certified organic.

According to the LF webpage, “The long-term goal of the Local Flavours Project is to build on the strengths of the region by increasing the sustainability of the local food supply and the farmers who produce it. Their primary task is to bring together local producers and consumers, creating an economic and social partnership which benefits the entire community”. The organization serves as an information collating and sharing hub highlighting local producers and outlets while also providing education on local foods. The program describes itself as “an excellent example of sustainable community development... It integrates sustainability's four pillars of environment, culture, society and economy. By buying both food and food services locally, you fortify our regional economy, help build stronger communities and reduce the heavy costs to the environment associated with food transport” (LF webpage).

Key motivation(s)

The project has two key goals. First, it strives to improve the chances of being more self-reliant. There is a concern regarding a possible future food crisis and the sense that

communities need to be more independent in protecting their own food interests. LF is motivated by a desire to be independent from governments and big business. There is the conviction that bottom up action is required for communities to regain control of their own food production/provision. Second, is the goal to develop a more sustainable food system with a lower carbon footprint and impact on the resources of the planet. There is a commitment to “local” and “sustainable” food. The Coordinator is a long-standing and politically active Green Party member and lives by the philosophy of sustainability.

Enabling Factors

A key asset is the committed and active volunteer coordinator alongside the supportive oversight organization (FABR). The region is also home to producer innovators (e.g. Wendy Banks). Finally there is a growing interest in the retail/outlet communities in providing local that may reflect a shift in consumer preferences.

Constraining factors

Several factors constrain LF’s ability to operate as effectively as it could. First, there is a lack of funding. This limits the time available for programming as the coordinator is constantly dealing with hurdles and trying to find the money to maintain and grow the service. There is also a limited volunteer capacity in the community. Essentially, there are too few doing too much without the supply of incoming younger/enthusiastic volunteers to step in and help. The erosion of local capacities is a challenge, specifically less emphasis on/and support for smaller farms and basic food awareness and skills. The last problem that was raised are the regulations and the associated overwhelming paperwork for organic production. The regulations are designed for larger farms and processors but imposed on smaller ones.

Policy

One policy challenge is the food safety regulations. As noted earlier, small businesses and operations do not have the time and capacity to meet regulatory requirements and paperwork. It was suggested that a commitment to funding ongoing coordination and mutual support programs for small and sustainable farms to the extent large commercial farms, agri-business and mining are funded would help to level the playing field.

Golden Horseshoe Region

Lisa Ohberg and Sarah Wakefield

BRANT

Bountiful Brant

<http://bountifulbrant.com/>

Bountiful Brant is a producer representation organization that helps bring traffic to members’ farms and build awareness of local producers and food in the county to consumers. Bountiful Brant’s mission is to represent local farmers, increase sales to local farmers and promote local small producers. It was started in October 2008 by a group of dedicated volunteers from the Brant Federation of Agriculture raising funds to create a

'Buy Local' map. Bountiful Brant has expanded in the last three years to additional projects aimed at promoting local products. They have created a website, recipe booklet, widespread media advertisement and many events to promote the availability of food. Producers pay a membership fee of \$100 to join, and all local producers are welcome. For their fee, members have their farm featured in Bountiful Brant's promotional projects such as the buy local map website, and on the Rogers Cable local television channel, as well as having the opportunity to participate in events and workshops. The membership fee comprises Bountiful Brant's operating budget for funding projects and hiring contractors to do specific tasks (such as website design), the organization is otherwise staffed by volunteers, who are producers themselves.

Six Nations Reserve

<http://www.sixnations.ca/>

The Six Nations Native Reserve in Brant hired a Farmer's Market and Garden Coordinator in July 2010 using money obtained from various grants (Union Gas, Walmart Evergreen, Healthy Community Funds) to manage all of the food security initiatives in the reserve community. These activities include a community garden, a food bank, a farmer's market, food literacy workshops, as well as participation in Brant's Good Food Box Program organized by the Community Resource Service. The coordinator picks up food boxes from the Community Resource Service in Brantford and delivers them to the several pick up sites through which the good food box is administered on the reserve. Workshops are given monthly on food topics that correspond with the seasonal ceremonies the community celebrates and emphasize traditional practice and knowledge.

The community garden was started this year, and promotes traditional cultivation methods such as sister mounds. Currently it is entirely volunteer based, and whomever volunteers to cultivate is eligible to receive a portion of the harvest, although next season the garden will be divided into plots for rent for the season for five dollars. At the time of writing, the reserve had just started its market with a focus on providing a space to sell produce and homemade goods from the community garden as well as residents' private gardens or kitchens. The goal of the market is to promote economic self-sufficiency in the community and provide a place for residents to generate their own income or barter and trade with their neighbors.

The reserve community has found that food security links to many other issues such as health, delinquency, and maintaining traditional knowledge, "if you can't come together in the garden, in the dirt, then you'll never come together [as a community]". Community food security initiatives are seen as opportunities to strengthen economic self-sufficiency, practice and transfer traditional knowledge and address social issues at their core.

Community Resource Service (food box and bank)

<http://www.crs-help.ca/>

http://www.bchu.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1580&Itemid=954

The Community Resource Service is a not for profit organization in Brantford that runs a food bank and a good food box program. The food bank began relying on community food donations, but is now also distribution centre. The Ontario Association of Food Banks operates a regional food bank distribution network. Large corporate donations are solicited within a region and distributed to the food banks within that region from a main hub. The Community Resource Service food bank receives their allotment of these donations from the Waterloo Region Food Bank, which is the main hub in the region. The CRS then redistributes these donations along with direct donations from the Brant community, using some to supply their food bank and redistributing the rest to twenty-two other community food initiatives such as emergency food pantries and meal programs.

The Community Resource Service received funding from a Trillium Grant to hire a part time coordinator to run a fresh food box to compliment the food bank's provision of emergency (often dry) goods. Because of the food box's success, the coordinator position was maintained as a CRS staff member even after the expiration of the grant. The program administers 400 boxes of fresh produce on a monthly basis to customers who reserve their boxes by paying in advance. Boxes cost \$10 or \$15 dollars depending on the size and all of the money is used to purchase good quality produce. The boxes are packed and distributed by volunteers. Each box includes a newsletter prepared by the Public Health Department including food safety, preparation and nutrition information.

DURHAM

Whitby Ajax Garden Project/ Durham Integrated Growers

<http://www.durhamdigs.ca/>

<http://www.durhamdigs.ca/wacg/>

The Whitby Ajax Garden project was started up when Drummond, a parish nurse working with community members who experiences low income and/or physical disabilities, convinced the church she was working for to allow her to use their land and set up a communal garden. What started with in 2001 with a single communal plot is now a 50-plot operation on rented and donated land that involves up to a 100 people. The gardens bring participants together, contribute to food security and health, and provide a place for empowering community members.

In 2010, the project donated over 7000 pounds of fresh produce to various agencies in five communities in Durham Region. Operating on a small budget (about \$15 000) with a small symbolic stipend to support Drummond, the project has received funding from faith organizations and from Carrot Cache. The garden rents plots to members and is largely run by volunteers.

HALDIMAND

Dunnville Farm to School Program

<http://www.hnreach.on.ca/index.php/community-networks/child-nutrition-network>

The REACH School nutrition program funded by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services operates school nutrition programs in Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk, Niagara and Hamilton. The Haldimand-Norfolk office received Trillium Foundation grant funds in 2010 to commence a pilot farm to school program in the community of Dunnville. The program started in two schools and has grown to supplying four schools with locally produced food for meal and snack programs run by REACH. The goals of the program are to increase the consumption of healthy, fresh fruits and vegetables in children, as well as to support local farmers, and increase students' awareness of local food.

The Salvation Army has provided in kind support to the program by allowing the program to make use of a basement space in its Dunnville location. The Salvation Army in Dunnville is across the street from the Dunnville Farmer's Market, which is where the produce for the program is purchased. It is stored in the refrigerator equipment in the Salvation Army space. A dedicated staff person spends 15 hours a week sourcing produce, coordinating with the schools and making deliveries. The program is overseen by a loose grouping of active volunteers in the community. At the time of writing, the program was beginning to source more produce (such as strawberries) when it is available in the peak summer season (when school nutrition programs do not run) and freeze it for use in the upcoming school year.

Richardson's Farm and Market

<http://www.richardsonsfarm.com/>

When James and Kirsten Richardson bought their farm in 1997 it had a quarter acre of strawberries on it. Today they cultivate thirty acres of fruits and vegetables including sweet corn, peas, beans, fall raspberries, pumpkins, sweet potatoes and tomatoes grown without fungicides or insecticides. The Richardsons sell their produce at their own market on the farm as well as at six different farmers markets in Haldimand County and the City of Hamilton. The Richardsons also have an educational corn maze featuring facts on agriculture in Haldimand on their farm and offer school tours to promote facilitate education.

The Richardsons are actively involved in supporting local agriculture in Haldimand County as they themselves rely on the local hubs of markets and the direct connections with consumers markets provide to retail 97% of their produce and earn their living. James volunteers with the Dunnville Farm to School program, is a volunteer member of the executive board of the Caledonia Farmer's Market in Haldimand, is on the board of directors of the Locke Street Farmer's Market in Hamilton, and is the President of the Dunnville Farmer's Market Association.

Dunnville Farmer's Market

<http://www.dunnvillefarmersmarket.ca/>

The Dunnville Farmer's Market is open from March to December, 7 am to 12 noon on Tuesdays and Saturdays. The market does not receive funding but operates on a budget comprised of vendor fees. Vendors can apply to be permanent vendors under the canopy space for the entire season, or can arrive on a day-to-day basis and be allotted a stall on a first-come first-serve basis or to set up their own stands in the parking lot. Haldimand County owns the market shelter and is responsible for its maintenance. The County supports the market by providing printing and advertising, particularly through the Harvests of Haldimand website.

