

Building Just and Sustainable Local Food Systems

- Presented by Mark Winne, author of “Closing the Food Gap: Resetting the Table in the Land of Plenty” (Beacon Press).
- Director of the Community Food Security Coalition’s Food Policy Council Project – www.foodsecurity.org
- Contact information: Mark Winne, 41 Arroyo Hondo Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87508; mark@foodsecurity.org; (505) 983-3047; www.markwinne.com.

Favorite Quote

All you need in this life is ignorance and confidence – success is sure to follow.

- Mark Twain

Food Issues that can typically be addressed at the local and state levels:

- Access to healthy and affordable food, especially in lower income communities
- Loss of farm and ranch land
- High rates of hunger and food insecurity (now at 12% nationwide)
- High rates of overweight and obesity (now over 60% nationwide)
- High rates of diabetes, especially among children
- Lack of public transportation
- Limited nutrition education in public schools
- Low farm prices and limited access to markets for farmers

The “3-Ps” of Developing Just and Sustainable Local Food Systems:

- **Projects:** The programs, activities, businesses, and services that make up local food systems
- **Partnerships:** methods of cooperation, e.g. coalitions, that are formed to accomplish something that no single entity can accomplish alone
- **Policies:** the action and in-actions of government at levels that influence the supply, quality, price, production, distribution, purchase, and consumption of food

Local Food Organizations, Projects, Services, and Strategies

- Non-profit organizations – farmers' markets, CSAs, youth and community gardens, urban agriculture (Milwaukee – Growing Power)
- Community Development – supermarket development, new farm enterprises and value-added, healthy corner stores (Philadelphia – Food Trust – Fresh Food Financing Initiative)
- Anti-hunger projects: Food banks, food pantries, soup kitchens, and anti-hunger advocacy (Oregon Food Bank)
- Government programs and services: SNAP (food stamps), WIC, obesity reduction/prevention, farmland preservation, conservation
- School nutrition: School lunch, breakfast, farm-to-school (Farm to School Network – 9,000 schools nationwide)

LFOs, Projects, Services, and Strategies, cont'd

- Private and market-based enterprises (food stores, farms, processors) – Value-Chains, Leopold Center (Iowa State University)
- Education: food, cooking, and nutrition education – in schools and through non-profit organizations (Austin, TX – Sustainable Food Center, Happy Kitchen Program)
- Empowerment: Leadership development, community ownership (Oakland, CA, People's Grocery)
- Food Production, local foods market development, urban agriculture, institutional purchasing, local policy (Cleveland – City Fresh – City of Cleveland)

Partnerships?

It's Good to Know What You Are

- Partnerships
- Networks
- Task Force
- Coalition
- Working Group
- Collaborative
- Council
- Questions to consider: Convened under whose auspices, governance, expectations, timelines, leadership, membership, diversity, funding

Types of Networks

(special thanks to Rich Pirog, Leopold Center, Iowa State U.)

- **Cooperating:** Low risk to members; little chance of systems change; can model best practices, test ideas, convene problem-solving sessions
- **Coordinating:** Low to moderate risk; better chance of systems change; can push organizational boundaries; engage in activities requiring greater mutual reliance
- **Collaborating:** Moderate to high risk to members; best chance of systems change; methods in place to resolve conflicts; pursuing long-term system creation; radical shifts from past operations

Policy

Food Policy Councils** Complement and Extend the Work of Government Agencies and Private Sector Organizations

(** Sometimes called networks, systems, and partnerships)

- No state or local government has a “Department of Food”
- Food Policy Councils can be a de facto Department of Food
- Their membership is comprised of representatives from a given area’s food system: government, academic, for-profit and non-profit
- They bring together many government functions to create a more singular and coordinated approach to food, nutrition, and agriculture, e.g. planning, human services, education, health, and econ. dev.
- They serve as a food system planning venue, e.g. incorporate nutritional health concerns and availability of quality, affordable food outlets into a city’s plan of development

FPCs Work within Existing Governmental Frameworks

- How are public resources allocated to food and nutrition needs?
- Are regulations appropriate to the public's food and farm needs?
- Do management practices promote high performance among food assistance programs, such as food stamps, WIC, and School Meals, that are administered at the local, county and state levels?
- Are public education and awareness programs in place, e.g. obesity prevention?
- Note: Sometimes work across (synergistically) government lines, e.g. a federal food program that's administered by the state and whose services are delivered by a local agency

Indicators of Community Food Security**

- Access to convenient sources of healthy and affordable food
- Adequate transportation to secure healthy and affordable food
- Financial means to purchase healthy food
- Well-functioning food safety net: SNAP, WIC, School Meals, food banks
- Available natural resources: farmland, garden land, and water
- Food education and information are available
- Access to food system policymakers (food democracy)

**Community Food Security is a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice

A Community Food Assessment is a Good Place to Start

- CFA is a collaborative and participatory process that examines a broad range of community food issues and assets in order to inform program and policy actions and improve the community's food security

Or, to Put it Another Way:

- If you don't understand the problem, you won't get the right answer
- Example: We are losing farmland because of...
 - Development?
 - Aging farmers?
 - Not enough new farmers?
 - High taxes?
 - Changing markets?
 - Ineffective policies?

Sample CFA Tools:

- *What's Cooking in Your Food System* available at www.foodsecurity.org.
- Students, interns, college and university faculty
- Government agencies
- Neighborhood surveys (Fresno, CA; Portland, OR)
- GIS Mapping, food store surveys, focus groups (New Mexico)
- Transportation studies (Hartford, CT)
- Public opinion surveys (Connecticut)
- Results presented through forums, white papers, press conferences, and public testimony

How Are FPCs Organized?