The Dunnville Farmer's Market Association, made up of volunteers, runs the market. The Association pays for further advertising, and oversees the operation and vision of the market from long term planning to day-to-day issues. Vendors at the market are very diverse selling produce, meat, baked goods, honey, and other products. The Market Association plays a role in maintaining the diversity of vendors by managing vendor applications. The Dunnville Farmer's Market has a by-law stating that 50% of a vendor's wares must to be produced by the vendor. The market tries to balance the desire to be as local as possible with the reality that inter-regional vendors help increase diversity.

Shared Harvest Community Farm

<http://www.sharedharvestdunnville.com/>

Shared Harvest Community Farm and Education Centre was started by two doctors in the community of Dunnville in Haldimand who put up the capital to build the farm and greenhouse. Hamilton, who has studied organic agriculture across the globe, was hired full time to run the farm with the help of students and interns from various programs including the WWOOFing (Willing Workers on Organic Farms) Club and Dunnville's D.R.E.A.M. education and mentorship non-profit. Together they grow 100 varieties of 40 different vegetables on a five-acre plot.

Shared Harvest operates Dunnville's first certified organic CSA program that produces about 60 32-week shares. A non-profit organization called 'Triple Bottom Line' was incorporated for the purpose of running Shared Harvest and providing it with a Board of Directors. Shared Harvest is organized around the three governing principles alluded to in the name of this organization: financial sustainability, environmental responsibility and social responsibility.

Harvests of Haldimand

www.harvestofhaldimand.com/

Harvests of Haldimand is a marketing campaign and program run by the Haldimand County Economic Development and Tourism Division to promote local agriculture in Haldimand. The county's Rural Development Officer is responsible for operating the program. Harvests of Haldimand partners with farmers and producers, restaurants and other food service businesses that might use local food. These members benefit (at no

cost) through events, advertising, increased traffic to their businesses as well as networking opportunities (for example between local producers and restaurants).

The program was started two years ago with start up capital provided from the Ontario Market Investment Fund and is now supported by the County, with annual funding from Haldimand Council and dedicated staff time from the Rural Development Officer. Harvests of Haldimand also partners with Haldimand's three farmers' markets (Caledonia, Hagersville and Dunnville), providing support and advertising. Harvests of Haldimand is exclusive to Haldimand but supports the full range of agricultural products grown in Haldimand County.

Harvests of Haldimand has a website that features local producers, processors, agritainment, equestrian facilities and restaurants that feature locally grown food. Harvests of Haldimand has also produced a Local Food Guide and a recipe booklet featuring recipes from local producers and restaurants that feature local food in their menus. Harvests of Haldimand and locally grown food have also been featured at numerous local festivals and events

HALTON

Halton Food for Thought's Farm to School Program

<http://www.haltonfoodforthought.ca/>

<http://www.haltonfoodforthought.ca/programs.php?bdyId=35>

<http://www.halton.ca/cms/One.aspx?portalId=8310&pageId=46822>

Halton Food for Thought has been facilitating the creation of and operating school nutrition programs in Halton Region schools for more than a decade. Food for Thought's mission is to inspire children and youth to make healthy food choices vital to their development by providing inclusive access to nutritious foods throughout the school day. They currently operate programs in approximately 90 schools in Halton Region. In 2009 the Farm to School program was started to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables in children, educate students and parents about local and healthy foods and support local farmers. The program is run through Halton Food for Thought's existing school nutrition infrastructure in a subset of 9 schools for the year 2010-11 with more interested in participating this school year

A part-time coordinator liaises with local farmers to source local fruits and vegetables for the participating school nutrition programs and coordinates logistics. The Food for Life/ 'ReFresh' distribution centre plays a role in the distribution of produce from local farmers to schools. Participating schools also receive information regarding local and seasonal agriculture for morning announcements, and inserts for school newsletters educating parents and children about healthy food and local agriculture.

Oakville Sustainable Food Partnership

www.osfp.ca

The Oakville Sustainable Food Partnership (OSFP) is a not for profit organization started in 2008 to promote a sustainable local food systems in Oakville and the surrounding Region of Halton. The organization is run by volunteers who collaborate in a working group style without any physical office space or continued funding. Despite this obstacle the organization has made many important contributions towards increasing the sustainability of its food system in the past three years. OSFP's first project was the Harbourside Organic Farmer's Market, which continues to offer healthy local and organic foods and environmental products to consumers. OSFP is starting a fruit tree harvesting program (Halton Fruit Tree Project) as well as a backyard/garden sharing program and a community orchard within the next year. Although OSFP has to date been funded on a project basis by various grants, they are investigating a diversified continued funding base model to ensure the long term sustainability of its projects and the capacity to grow new food ideas in Oakville, and the Region of Halton.

Halton Fresh Food Box

<http://www.choices4health.org/pages/Projects/Halton+Fresh+Food+Box>

The Halton Fresh Food Box Program started eight years ago after an anti-poverty coalition identified a need for fresh produce provision to low-income groups in Halton. The food box followed the Foodshare Toronto food box model in starting up, it is now an incorporated not-for-profit organization directed by a board. The food box is staffed using core funding for operating and administrative costs from Halton Region Public Health Department supplemented by grant funds.

The food box was originally conceived as a food access program to supplement traditional emergency food access and fill a gap in that sector by increasing access to fresh produce. The box consists only of good quality produce. The food box's policy on local sourcing is that averaged over the year, the box must contain fifty percent local content or food grown within an approximately 100 km radius. The box contains higher percentages of local produce at some times during the year than others – for example the box is often 100% local in the summer, but has a lower local content in April and May. This reflects the seasonality of agriculture in Ontario. Halton region grows strawberries, raspberries, apples and pears, as well as some broccoli, kale, corn, turnip, squash and tomatoes, mostly in the rural North of the Region. Expanding the definition of local to neighboring regions as well allows the box to access local content in items for which there is a gap in supply within Halton, such as potatoes from Hamilton or peaches from Niagara.

Produce is sourced from wholesalers and some growers directly: some growers grow crops specifically for the food box program, and wholesalers are often willing to offer good prices because they know the destination of the purchase is the food box. Customers pay a reasonable, but an affordable price for the boxes, and all the money collected is used to purchase the produce and provide truck drivers with honorariums. The boxes are designed to be accessible to those who need them most, but also non-stigmatizing. Thus,

the program is open to anyone, and anyone can purchase a box, but the drop sites (often schools and churches) are selected in high need neighborhoods to ensure that targeted populations are served. The food box is packed monthly at three locations, the Food for Life warehouse and churches in Georgetown and Burlington by some 180 volunteers.

Food for Life/Refresh Foods

<http://www.foodforlife.ca/index.php>

<http://www.refreshfoods.ca/>

When Food for Life started fifteen years ago, it looked very different than it does today. Originally, it consisted of only founder George Bagaco's individual efforts to deliver baked goods not sold by the end of the day at the local bakery to families in need in his neighborhood.

Food for Life collects fresh surplus food (baked goods, fruit and vegetables, meat and dairy) from local grocery stores, restaurants and the corporate food sector seven days a week, and delivers the food to over 42 community agencies in Burlington, Oakville, Hamilton, Mississauga and Halton region. For example, Halton Region Longos Chains will flash freeze much needed meat products the day before their best before date and donate them to Food for Life. In addition, Food for Life has established over 36 outreach programs in housing complexes and low-income neighborhoods in Burlington, Oakville, Milton, Acton and Georgetown. Today, Food for Life redistributes over 900,000 pounds of food annually.

Examples of outreach programs include food pantries, distribution to residents of a social housing project, meal programs and much more. At each of Food for Life's outreach programs a volunteer coordinator administers the outreach with the support of the Food for Life Outreach Program Manager. The four outcome goals for the outreach programs are: increasing access to food, increasing nutrition and food literacy, providing additional information about other social services and building trust between volunteer coordinators and clients. Food for life has a 6,000 square foot warehouse with walk-in freezer and cold storage, and two refrigerated trucks. Food for Life is operated by a board of directors and funded by four different united ways, contributions from Halton Region and also fundraising.

Refresh Foods is a Food for Life program created three years ago to build donor partnerships with large food service corporations (food manufacturers, processors and distributors). Food for Life partners with other food groups in the community by offering their warehouse space and distribution infrastructure to the Halton Food for Thought school nutrition program, its Farm to School program and the Halton Fresh Food Box program.

Halton Food Council

<http://www.haltonfoodcouncil.ca/>

The Halton Food Council, started in 2008 is a group of community stakeholders whose goal is to facilitate dialog and communication between food players in the community.

Members identified it as a think tank type, policy advocacy committee, with a two pronged focus on social justice, agriculture and related policies. The council's first task was to identify all the community food stakeholders and initiatives in the community. As such it conducted (and completed in spring 2011) an environmental scan containing statistics on the region's land use, agriculture, poverty, food costs, as well as a detailed list of all the food related programs and organizations in the community.

The Council's second task is to bring together community food stakeholders for dialog and collaboration so that community goals and priorities relating to food can be identified. As such the council is made up of twelve members representing different key interests and sectors of Halton's food community. Some members volunteer their time (including the chair) while others represent the organizations that employ them and are involved with the Council as a part of their work with these organizations. The council is trying to achieve membership representation from all community food sectors including farming and agriculture, social justice, business, planning, school nutrition, non-profit organizations, etc. All members have an equal voice in voting processes, aside from two non-voting advisory members from the region's Public Health and Planning Department.

The Council also regularly engages in meetings and activities aimed and increasing communication with and between other community food actors. For example, the Council held a planning day where 70 community food actors were invited to attend, hear speakers and engaged in facilitated conversations to identify important issues. Sub-committees have now been established within the council to continue to work on these issues and include both council members and non-members. The third task of the Council will be to develop and advocate for food policy in the region that addresses the community identified food priorities and goals that are produced by these activities. The Council has already been successful in fostering relationships and partnerships between community food actors through its efforts to facilitate greater communication and collaboration between these actors.

HAMILTON

Community Food Security Stakeholders Committee

<http://www.hamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/096AEEE5-2210-4D39-9123-7AF871961473/0/Feb23BOH07031bCommunityFoodSecurity.pdf>

The Community Food Security Stakeholders Committee was created in 2007 from a Hamilton Public Health Services Department recommendation. The committee consists of a wide range of community food stakeholders representing agricultural, environmental, social service, emergency food access, research and education and other key interest groups. The committee meets monthly to discuss community food issues and policy advocacy projects they are working on. The CFSSC plays a communication facilitation, policy advisory/creation, and think tank role in food issues in Hamilton. One recently completed project was the creation of a white paper to guide policy development for Farmer's Markets in the City. The CFSSC is also working on a project to create a Food Charter for the City of Hamilton.

Manorun Organic Farm and CSA

<http://www.manorun.com/>

Manorun Organic Farm is a small, family run organic farm. The farm has 40 acres half cultivating hay and pasture, and a quarter each cultivating grains and vegetables, fruits and herbs. The farm produces organic vegetables, fruits, herbs, meats and breads to supply a CSA of 150 shares. Manorun also sells their products at three farmer's markets in Hamilton, the Dundas, Ancaster and Locke Street markets. Manorun's vision of a sustainable food system involves small, diverse farms using sustainable methods selling directly to consumers. Manorun is embodying this vision in its practice, and furthering it by participating in marketplaces that increase the demand for small, local, diverse, sustainable farmers.

Hamilton Eat Local

http://environmenthamilton.org/view/page/hamilton_eat_local

Hamilton Eat Local is a subsidiary of Environment Hamilton, a non-profit organization committed to protecting the environment and educating Hamilton residents on how they can do so. Environment Hamilton and other community partners created Hamilton Eat Local in 2005. It creates and supports programs that encourage Hamilton residents to eat food grown by local farmers and in the urban community. One major project is the annual local food map and directory started in 2007 that lists all the places that Hamilton residents can purchase food directly from farmers in their region. Another major project is Hamilton Fruit Tree project, a gleaning program where volunteers pick the fruit of urban fruit trees and split the harvest three ways between volunteers, owners and food banks. Other projects have included the Rural Routes bus tours that took urban residents on tours of local farms to educate and increase Hamiltonian's awareness of local agriculture, while offering opportunities to buy produce directly from those farms, giving those organizations a bit of extra income in exchange for their hospitality; and the Operation Smoothie project, which is working towards providing frozen fruit from local farms to school nutrition programs so they could serve healthy, delicious, local fruit all year 'round in the kid-friendly "smoothie" format.

TORONTO

North York Harvest

<http://www.northyorkharvest.com/>

North York Harvest is a large food bank in Toronto, and also a regional warehousing and distribution centre for emergency food provisions. North York Harvest distributes 1.6 million pounds of food a year through the food bank and the programs of member agencies including neighborhood food banks, social services, community kitchens, shelters, and meal programs throughout the City. North York Harvest is currently conducting a feasibility study with funding provided by the Metcalf Foundation to investigate the potential for creating a food hub in the Lawrence Heights neighborhood in Toronto. The envisioned Lawrence Heights food hub would be a multi-service hub that would provide more than food services, but use food as the ballast of operation.

West End Food Coop

<http://www.westendfood.coop/>

The West End Food Co-operative (WEFC) is an incorporated multi-stakeholder co-operative – with consumer, employee, and producer/supplier members – committed to the development of an inclusive community food culture in Toronto’s West End. WEFC acts as a catalyst for local food security by co-ordinating community-driven food initiatives; these include the Sorauren Farmers’ Market and the soon-to-open full service grocery store at the Parkdale Community Health Centre at Queen and Dufferin which will feature local, organic and fair trade products. The co-op will focus on creating local food security while providing employment using a liveable wage model.

Co-op Coordinator Lynn Bishop sees WEFC as much more than a grocery store; it is a multi-stakeholder co-operative, one of the first of its kind in the local food space. Serving a diverse population, WEFC hopes to continue to build on its roots as a community food service organization by leveraging financial stability and food security achieved through their soon-to-open retail space and combining this with additional funds raised through community fundraisers, public and private foundations to support innovative capacity building and outreach programs in the community. As a co-operative social enterprise, the WEFC aims to be inclusive and innovative, reaching more diverse populations through life-changing ways while connecting local farmers with new markets to enhance regional resiliency.

YORK REGION

York Region Food Network

<http://yrfn.ca/>

The York Region Food Network is an organization that promotes food security in York Region by raising regional awareness of issues the impact food security. The York Region Food Network started as mostly an awareness group in the late 1980s to counter the myth that there was no hunger in the suburban York Region. Their work grew over the years to include breakfast drop in program, community kitchens, community gardens, school programs and so on. They are also now involved with pushing for a Food Charter. They are partly funded through the United Way, but mostly project funding. The organization is located in a building that functions as a services hub: as it also houses the Street Outreach, Emergency Winter Shelter, John Howard Society and the food bank. The York Region Food Network envisions a food system in York Region that is healthy, accessible and sustainable.

Southwestern Ontario Region

Erin Nelson and Irena Knezevic

OXFORD COUNTY

Oxfordlicious

<http://www.oxfordlicious.com/>

Interviewee: Cathy Bingham, Tourism Oxford

Bingham has long been a champion for local food promotion in Oxford County. In her role at Tourism Oxford, she was able to secure a Trillium Foundation Grant to develop a database that connects local producers with potential consumers; she has also helped spearhead Oxfordlicious – a program designed to increase the use of local food in local restaurants. Although Tourism Oxford’s mandate does not explicitly include local food promotion, Bingham’s personal passion has inspired her to creatively include local food initiatives such as Oxfordlicious as part of the County’s culinary tourism strategy.

For Bingham, community-building is at the heart of what she does, but she also believes that in order for Oxfordlicious, or any other local food project, to be successful, it is important that there be a clear economic impact, particularly in terms of helping local area producers increase the viability of their operations. At the end of the day, the two elements go hand in hand, as successful local business development helps build community ties.

Oxford County Buy Local Map

<http://www.oxfordbuylocal.ca/>

Interviewee: June Nussey, Oxford County Federation of Agriculture

Like many other communities, Oxford County is increasingly interested in buying local, and getting the Buy Local Map off the ground has been key to facilitating that, as it helps restaurants, caterers, Good Food Box programs and others more easily locate local products. Currently, the Buy Local Map project is funded by an OMIF grant, and managed by a committee with representatives from a number of organizations.

Having grown up on a farm, Nussey has always been passionate about agriculture, and sees her main role at the Oxford County Federation of Agriculture as being about getting the agricultural message out to the public. Taking on the coordination of the Oxford County Buy Local Map has been an excellent way to move forward with that agenda, as it has allowed her to actively engage in public education regarding the importance of local food. Ideally, Nussey would like the Board of Health to take on a stronger role in providing resources for individuals to learn how to preserve local food through the canning and freezing processes. It is important to have public sector involvement, as opposed to simply relying on private business to move the local food agenda forward. She notes that developing municipal public procurement programs that would favour local food would be a wonderful strategy for increasing the local food sector.

Oxford County Food Charter

Interviewee: Linda Dimock, Woodstock and Area Community Health Centre

The Woodstock and Area Community health centre staff spearheaded a collaborative process to develop a food charter for Oxford County. Other actors involved in drafting the charter included Public Health, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, OMAFRA, Children's Aid, non-profits such as the Salvation Army, Operation Sharing and Helping Hands, private citizens, and one member of County Council. Broad in scope, the charter addresses issues such as emergency food service improvement, education and awareness about healthy eating, community gardening, and policy proposals.

Work is still needed in Oxford County to build the kind of broad-based community support for action on food issues that exists in a place like Waterloo Region, or Guelph-Wellington. Dimock hopes that the Food Charter will eventually be adopted by County Council, and that it may spark increased action and potentially lead to the development of a food hub project that would help coordinate the variety of activities already happening in the County. Ideally, community partners can take a more active leadership role in local food work, helping to educate local citizens – many of whom are still unfamiliar with concepts such as “food security”.

Your Farm Market

Location: Woodstock

Interviewee: Don McKay, Oxford County Warden and local sweet corn grower

A sweet corn grower for 20 years, McKay's daughters now run his operation. They have opened a sales outlet in a local parking lot, where they sell their own produce as well as that of 20-25 other area farmers, and some added goods that they source at the Elmira Produce Auction. Known as Your Farm Market (YFM), all products sold come from a 100 km. radius, and annual sales have reached almost half a million dollars. In McKay's opinion, this success is a direct result of his daughters' focus on building close personal connections with their consumers, which he feels keeps them wanting to buy at the market, even when other options might be available.

According to McKay, a city like Woodstock could easily support many more farm market outlets similar to the one operated by his daughters. He suggests that, if zoning bylaws would permit it, the city could be home to ten such business ventures, and that each could be open every day, as opposed to just one day per week. In addition to helping increase consumer access to fresh, local food, this model would help smaller-scale producers in the region gain market access. In spite of opposition from large-scale producers, who see such markets as competition, McKay is working hard in his role as County Warden, and as a private citizen, to create consumer awareness about local food issues, in the hopes that the public will push for more market openness.

PERTH COUNTY

The Local Community Food Centre

Location: Stratford

Interviewee: Steve Stacey, The Local Community Food Centre

In 2010, Toronto's Stop Community Food Centre decided to pilot its model in two other Ontario communities, one of which was Stratford. Stacey explains that the Stratford site will be modeled after the original location in Toronto, but will be tailored to suit the needs and context of the local community. Taking advantage of the area's rich agricultural productivity, The Local Community Food Centre will strive to source local food as much as possible (though it will also partner with industrial suppliers). Its programs and services will include an emergency food distribution centre, greenhouse, community garden and kitchen, drop-in meals, nutrition education, and advocacy work on food issues.