- Some are created by local ordinance or resolution (Hartford, CT and Knoxville, TN)
- Some are established by executive order (states of Iowa, New York and Michigan)
- Some are self-organized and operate under the umbrella of an existing non-profit organization with active, albeit voluntary participation of government agencies (New Mexico, Colorado)
- Some FPCs are cross-jurisdictional (Santa Fe City/County, NM and Portland/Multnomah, OR)
- Approximately 100 FPCs have been organized at the local, county, regional, and state levels in the last 15 years

General Purposes of FPCs

- Advise government on food policies
- Link economic development, health, human services, education, agricultural and environmental concerns
- Review and comment on proposed legislation, regulations and budgets
- Conduct research, data gathering, assessments, and public education
- Provide a public forum for the consideration of food system issues

Sample Food Policies and FPC Actions

- Promote local school wellness policies
- Develop strategies to purchase more locally produced food for schools and other public institutions
- Provide land for farmers' markets, supermarkets, and community gardens
- Invest in the development of new food stores
- Provide sales and property tax exemptions for new supermarkets in underserved communities
- Develop school nutrition standards that promote healthy eating

More Policies and Actions

- Assess public transportation and ensure that it serves transit-dependent food shoppers and communities
- Monitor the performance of and recommend improvements in food assistance programs: food stamps, WIC, and School Nutrition
- Protect farmland and enhance the viability of farming
- Work to include food, nutrition, and farming-related issues in local and regional planning
- Conduct small food store healthy food campaigns
- Monitor food prices to ensure that prices are roughly equal across region
- Support other efforts that promote healthy living and reduce poverty

Fresno, California

- Leadership: Fresno Metro Ministries (www.fresnometroministry.org)
- Organizational Type: Within county government with strong public/private partnership
- Research: Conducted Community Food Assessment - basis for future work
- Community Participation and Education: Held monthly Community Hunger and Nutrition Forums that continued community's food system education
- Big Break: CA Endowment Funding supported "Get Fit Fresno Policy Council" under auspices of several Fresno-area county public health departments
- Champions: Engaged county health departments and city planning staff
- Issues and Outcomes: 1) Changed city zoning regulations to permit farmers' markets in city limits; now leading to establishment of markets in underserved neighborhoods; 2) 5-acre community garden (site of immigrant farmer training) threatened by takeover of city for new police station – the food policy network is vigorously opposing this.

Chicago Food Policy Advisory Council

- Origins: Grows of Illinois Food Security Summit in 2002; CFPAC (www.chicagofoodpolicy.org) grows out of Chicago Food Systems Roundtable
- Organizational Type: Free-standing with strong ties to city gov't
- Leadership: Heifer International, Growing Power, and Sustain
- Research: Community Food Assessment which is followed by a series of independent (private and university) studies on food access, land use, and urban agriculture; inventory of city government's food-related functions
- Community Participation and Education: CFPAC holds open quarterly meetings and annual summits that have been attended by 300 annually
- Big Break: Mayor Daley creates Chicago Organic Task Force under auspices of city planning and environment departments
- Champions: Private organizations, city planners, Chicago Community Trust
- Issues and Outcomes: Established 15-member private/public leadership committee; successfully advocate for Illinois State Food Policy; successfully fought city plan to ban raising chickens

State Food Policy: NM Food & Agriculture Policy Council; CT FPC

- Origins: Both FPCs were formed after two years of organizing and research
- Organizational Type: NM's is independent, but has strong ties to individuals within state gov't; CT's was created by a state statute, members are designated by statute and appointed by legislative leadership
- Leadership: NM staffed by Farm to Table (www.farmtotablenm.org/policy); CT FPC by the Hartford Food System (www.hartfordfood.org).
- Research: community food assessments, inventory of state gov't, community forums, white papers, on-going research and reports on special topics
- Community Participation and Education: Prepared booklets about their food systems, and contained policy recommendations
- Big Break: NM – passage of resolution encouraging state agencies to participate; CT – forum on farmland loss that ignited public attention
- Champion: NM – Sec., NM Agriculture; CT – Chair, Leg. Planning Comm.
- Issues and Outcomes: School nutrition rules, funding for farmland preservation and farm enhancement, farm-to-school funding

Lessons Learned

- Relationships count, cultivate them
- Be inclusive of a wide range of food systems interests
- Conflict – work on consensus and foster a climate of robust debate and trust (remember: “Everyone takes sides in social change if it is profound enough”)
- Educate the public and policy makers about concepts like food security, sustainability, justice, food systems, and food policy
- Public education and information gathering are powerful tools – you should be regarded as a body of experts
- Look for synergy in policy issues between all levels of government

AND...

Don't worry...it will take 20 years.

Resources

- Community Food Security Coalition/Food Policy Council Project: Mark Winne, (505) 983-3047; mark@foodsecurity.org; www.foodpolicycouncil.net.
- Connecticut Food Policy Council (Linda Drake), www.foodpc.state.ct.us
- Planners Commissioner Journal, No.63, Summer 2006; www.plannersweb.com
- Progressive Planning, (No. 158, Winter 2004); www.plannersnetwork.org
- New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council (Pam Roy – (505) 473-1004); www.farmtotable.info
- Dane County Food Policy Council (Madison, WI); www.countyofdane.com/foodcouncil
- National Association of Counties – “Counties and Local Food Systems.” www.naco.org
- Portland-Multnomah FPC: Matt Emlen (503) 823-7224; mattemlen@ci.portland.or.us