Stacey strongly believes that it is necessary to adopt a holistic approach when working to support local food networks, and take environmental, social and economic factors into equal consideration. He thinks the community food centre model is a good example of that kind of holistic thinking, and would like to see the concept replicated in other communities across the province and country as a means of addressing market instability and building social relationships. The Local Community Food Centre is a pilot project that will contribute towards the creation of a Canada-wide network of community food centres that would facilitate the sharing of knowledge, experience, and resources.

Slow Food Perth County and Perth County Kitchens

<http://www.slowfoodperthcounty.com/>

<http://www.perthcounty.ca/kitchen>

Location: Stratford

Interviewee: Laurie Knechtel, Slow Food Perth County and Perth County Kitchens

Following the philosophy of the international Slow Food movement, Slow Food Perth County strives to promote local, naturally grown food. One of the main ways in which they do this is by running a Sunday market in the Stratford Market Square. Based on their "good, clean, fair" philosophy, this market has been highly successful. Knechtel points out that it has been wonderful to see the city's historic Market Square return to its original function as a marketplace for the buying and selling of local products.

In addition to her work with Slow Food Perth County, Knechtel is also involved in Perth County Kitchens, an innovative initiative under the umbrella of Perth County Economic Development. The program assists small, food-related business start-ups by facilitating access to and use of certified community kitchens for an affordable, hourly rate. Those same certified kitchens are used to conduct classes for both children and adults on traditional methods of food preparation and preservation.

According to Knechtel, both Slow Food Perth County and Perth County Kitchens contribute to much-needed public education around food issues. She notes that, with so much junk food readily available, "we need a lot of Jamie Olivers", or people promoting healthy food choices. Beyond the physical health benefits associated with good, clean, fair foods, Knechtel also highlights the

social and community aspects of her food-related work. Indeed, she sees the health, social, educational and economic elements of a local food system as being inextricably linked.

Finally, she commends other local food initiatives that engage people in learning to produce and prepare their own food. She feels that providing this type of education is immensely important: “Not only does it promote a healthy local economy, but it is rewarding for consumers, young and old. It establishes in their mind a new paradigm of seasonality, and it enhances the pleasure of eating.”

Milverton Farmers’ Market

<http://www.milvertonfair.ca/farmers-market.htm>

Interviewee: Sandra Kuepfer, Milverton Farmers’ Market (coordinator)

Although it remains relatively small, Kuepfer believes that the market has been quite successful at meeting its goals. One of those goals relates to fair pricing, and she points out that vendors selling the same product work together to set price. Kuepfer also notes that prices at the local grocery store have decreased slightly since the market opened four years ago. While she feels positive about the level of success to date, she does acknowledge that she would like to see the market eventually become bigger, more diverse, and play more of a social role in the community.

Kuepfer explains that it can be challenging to get residents to attend a farmers’ market, especially when many work in urban centres such as Kitchener-Waterloo and London and are not in the habit of participating in a local food economy. She believes that food-themed festivals like Savour Stratford as well as public education are important for raising people’s awareness about how much excellent local food is available in the region. If people were better educated about the issues, they might be convinced to support a local market as opposed to doing their grocery shopping at supermarkets on their way home from work.

HURON COUNTY

Huron-Perth Farm to Table

<http://huronperthfarmtotable.ca/>

Interviewee: Joan Brady, Huron-Perth Farm to Table

The Huron-Perth Farm to Table network’s main goals are to build the capacity of the local food system, by increasing farmer training, building processing and other infrastructure, engaging in promotion work to communicate the benefits of local food to consumers, and market development. Specific activities of the organization include a Good Food Box program and Buy Local Buy Fresh map, as well as the Opportunities Project, which has been responsible for starting a number of farmers’ markets in the area. In 2005, the first was opened in Grand Bend; in 2008 another one was opened in Exeter. Since then, three additional markets have opened, all of which try to be as producer-based as possible.

A commercial hog farmer for 30 years, Brady stresses that the work done by the network must focus on the farmer perspective. She very much appreciates that growing numbers

of people are getting passionate about local food; however, she cautions that there is little point supporting local food if the farm perspective is not included in the work being done. For example, culinary tourism is wonderful, but care needs to be taken to ensure that it is developed in a way that benefits local farm families. Similarly, farmland preservation work can only be truly effective if it includes a focus on *farmer* preservation as well.

A self-described “big picture thinker”, Brady’s work as an agricultural advocate extends to involvement with the National Farmers’ Union, Sustain Ontario, and FoodNet Ontario. Ideally, she would like to see a system developed wherein local food networking organizations could communicate directly with OMAFRA about their needs. In her opinion, the current movement to develop a provincial network of local food networks could help facilitate such a system.

REACH Huron, Community Food Centre Social Enterprise Project

<http://reachhuron.ca/>

Interviewee: Brian Wiley

Wiley has been hired on contract (a position paid for by a Trillium Foundation grant) by REACH Huron to develop a proposal for a community food centre social-enterprise project. Such a project would fit into REACH Huron’s mandate of promoting local economic development within the agricultural and equine sectors. Although the project concept is still in its initial stages, elements would likely include a greenhouse, community kitchen and gardens, and a focus on food-related education, such as teaching people how to grow, cook and preserve their own food, and informing them of the benefits of local food from a nutrition, economic and social equity standpoint. The centre would be designed to serve the entire County, but would be located in Clinton where the lack of a farmers’ market makes access to fresh local food particularly challenging.

Currently, Wiley is working to build awareness of, and support for, the community food centre project. He notes that this is a challenging but essential task, as the project will only be successful if it achieves broad-based community buy-in. For Wiley, securing support for a community food education centre is tied to shifting the community’s priorities towards an increased focus on the importance of food, from a health, economic development, and social perspective. “We live in the heart of agriculture and there are tons of producers” he explains, “so there should be enough food for the community, and there’s no reason why we couldn’t have people selling fresh produce on the streets...Having more food sale more often in public areas would be helpful, and subsidizing it for people with access problems would be good for decreasing health problems such as obesity...Looking at health prevention through a local food system would be a good idea.”

Youth will be targeted for curriculum-based, hands-on agricultural education to instill values of sustainable agriculture and good food at a young age, and to complement in-class learning. There will also be a focus on sustainable farmer training for youth, and will follow Everdale’s model of a curriculum-based farmer training program. Wiley also hopes to provide vocational training for at-risk youth that will provide them with the tools to pursue opportunities in the agricultural community, and within their own community.

There is also an interest in offering green care to expose vulnerable groups to the beneficial effects of healthy food and farming.

Huron County Health Unit

<http://www.huroncounty.ca/health/food/index.php>

Interviewee: Janice Dunbar, Community Developer, Huron County Health Unit

Working in close collaboration with Huron-Perth Farm to Table, the Huron County Health Unit is involved in a number of local food initiatives, including the Huron County Good Food Box, a newly-opened community kitchen adjacent to the Health Unit headquarters, and the provincial Healthy Communities Partnership. The Health Unit also conducted a series of educational and consultative kitchen table talks about food systems in the County – work made possible through a grant from the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

From the perspective of the Health Unit, work to promote local food systems is based on both supporting local area producers and increasing access to healthy local food for everyone in Huron County. Dunbar points out that “it’s ironic, because we’re so strong and rich agriculturally, yet we have so many people who can’t afford to eat.” She believes it is essential to make healthy local food more accessible, particularly to vulnerable populations, while at the same time ensuring that farmers are able to make a good living, receiving fair pay for their work.

Recently, the Health Unit is working on the development of a food hub project in the County. If successful, the project would seek to bring together different food system actors to build hubs that could include elements such as sales, distribution and processing of local produce, and public education focused on nutrition and food skills. Recognizing the need to be accessible in a geographically-spread-out County, the hubs would ideally be located across the County, at sites where current food system work takes place (e.g. Good Food Box distribution site, REACH Huron projects). Although it is still unclear whether an eventual project would use a traditional business model, be based on social enterprise, or favour a non-profit approach, Dunbar stresses that any initiative “not only has to be economically viable, but you have to look at the triple bottom line...it’s not just about making money.”

GREY-BRUCE

Foodlink Grey-Bruce

<http://www.foodlinkgreybruce.com/>

Interviewee: Freeman Boyd

Foodlink Grey-Bruce is run by 2 almost full-time staff working with an annual budget that is subject to yearly re-approval by County Council. The organization’s mandate is to build linkages between 350 local food businesses (approximately 70 of which are farms). In addition to network-building, Foodlink Grey-Bruce provides small business grants and helps small-scale businesses navigate government regulation – an issue that Boyd (a

farmer himself for 25 years) points out the organization would like to become more actively involved in, for example by promoting the idea of a provincial agency that would help producers deal with regulatory compliance.

By far the most important priority for Foodlink Grey-Bruce is increasing the viability of local farm operations. In order for this to happen, Boyd suggests that there need to be significant changes in people's attitudes about food. For example, the public needs to be educated about concepts such as seasonality, and institutions such as schools and hospitals need to acknowledge the link between food and health and start sourcing fresher, healthier local food. In addition, Boyd stresses the importance of moving away from the increasing concentration that characterizes food processing and distribution and towards creating systems within which diverse small-scale operations can thrive. One specific recommendation is the development of a toolkit that would help people working on local food issues measure the economic impacts of their work, as this data is often required by funding agencies, but people working on the ground do not have the expertise to collect it.

Boyd is passionate about the need to scale-up the work that is done regionally, and ensure recognition of the value of local food at the national level: "We are lacking a national food policy. We have had a cheap food policy, coupled with a push for consumers to have a duty to seek out the cheapest cost. I often wonder what it would be like if we had had a cheap car policy. People don't buy the cheapest car they can buy."

Around the Sound

Location: Owen Sound

Interviewee: Anne Finlay-Stewart

Around the Sound was a retail outlet that sourced as locally as possible, with a focus on Grey-Bruce goods. All products offered were made by Canadian companies. The store, which began as a National Farmers' Union project, sought to act as an incubator, providing a secure market for up-and-coming small-scale production businesses in the region. It never advertised "sales", instead choosing to focus on educating the public about the value of local products. The project was intended to become a cooperative, but that idea was not feasible due to the widely varying interests of different actors. Essentially a non-profit by default, Around the Sound was lost in a fire in May, 2011, and plans for rebuilding are unclear.

For Finlay-Stewart, community-building and the creation of networks was the most important motivation for her involvement in the project. She thought of herself as a matchmaker, more than a retailer, and noted that the store was located in a mixed income neighbourhood, and made an effort to be accessible to a broad spectrum of customers. The community-building nature of her store is tied to local food security, because "if you're building community the farmer is always going to make sure that there's some for us" as opposed to going to market in Toronto, where there will always be money. It is also important to present a positive vision that captures peoples' imagination.

Markdale Farmers' Market

Interviewee: Kate Russell, Markdale Farmers' Market and Kate's Country Kitchen

A number of years ago, a Grey-Bruce regional conference, hosted by the Saugeen Economic Development Corporation, was held to discuss local economic development; one outcome was a realization that local farmers were almost exclusively shipping their production for sale at the Ontario Food Terminal. The potential to develop a local market for this production was identified as an important opportunity, and the Markdale Farmers' Market was created as a result. Russell notes that the Markdale experience is just one of more than 14 farmers' markets now operating in Grey-Bruce – a region that, only a few years ago, was home to just a couple of local markets.

In 2011, just the second year of its existence, the Markdale Farmers' Market consisted of six vendors. While five sold their own products, one was a broker bringing in goods from a 100 mile radius. Russell explained that, because local farming is still based on a mentality that favours cropping for bulk sale, it can be challenging to find producers to participate directly in the market. For consumers, the ability to attend a farmers' market is invaluable. According to Russell: "As much as people go [to the market] for good food, and the quality, it's also because somewhere deep inside our hearts we remember what it was like to grow our own food, and have a family supper, and I think that's why people go to farmers' markets; it's to touch that. There's a real sense of pride in that."

In addition to her work with the farmers' market, and her own small-scale processing business, Russell has also recently put together a funding proposal for the development of a food hub project in Grey-Bruce. If successful in obtaining funding from the McConnell Foundation, she would work to turn the Markdale Farmers' Market into a real hub for local food activity that would ideally include processing, storage and sale of local produce, as well as a community garden and kitchen, and food-related educational activities. Eventually, other elements might be included as well. "The sky is the limit for what you could use that kind of thing for" says Russell.

WELLINGTON COUNTY

Guelph-Wellington Local Food

<http://www.guelphwellingtonlocalfood.ca/>

Interviewee: Kate Vsetula, Guelph-Wellington Local Food

Housed within the Guelph Community Health Centre, Guelph Wellington Local Food is dedicated to linking local area producers with consumers. Vsetula, whose work to champion local food was essential for getting the initiative off the ground, explains that in the early years the project was much smaller because there was not as much public awareness of the importance of local food. More recently, however, Guelph-Wellington Local Food has been able to capitalize on the wave of interest in local food to help garner broad-based support and expand the scope of its work. There is a strong steering committee of 16 which includes farmers, restaurateurs, economic development officers, store owners and others; the steering committee consists of a number of working groups including partnership, events, marketing, evaluation and more.

For Vsetula, the main priority is to build linkages amongst local area farmers and any individuals or businesses that could be potential consumers. In her opinion, there is a lot of willingness on the part of both producers and consumers to participate in local food chains, but people need a facilitating organization to connect the dots. Activities designed to create these linkages include the publication of a Guelph Wellington Local Food Map, an online food finder, and various events such as the Guelph Wellington Local Food Fest, the Wellington Rural Romp farm tours and numerous networking events to link buyers and sellers of local food, including the broader public sector, food service and others, to regional producers and distributors. The new Taste Real local food brand for the region is also facilitating the knowledge transfer to consumers about what is local, through broad partner use of the brand and umbrella marketing of the brand and partners.

In Vsetula's opinion, Guelph-Wellington Local Food is well-positioned to act as a convenor for a food hub project, bringing together many different actors, including farm organizations, local economic development offices, municipal planning offices, institutional food buyers, business owners and public sector organizations. Indeed, she has already put together a funding proposal for such a project, and her long term vision would include everything from a venue for local arts, to a farmers' market, to a retail outlet, to a CSA pickup point, to educational space to office space, and beyond. Vsetula stresses that, although grant money would be necessary for project start-up, any food hub proposal must have a built-in plan for long-term financial sustainability and should not be afraid to consider membership fees or other options to ensure viability.

Distribution is a key issue for more use of local food to be used by stakeholders and a food hub has been discussed by many partners as one strong possible solution. In the meantime, the work of Guelph-Wellington Local Food and partner organizations are in many people's eyes the food hub of the region. There is huge potential to create a brick and mortar food hub come into development.

Taste Real

<http://guelphwellingtonlocalfood.ca/taste-real>

Interviewee: Gayl Creutzberg

Operating under the umbrella of Guelph-Wellington Local Food, Taste Real is a branding initiative designed to promote goods produced on Guelph-Wellington soil. In order to use the brand, businesses must commit to sourcing a certain percentage of local food. With funding from OMIF, and some financing from membership fees paid by participating businesses, Creutzberg explains that Taste Real seeks to expand the producer-focused work of Guelph-Wellington Local Food by bringing bigger businesses, such as the Delta Hotel in Guelph, into the consumer end of the local food chain.

A producer herself, Creutzberg feels strongly that local food initiatives must prioritize putting more money in farmers' pockets. In order to accomplish this, she believes a business-oriented model is the most effective. Specifically, she suggests that farmers producing for the local market are often too diversified, and could benefit from increasing specialization that would allow them to produce at a scale that would facilitate their

ability to supply larger local businesses such as the Delta. Creutzberg points out that, although she favours increasing specialization, maintaining farm biodiversity is still important for ecological reasons and to have a fallback in case of a problem with the primary crop.

Guelph-Wellington Food Round Table

<http://gwfrt.com/>

Interviewee: Brenda Doner

The Guelph-Wellington Food Round Table was created to bring together different actors and work towards the creation of, in the words of Doner, “a thriving regional food system that is economically and environmentally sustainable.” The six specific areas of focus are: network construction; research and advocacy for improved food policy; relationship building; promotion of social learning; support for infrastructure development; and the launching of new programs. Currently, the Round Table is not formally incorporated, but does have one full-time contract staff (whose contract comes to an end in 2011). It receives in-kind funding and support from participating organizations, including Family and Children’s Services, the City of Guelph, Canadian Organic Growers, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health, the University of Guelph Research Shop, the Taskforce for Poverty Elimination, the local school boards, and Guelph-Wellington Local Food.

For Doner, the initial motivation to work with the Round Table was its focus on food accessibility issues; however, she notes that the scope of the organization has evolved into a more systems-based approach that includes actors from a variety of sectors, such as non-profit and government and, similarly, looks at food issues from a variety of perspectives, including environmental sustainability and personal health. Doner explains that it has been challenging to bring the private sector into the Round Table work, but hopes that closer collaboration with Guelph-Wellington Local Food (including potentially bringing the Round Table under its umbrella) might address this issue, by facilitating more direct linkages with local producers. Additionally, there are plans to look more at social enterprise projects that would address the issues of profitability and distribution.

As it works to consolidate its role in the community, Doner feels the Round Table offers people an excellent opportunity for civic engagement. She stresses that its many volunteers are not just volunteers in the traditional sense of the word, but rather take part in the Round Table, and its associated activities, as a means of engaging in active citizenry in their community.

WATERLOO REGION

Pfenning’s Organic Farm

www.pfenningsfarms.ca

Interviewee: Wolfgang Pfenning

Pfenning's is a family-owned farm that has been operating since 1983, and currently grows 500 acres of certified organic vegetable crops, while employing approximately 40 full-time and 60 part-time or seasonal staff. The operation is unique largely because it has developed its own distribution network, packing and storing its produce on-site, and shipping it in its own vehicles to regional retailers. In addition to their own produce, Pfenning's also distributes goods from approximately 40 other farmers, primarily from Southwestern Ontario, but also from the Maritimes and California. Its distribution network is concentrated in Ontario, though it also includes a number of retailers in Quebec, Chicago and Pennsylvania. Although it supplies some larger supermarkets, the focus is on smaller-scale retailers whose "passion for selling good food" is much appreciated by Pfenning.

Pointing out that "we were local before it was cool", Pfenning suggests that the key to his success was taking on the distribution side of the food chain, which is a big struggle for many producers. He explains that this involved going to Toronto and asking retailers what they were doing wrong. "It takes a long time to figure things out" he explains, "and a lot of times you don't hear pleasant information...but if you take it and digest it and come up with creative solutions...then you do your homework and you come back. It's like growing a crop, and you have to serve all year long, and only once are you allowed to harvest. Growing relationships with stores is the same."

Largely due to its achievements in developing an effective distribution network for local organic food, Pfenning's was recognized with a Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence. Even with all this success, however, Pfenning points out that there is still very little financial security in what he does.

Garden Party CSA

<http://gardenparty.ca>

Interviewee: Theresa Schumilas, owner-operator of Garden Party CSA

In the opinion of Theresa Schumilas, who runs a CSA farm and an organic buying club, consumers are responding to the message about local food because it represents "a positive marketing strategy in the middle of a doom and gloom message about destruction. I think people respond to positive things; they're not motivated by fear."

A recipient of the Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence, Garden Party is based out of Schumilas' certified organic farm, and includes a 30-share year-round CSA, bulk buying club, and on-farm farmers' market. While a focus on local is important, Schumilas is also a strong believer that, to truly be sustainable, food should be produced without dependence on agrochemicals, GMOs or exploitation of migrant workers. She feels that the local food movement sometimes masks these issues, and would ideally promote a shift away from the large-scale corporate model that makes such unsustainable practices difficult to avoid.

Schumilas suggests that one of the most important things about her work is that it helps demonstrate that there is a lot of local organic food available locally, and that you do not have to make trade-offs between the economic development and environmental goals of sustainable food systems. Her members may sometimes pay more money for the food they buy; however, in-season organic produce costs the same as conventionally-produced produce. She explains that members are willing to pay more because they recognize that they are paying for the internalization of social and environmental costs. She notes that it would be very helpful for these consumers to receive a tax credit, and also for public institutions to move towards increased sourcing of local organic food and paying a fair price that recognizes its true value. Also it would be ideal if public procurement programs prioritized purchases from smaller local producers, instead of using conventional value chains. Schumilas also offers barter arrangements for shares for people who are unable to afford them. In each CSA session, she asks members if they can contribute something “extra” so that members with less income can be included. Efforts to make organic food more accessible for lower-income people are becoming almost standard among the organic CSAs that she networks with in the area.

For Schumilas the most effective initiatives are those based on small-scale organic producers because they have seen first-hand the impacts of the large-scale, globalized model, and they truly understand the environmental issues of sustainable production and also the social importance of local agriculture. Organic is an important characteristic because it has the benefit of definition. When producers describe themselves as “sustainable” or “ecological”, eaters do not really know what that means and risk being misled. If the local food movement is building something authentic, then communications have to be very transparent; Schumilas believes this is lacking in much of the localism movement today. People think that farmers who rely on fossil fuels and GMOs are located far away, and that farmers in our own backyards are “pure”. Because Schumilas works closely with many farmers who sell direct into local markets, she knows this is not the case.

Southern Ontario Region

Irena Knezevic

ELGIN COUNTY

Savour Elgin

(With information from Kate Burns, Business Development Coordinator, County of Elgin)

Launched in 2010, Savour Elgin promotes local farms, wineries, restaurants, and food events in Elgin County. It also serves as a communication hub for producers, distributors, and suppliers, while at the same time promoting Elgin as a culinary tourism destination.

As indicated on its website (<http://www.savourelgin.ca>) “Savour Elgin has three culinary tourism-specific goals: 1. Strengthen the local food supply chain, including suppliers,

providers, and users; 2. Build awareness of culinary tourism in Elgin County; and 3. Evoke a sense of pride within and have a positive impact on the community.”

There has also been some overlap with community members who are working with Savour Elgin and the efforts to develop Elgin Food Charter, so while Savour Elgin is primarily an economic development effort, it is not exactly isolated from broader community development and food security work.

Horton's Farmers' Market

(With information from Shawn DeVree, Manager, Horton's Farmers' Market)

First opened 130 years ago and reopened five years ago, Horton's Farmers' Market is managed under the umbrella of the City of St Thomas. With a budget of \$29 000, and several dozen vendors, the market features local products exclusively, with most of them coming from no more than 60km away. There are a few 100km exceptions for products that cannot be found closer to home.

The market purpose is to support local economy and community building. The manager, Shawn DeVree, explained that she saw the market as an incubator of local jobs too – where each stall represents several jobs. That is a welcome contribution to the economy of a town that has been hard hit by the disappearance of manufacturing jobs. Shoppers seem interested in supporting local producers but also looking for healthier and fresher foods. The markets website can be found at <http://www.hortonfarmersmarket.ca/>

ESSEX COUNTY

The Windsor-Essex County (WEC) Food Matters Forum

(With information from Adam Vasey, Pathway to Potential; Colleen Mitchell, United Way; and Celso Oliveira, former WEC Food Strategist)

This forum took place in October 2010 and was facilitated by the WEC United Way and Pathway to Potential (WEC's Poverty Reduction Strategy). It brought together city agencies, community groups, and local business to develop a common vision and identify the assets and needs of the community. While diverging views were evident in this meeting, the collaboration became an asset in itself. It is difficult to determine if the Forum's success was a reflection or a catalyst (likely both) of the strong food movement in Windsor-Essex, but it was evident that the local food activity in this area was more advanced than elsewhere in Southern Ontario. (Our interviews in this area also snowballed quickly as everyone we spoke to had numerous others to recommend for the study.)

The Forum itself produced the Food Matters report (available at <http://www.weareunited.com/reports>) all food security-related activities in the area, sets out an action plan, and identifies the area's priorities for strengthening the food system and addressing access to fresh food. Their top priority is to have a food strategist, a community position that has now been established. The position is supported through a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation as a collaboration between the United Way,

Pathway to Potential, and the Windsor-Essex County Food Bank Association. The strategist will spend the next three years developing the food strategy for the county and facilitating collaborations among the various initiatives including community gardens and community kitchens. Celso Oliveira, who was filling the position for a time in 2011, indicated that the goal of this position is to find ways to meet the food needs of a recently impoverished population and extend community networks and collaboration. At the same time, Oliveira suggested that there would be stronger efforts to engage big food producers in the areas with local issues – make them aware of food security concerns in the area, while at the same respecting that they have to be economically viable.

Windsor-Essex Community Supported Agriculture (WECSA)

(With information from Steve Green, WECSA)

WECSA was launched in 2009 and now encompasses a CSA-type “local good food box” program, a community garden, a peri-urban organic farm in transition, and an egg co-op. WECSA has also been at the forefront of urban hen by-law campaign, and a part of the Food Matters Forum (see above).

Volunteer-run and supported with only occasional and small contributions (including a grant from the TD Friends of the Environment Fund), WECSA's participation numbers vary but involve several dozen community members at any given time. WECSA also works closely with other community groups sharing resources, creating a platform to push for a municipal food charter, and spreading awareness of food security issues and the importance of local food. The motivations for WECSA's work are mainly food-security and food-sovereignty related, but also include environmental and community-building concerns. More information can be found at <http://windsorca.blogspot.com/>

Grown Right Here

(With information from Lana Drouillard and Joe Byrne, Windsor-Essex Economic Development Corporation)

The Agri-Business Sector Task Force of the Windsor-Essex Economic Development Corporation (WEEDC) identified, applied and received an OMIF grant from the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs in 2009 and 2010. The purpose of the grant was to promote locally grown, produced, and/or processed agricultural products to consumers in the Windsor-Essex region. The grant was matched by the WEEDC in 2009 and 2010. “Agri-Business and Nutraceuticals” has been identified as one of the nine priority sectors within the WEEDC's Regional Economic Roadmap that holds potential for the Windsor-Essex region.

“Grown Right Here: Look for Local” campaign and branding program was initiated in 2009 by the Windsor-Essex Economic Development Corporation, with support from the Ontario Market Investment Fund and in partnership with numerous WEC producers and associations including Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island, Essex County Federation of Agriculture, Essex County Associated Growers, South Western Ontario Vintners Association, and the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers Association. The campaign created a local food map, a resource-filled website, and the “Grown right here Windsor-

Essex: Look for local. It's worth it” logo available to producers as well as to restaurants that feature local food (see <http://www.welookforlocal.ca/> for more information). In 2011, the campaign also produced a 32-page local food supplement for the local daily, The Windsor Star.

The campaign is by all accounts successful, it has helped create strong producer-consumer connections, and those who participated in the branding program in its first year reported seeing noticeable sales increases. The campaign's purpose is to increase profitability/ viability for producers, increase and improve access to local food and assist in building a more sustainable food system. As Byrne described it, it was conceptualized as a “marketing campaign that could also double up as an educational opportunity; guided by economic principles to make good ideas into broadly successful endeavours.” Drouillard indicated that a part of the work of this branding program was to find ways to increase economic sustainability in the long term and look beyond just immediate economic gains. Ironically, the big challenge to the program right now is its precarious future because of the lack of permanent funding.

Downtown Windsor Farmers' Market

(With information from Victoria Rose, market communications and mylocalfoodblog.com)

One of Essex County's five markets, and now in its third season, this market operates on an annual budget of less than \$20 000 and is volunteer run. The dependence on volunteers puts it at high risk of volunteer burnout. The funding comes from booth fees (from about two dozen vendors) and support from the local BIA (approximately 25%). The market volunteers have put a lot of work into meeting regulation requirements, such as maintaining a required ratio of farmers to other vendors (artisans, entrepreneurs), so as not to compromise its position due to lack of washrooms facilities.

As their mission statement describes: the market “connects residents of Windsor and surrounding areas to the farmers of Essex County by providing residents with local, fresh and in-season food in an accessible setting. We aim to raise the profile of local food producers and entrepreneurs by giving them a venue in which to sell their goods, while educating the public about the rich agricultural diversity that exists in Essex County. Through partnerships we work to build a stronger sense of community, restore the positive image of downtown and bring vitality back to our city.” More information is available at <http://downtownfarmersmarket.ca/>

County Connect

County Connect is an online market that connects producers and consumers in Essex County. This family-run business is membership-based (vendors and customers become members of the County Connect community), it offers online ordering and deliveries, and is frequently cited as one of the more innovative and successful initiatives in Essex County. Though run as a business, County Connect is very much a community building endeavour and as their website states:

The County Connect Family encompasses all the member Farmers, Craftsmen and Restaurants in the Essex and Kent County region. These are the people that do extraordinary things to bring quality local food to the doors and mouths of our community. These are the people who have a story to tell, and a culture to share. We are grateful for the dedication of local Farmers whose jobs are not easy, and who often times must hold a second job to pay for the farming they love and share... We celebrate and share those Craftsmen that create local treasures that represent the people and values of our community... We value the Restaurants who share the vision of our Farmers in providing quality, fresh, nutritious, local food to their guests.

More information can be found at <http://www.countyconnect.ca/>

KENT COUNTY

Buy Local Buy Fresh

(With information from Kim Cooper, Agricultural Coordinator with Economic Development Services, Chatham-Kent)

Facilitated by the Kent Federation of Agriculture and supported by Food Link and Economic Development Services, the creation of this map is only partly motivated by economic factors. The Federation's website notes: "Buying directly from the farm helps support local farm families, preserves local farmland, helps to expand the local food market and is your source to the freshest food around. Buying your food locally and eating from our region is not only healthy for you and your family, but also for the environment."

Although the region has always been very agricultural and farm-gate sales have always been common, there has been plenty of interest in the map, which is now in its third edition. Cooper indicated that the map and, more generally, local food are attracting those consumers who are wanting to know more about their food: "They just want to know that the food they are getting is safe and healthy and then there are the are spin-offs in helping the environment and helping the local economy. But those factors are not insignificant, rather they are all interconnected, and all positive." More information can be found at <http://buylocalbuyfreshchathamkent.com/>

Chatham Kent Community Gardens Program

Supported by the United Way and Trillium foundation this is a community garden project whose website states that "Food Link Chatham Kent Community Gardens are committed to providing the necessary land, education, tools and seeds to allow the citizens of Chatham-Kent, through their own efforts, to have access to safe, nutritious and appetizing fruits and vegetables." The program is a part of the wider Food Link Chatham Kent Coalition, which also includes food banks, collective kitchens, and other community and faith organizations.

Since 2006, the gardens program has been working with the aim of establishing a community garden in each community, and so far 8 community gardens have been

established in 4 municipalities. The program emphasizes the multiple benefits of community gardens including health, food security, community building, environmental benefits, and skills development. More information is available at <http://www.chathamkentcommunitygardens.com/>

LAMBTON

Sarnia Lambton Food Coalition

Formed in 2010 and co-chaired by the Community Health Services Department, the Coalition represents an effort to bring together the key players in the community's food system, including public health officials, producers, retailers, community development and planning sector, NGOs, and community members. Lambton's local food encompasses farmers' markets, city garden plots, emergency food services, and several garden projects (run by businesses and community groups) that supply fresh produce to emergency food services.

The Coalition has been at the forefront of effort to develop a food charter for Lambton. Earlier this year, the Coalition released a strategy document, *Creating a Food Revolution: A Healthy Food System Plan for Sarnia-Lambton*. The document lays out the goals of the Coalition's work and the purpose of the strategy: “fostering food-friendly neighbourhoods; promoting social justice; supporting nutrition and disease prevention; building strong communities; creating local, diverse and green economic development; protecting and sustaining the environment; empowering people with food skills and information; and nourishing links between city and countryside.” For more information see <http://www.lambtonhealth.on.ca/nutrition/slfc.asp>

Petrolia Farmers' Market

(With information from Sandy Mason, Petrolia Farmers' Market)

This market is one of four farmers' markets in Lambton (the others being in Sarnia, Forest, and Grand Bend). Petrolia market started operating in 2009 in a community arena. It now has nearly three dozen vendors and can see up to 2000 customers on market day. This operation is owned and operated by the town of Petrolia, is coordinated by a part time employee hired by the town, and the town also provides administrative support. In 2011 it became an outdoor market with a large covered area (an 8000 square foot pavilion) and full washroom facilities. The pavilion was made possible with federal support through Community Adjustment Fund. Located in downtown Petrolia, the market serves a double purpose – it supports local producers and attracts visitors to the downtown area, hence supporting other downtown businesses.

Though primarily an economic endeavour, this market is also interested in contributing to community building – as many other markets have been doing in recent years, Petrolia's market features live music and local artists, providing a bit of a cultural hub every weekend.

MIDDLESEX

Get Fresh... Eat Local

Created by the Middlesex Federation of Agriculture, this local food map is another case of wide community collaboration as it was supported by Tourism London, the County of Middlesex, City of London, Western Fair, Middlesex-London Health Unit, Healthy Living Partnership Middlesex-London and the London Farmers Market. Like other similar initiatives, it aims to support local producers while also promoting healthy eating. The map also includes information on seasonality, benefits of local food, tips for buying local, and tips for pick-your-own options. More information is available at http://www.heeman.ca/images/stories/pdf/get_fresh_map.pdf

NIAGARA

Niagara Local Food Co-op (NLFC)

(With information from Linda Grimo, NLFC)

The co-op is a for-profit virtual market for Niagara region that started in 2008. In 2007, some seed money became available for an agricultural initiative. Local producers and community developers came to the table, bounced ideas around, and invited a co-op consultant. One of the models the consultant shared with them was the Oklahoma Food Cooperative and everyone zoomed in on it. They sent a team to Oklahoma to observe and learn. By 2008 the team had tweaked the model to better suit Niagara, adjusted a few operational details and the co-op was launched. The memberships now stands at over 200, 35 of which are producers, though not all members are active. Some are active only seasonally, others have joined but only listed products once or twice (if producers) or purchased very little (if consumers).

The co-op facilitates online ordering (on a very clean, easy to navigate website), provides space for drop-off and pick-up (they have been lucky to obtain space through a local church). The only products allowed to be sold are food items (e.g. they do not facilitate sales of local crafts). The co-op takes a fee for everything sold and is a profitable venture now, though it still relies much on volunteer work. Grimo observed that the online technologies made it more convenient and easier to set this operation up and for members to participate, but that it made it difficult for the co-op to play a role in face-to-face community building (though she also acknowledged that power of online “community”). Run as a business, the co-op's main purpose is to support local agriculture in being economically sustainable, but relationships of trust, food safety and food security are also important considerations. For more details see <http://www.niagaralocalfoodcoop.ca/>

Niagara Local Food Action Plan

Developed by the Niagara Region, this strategy document was developed following the regional council's 2008 decision to take a proactive role and ramp up purchases of local food. The purpose of the plan is to provide “potential solutions to many problems that farmers are facing through the creation of stable and reliable markets for Niagara producers; safe and secure food supply of consumers; economic development through

local markets; and opportunities to enhance wine and culinary tourism in the region,” the Region's website explains.

Project partners included Vineland Research and Innovation Centre as well as the Niagara Culinary Trail. For more information visit:

<http://www.niagararegion.ca/government/initiatives/lfap/about-local-food-action-plan.aspx>

Sexsmith Farm Co-operative (SFC)

(With information from John Blackwell, SFC)

Established in March 2011, the co-op formed to merge two existing CSA programs in Fort Erie, which serve clients in Fort Erie, Port Colborne, Welland, Niagara Falls, Thorold and St. Catharines. It is a community of farmers whose mission is to cultivate a secure, sustainable food production and distribution system rooted in Niagara. The co-op incorporated as a Farming and Supply Co-operative with Share Capital under the Ontario Co-operative Corporations Act. SFC also works in partnership with a number of other local farms (a tender fruit producer in Niagara-on-the-Lake, for example), though these partnerships have not been formalized by Co-op membership yet. The distribution takes place through the CSA program, as well as two local farmers' markets and the Niagara Local Food Co-op.

When the original Sexsmith Farm operated its CSA program alone, its membership doubled each year, so now with the larger production and shared risks, the co-op is a very promising venture. For more information contact sexsmithcsa@gmail.com

Niagara Culinary Trail (NCT)

This extensive project is the information hub for local food and culinary tourism in the Niagara Region. The initiative has produced a map, a culinary tour guide, cookbooks, and a website rich in information about local food. Intended to benefit the local economy, NCT materials also note the importance of healthy and fresh food, taste, community building, knowing where one's food comes from, and benefits to the environment.

NCT is a member of the Niagara Original regional branding program and the Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance. NCT was initiated in 2008 by the Niagara Environmental Food Alliance, which is in turn supported by Niagara Peninsula Community Resource Centre and the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation. NCT currently has nearly 100 members, including farms, markets, wineries, restaurants, bakeries, and so on. More information can be found at <http://niagaraculinarytrail.com/>

NORFOLK COUNTY

Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS)

(With information from Bryan Gilvesy, Y U Ranch, Tillsonburg)

Norfolk ALUS's website describes the program as follows: “The Norfolk Alternative Land Use Services ... is a voluntary, incentive based project... providing payments to

farmers for returning marginal, environmentally sensitive, or inefficient farmland into native vegetative cover and wetlands.”

Modelled on the concept developed in the Blanshard Manitoba ALUS pilot, the project provides payments to farmers in exchange for ecological services. It has nearly a hundred participating farms, several of them also serving as demonstration sites. The idea is that farmers can be enabled to make ecologically sound farm decisions if they are given financial incentives and know that such a decision would not put their business in jeopardy. Bryan Gilvesy, whose Y U Ranch is one of the demonstration farms, explains: “We want to get to a place where we can provide ecological services and produce food on the same land. We can get many of the ecological benefits from working land... The more we can fold these things into the way we farm and reward farmers with real money for doing these things... the faster we can become sustainable.”

In essence, ALUS participants commit to undertaking some ecological service activity – they either take some land out of production or provide other ecological services along with continued farm use – and others, for instance corporate entities, compensate them for that service. In short, participating farmers provide ecological services, ALUS organization markets their ecological credits to corporations, organizations and individuals, and those entities who agree to buy the credits in turn fund the whole enterprise. Gilvesy compared this to carbon trading, but encompassing a larger suite of ecological function than simply the sequestration of carbon.

Gilvesy explained that participation in the program was as at first a one-way street for farmers, but now participants also use it as a marketing and production tool, enhancing the contribution of nature to their farming activity, and adding marketing lustre to the way their food is produced. Partners in the project are numerous. 21 funding partners funded the initial pilot program. The project is now permanent and ALUS is now supported by several groups including the W. Garfield Weston Foundation, the George Cedric Metcalf Foundation and Delta Waterfowl Foundation. Working collaborations exist with various organizations such as Local Food Plus, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Bird Studies Canada, Ontario Nature, Long Point Regional Conservation Authority, OMAFRA, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. More information can be found at <http://www.norfolkalus.com/>

Direct from Norfolk

(With information from Nick Kinkel, OMAFRA – Norfolk, Haldimand, and Brant; and Cindy Vanderstar, Norfolk Tourism and Economic Development)

Branding Norfolk County as “Ontario's Garden” this initiative was developed by Norfolk's Tourism and Economic Development Division. It encompasses a website with a local food directory, a local food map, local recipe book, an annual Flavour Fest, and other local food and wine promotions as well as culinary tourism marketing. The county is rooted in agriculture and in recent years has been creating opportunity out of the loss of tobacco markets. The richness and diversity of food production make food the perfect vehicle to promote the area. While primarily interested in economic development, the

initiative also considers innovation, health, taste, and environment as playing a role in local food and culinary tourism.

More information is available at <http://www.norfolkfarms.com/>

Province-Wide Initiatives

Irena Knezevic

Foodland Ontario

Foodland Ontario is a branding program supported by the Ontario Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Rural Affairs, and established in 1977. The program includes recognizable slogans, such as “Good things grow in Ontario,” a logo, and ongoing marketing campaigns. As its website explains, Foodland Ontario “identifies and promotes Ontario foods in grocery stores through the distribution of point-of-purchase material and in-store promotions to 1,200 stores across the province.” The program is also present in farmers' markets.

Foodland Ontario boasts 94% brand recognition in the province, and its promotional materials include recipes, seasonality information, nutritional information, and other educational materials for consumers. The program also includes the Foodland Ontario Retailer Awards, which recognize retailers who contribute to promotion of Ontario foods in notable and innovative ways.

For more information visit <http://www.foodland.gov.on.ca>

Ontariofresh

(With information from Franco Naccarato)

Ontariofresh.ca is a free website and online community that is being created to expand the market for buyers and sellers of local Ontario food. The goal of the site is to create connections across the food service value chain, linking bulk buyers, chefs, restaurants, caterers and distributors with growers and producers.

The Ontariofresh.ca website is designed as a support to the Broader Public Sector Investment Fund, a granting program which aims to get more Ontario food into our public institutions, although it is not exclusively dedicated to this purpose. It will be a business-to-business (B2B) website, so the focus will not be on consumers, but instead to assist Ontario growers and producers tap into large lucrative markets close to home. Since advanced registration began, Ontariofresh.ca has seen steady growth in the number of registrants from hospitals to major food service providers to large and smaller scale producers alike. The whole idea is to provide an easy and accessible way for buyers to connect with producers that meet their needs, and vice versa.

The information collected on the Ontariofresh.ca site will help to populate it with four profile types: grower/producers, buyers, distributors and friends/supporters. Registration is easy, and will address questions such as location and distance, farm practice, availability, traceability and more. Other key features include the advanced search

functionality and the Marketplace, in which buyers and sellers can make up-to-the-minute requests or offers for products, putting their business front and centre on the website.

There is a huge amount of potential for Ontariofresh.ca to serve as a tool for the food value chain to communicate, network and coordinate for the benefit of everyone involved. As administrators of the project, the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation will be actively engaging the users of the site right out of the gate to identify new opportunities and take suggestions.

For more information or to sign up, go to <http://www.ontariofresh.ca> or call Megan Hunter, Communications Manager at 416-960-0001 x 315.

Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance (OCTA)

(With information from Rebecca LeHeup)

Initiated by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism with support from OMAFRA, OCTA's purpose is to roll out Ontario's 10-year Culinary Tourism Strategy created in 2005 (there is now a revised 2011-2015 strategy), which aims to support the tourism industry alongside Ontario's food and beverage producers. Guided by a Board of Directors and relying on a variety of grants, OCTA works on promoting Ontario as a culinary destination and is currently working with over 35 local destinations in the province. Their membership includes farmers, winemakers, restauranteurs, accommodations' businesses, producers' associations and so on.

Achieving and maintaining economic sustainability for producers and tourism service providers is the foundation that underpins OCTA's work, but that work also encompasses working towards safe and secure foods system, healthy environment, and vibrant communities. The Executive Director of OCTA, Rebecca LeHeup, comes to her position with a great deal of experience and a track record of success in promoting Prince Edward County as a culinary destination through organizing food and wine events, and developing the Prince Edward County Taste Trail. However, LeHeup is apprehensive about taking credit for OCTA's success to date, indicating that the province-wide momentum around local food has cleared much of the way for OCTA's success. LeHeup encourages better and more multifaceted collaborations across sectors and locations, and applauds the work of other initiatives. In particular, she highlighted the work of Savour Ottawa in creating a space for collaboration across sectors, and the efforts of of Sustain Ontario, especially for their ability to bring the various players together at the Bring Food Home conferences.

OCTA's work also includes developing toolkits and culinary tourism best practices, some of which are only available to members, while others are accessible to the public such as the guide to culinary trails and a research report on local food distribution in Ontario (in collaboration with Sustain Ontario). For more information visit <http://ontarioculinary.com/>

Sustain Ontario: An Alliance for Healthy Food and Farming

(With information from Ravenna Nuaimy-Barker)

Officially launched in January 2009, Sustain Ontario developed from two years of province-wide consultations initiated and facilitated by the Metcalf Foundation. The consultations identified the need to create a group that would link the various initiatives in Ontario, provide space for dialogue, and do some of the research and advocacy work needed at this time. Somewhat modelled on Sustain UK (<http://www.sustainweb.org/>), Sustain Ontario is a non-profit organization and its website describes it as:

...a province-wide, cross-sectoral alliance that promotes healthy food and farming. Sustain Ontario takes a collaborative approach to research, policy development and action by addressing the intersecting issues related to healthy food and local sustainable agriculture. Sustain Ontario is working towards a food system that is healthy, ecological, equitable and financially viable.

Based on the constellation model (see socialinnovation.ca/blog/constellation-model-of-collaborative-social-change), the organization now has over 275 members and is a project of Tides Canada. Additional support is garnered from Metcalf Foundation, the Trillium Foundation, and Heart and Stroke Foundation, as well as Friends of the Greenbelt, Hypenotic, and Carrot Cache.

Sustain Ontario's main role is to convene the participating partners and promote province-wide conversations. Hence, its Bring Food Home conference (<http://bringfoodhome.com/>) is a key activity. There are two full time staff (the executive director and the program coordinator), with additional part time and temporary staff who work on specific projects. There is also substantial volunteer and student intern support, as well as a steering committee and an advisory council for guidance.

Sustain Ontario's mandate is multifaceted and Nuaimy-Barker emphasized the importance of holistic understandings of food and food systems. She indicated that one of Sustain Ontario's roles was to help build capacity across the province, share good examples, and assist communities in finding local solutions. She emphasized that Ontario needs food hubs that are designed locally and grounded in local realities. Sustain Ontario can help with the design process but not the type of design as their role is not to prescribe solutions. However, Nuaimy-Barker did underscore the importance of creating physical infrastructure in conjunction with informational and relational infrastructure.

Nuaimy-Barker indicated that the largest barrier to local food had to do with global markets and global trade, including subsidies and world-wide policy. In Ontario, this is compounded by many local and provincial policies that limit the growth of local and sustainable food systems. More attention needs to be given to ways in which policies and practice can support small-scale, local, sustainable production.

For more information visit <http://sustainontario.com/>

Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers (OGVG)

OGVG is a lobbying and research group representing over 200 producers with some 2000 acres of greenhouse production (tomatoes, peppers, and cucumbers).

OGVG has been supportive of local food branding campaigns, but their focus is on Ontario food and they are hence very supportive of Foodland Ontario branding. Most of their collaborations are with Foodland Ontario and OGVG has benefited from that branding. Because they depend so much on exports (70% of what is produced by OGVG members is produced for export, mainly to the United States), they also promote their produce as local in Michigan. They are careful in how they approach local because of the diverse interests at stake, but they would like to be able to see more OGVG produce marketed and sold in the province. OGVG is hoping to get into the province's food service market more aggressively and perhaps take advantage of the Broader Public Sector Fund.

Despite being a large entity and representing some large producers, OGVG encounters barriers in the food system, such as competition from cheap imports and public misunderstandings around food scares. Sometimes, the barriers are of small, technical nature – for instance, the food service industry is not very favourable to OGVG tomatoes as their slicing machines are actually designed for a different type of tomato.

OGVG website can be found at <http://www.ontariogreenhouse.com/>

Nutrition Resource Centre (NRC) and Community Food Advisor (CFA) program

(With information from Elizabeth Smith)

The NRC is an Ontario Public Health Association initiative supported by funding from the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport. Their programs include CFA, Eat Smart® (certification program for public spaces and work environments that offer healthy food choices), NutriSTEP® (nutrition screening for every preschooler), Colour it Up (promotion of higher vegetable and fruit intake), and production of a variety of educational materials. The programs do not have a mandate to promote local food, although Colour it Up pays attention to seasonality and also works on introducing new immigrants to local fruit and vegetables and way to consume/prepare them.

CFA is a train-the-trainer program offered by 14 health units across the province. The health units recruit volunteers who then receive 40 hours of training on nutritional information, cooking skills, and budgeting. In 2010, the program had over 350 CFAs in the province. Although local food is not in the mandate of the program, the CFAs are themselves taking on the local food cause. Many of them are heavily involved with community gardens and such. Some of the material also promotes local food and seasonality. As a result, the CFA program has inadvertently become a program that also promotes local food initiatives and can help strengthen communities' food systems by supporting community gardens and kitchens, promoting local and seasonal foods, and teaching the valuable food skills to local populations.

Elizabeth Smith, the Registered Dietician who coordinates CFA provincially, indicated that, in her opinion, Registered Dieticians and Public Health Nutritionists have some professional responsibility to include food security and food access issues in their work. She also felt that price and convenience were still driving much of the food economy and that educational programs like those offered through the CFA initiative can really be helpful in relocalizing the food system through teaching the importance of fresh food that is safe and nutritious. Smith also identified food-related programs as excellent entry points for other things – for example, she explained that nutritional programs for newcomers can also be a venue to raise awareness about other programs available to new Canadians. She thus thought that food hubs can easily double up as community centres. She also felt that the use of co-ops and CSAs has not been fully realized and that there was still much potential in that.

For more information go to <http://www.communityfoodadvisor.ca/> and <http://www.nutritionrc.ca/>