

VISION

We envision a
thriving
economy, equity
and
sustainability for
all of Michigan
and its people
through a food
system rooted in
local
communities and
centered on
good food.



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Northwest Michigan Launches Project to Promote “Food Innovation Districts”

by Patty Cantrell, Regional Food Solutions

Planning and economic development toolkit will support communities statewide.

TRAVERSE CITY — When economic historians look back at the origins of industries — whether California semiconductors or Michigan wineries — they often find that a group of entrepreneurs with similar ideas and values started working together, even as they competed, to build new products and markets.

Michigan’s emerging local and regional food sector is just such an industry in formation. Like-minded businesses are sharing information at farmers markets, partnering on events and retail promotion, and designing regional “food hub” facilities for common storage, packing, and distribution needs.

Beginning in January 2012, the [Northwest Michigan Council of Governments](#) (NWMCOG), in cooperation with the [C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at MSU](#), will prepare a toolkit

that communities statewide can use to recognize and support such business collaboration and innovation. With funding from [USDA-Rural Development](#), NWMCOG will examine the range of planning, zoning, and economic development strategies involved in establishing business districts to encourage food and farm innovation, or “food innovation districts.”

“This is where we can add real value to the extensive work many others are already doing to build Michigan’s regional food economies,” says Matt McCauley, NWMCOG Director for Regional Planning and Community Development.

With expertise in land use planning and economic development, the NWMCOG is in good position to work through potential questions, considerations, and implementation steps of developing food innovation districts, such as zoning tools or economic development incentives to use.

Continued on page 2.

2020 GOALS

- Michigan institutions sourcing 20% of their food from Michigan
- Michigan farmers profitably supplying 20% of Michigan markets
- Generating new agri-food businesses
- 80% of Michigan residents having access to good food
- All Michigan schools meeting nutrition standards
- Michigan schools incorporating food and agriculture into preK-12 curricula



Food Innovation Districts cont.

Eastern Market Corporation
Copyright Eastern Market Corporation 2011

[Detroit's Eastern Market](#) is an example of a food innovation district. Over its 120 years, Eastern Market has been a hub of food retail and wholesale activity. Not only do shoppers and farmers get to know each other, but retail and food processing businesses located in and around the district also work with the farmers and each other to develop products and pursue market opportunities.

Eastern Market is now adding activities and services, such as a food business incubator, nutrition education, and an on-site urban farm to further revitalize both its midtown Detroit neighborhood and southeast Michigan's regional food economy.

"NWMCOG's food innovation district project will help more Michigan communities set up their own versions of Eastern Market, where food and farm entrepreneurs, as well as customers and suppliers, can cluster and collaborate," said project consultant Patty Cantrell of [Regional Food Solutions LLC](#).

Developing such a food innovation district guide for local officials is one of 25 recommendations in the Michigan Good Food Charter, a statewide policy platform. The Charter focuses on the

economic, environmental, and social benefits that can come from Michigan sourcing 20 percent of its food from local farms and food businesses by 2020.

The NWMCOG will consult with communities in its 10-county region from Manistee County to the Mackinac Bridge about food and farm initiatives in process or in mind. Examples range from redevelopment of commercial property for smaller scale food processing and food retail to community centers adding nutrition education and other resources, such as licensed kitchen space for public cooking classes and startup entrepreneurs.

"With this on-the-ground input, the NWMCOG will further research state and national models for insights on food innovation district development," said project partner Kathryn Colasanti, academic specialist with the C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at MSU.

The final outcome will be a useful package of information about food innovation districts – what they look like and what they do – and different ways that communities can establish and encourage them. ■



New Farm & Food Action Council Kicks off in Clinton County

by Amber Shinn
Shinn Marketing Communications

The newly-formed Farm & Food Action Council of Southern Clinton County approved their structure and bylaws on October 25, 2011, with a mission to serve as a catalyst for opportunities and partnerships that support healthy food from the farm to the plate.

Building on Bath Charter Township's existing partnership program with neighbor communities Dewitt Charter Township, Watertown Charter Township and the City of Dewitt, the Food & Farm Action Council quickly engaged more than 150 community members directly on food issues and developed an even larger list of supporters, growers, parents, educators, businesses and consumers throughout the region.

Through public meetings and focus groups during 2011, four issues were found to be most important to the communities involved: farm to school, community gardens and healthy food access, community kitchens, and marketing and distribution of local foods. Committees formed around each issue, and now meet regularly to develop action plans for making changes in 2012.

A common feature of Farm & Food Action Council meetings and events are the strong networking and community-building opportunities. This has been important to garnering group support and to providing immediate value for attendees, even during brainstorming and discussion sessions. For example, simply putting producers and buyers in the same room creates business arrangements that help the local food system grow.

The Farm & Food Action Council's main goal is to create an environment where all people have access to locally grown and produced food, and quality growers and producers are able to thrive. Long term success will be proven by the group's progress on the four main issues, continued service as a useful sounding board for ideas, and an effective platform for action.

For more information, contact Jeff Garrity at jgarrity@bathtownship.us. ■

SUPPORTERS

Individuals recently signing the Resolution of Support include:

- Jomie in Schoolcraft, MI (Oct 12, 2011)
- Melville in Davison, MI (Oct 14, 2011)

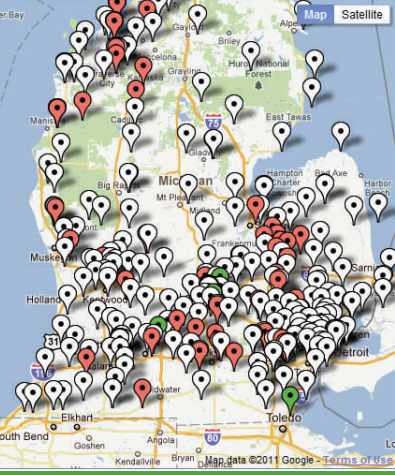
You can sign too at www.michiganfood.org!

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

Want to share what's happening in your community around local food systems?

We welcome your contributions to the newsletter!

Email Kathryn Colasanti at colokat@msu.edu



New Tools for Good Food Networking

The Michigan Good Food website has a new map and timeline showing the evolution and activity of the good food movement.

Have you been to www.michiganfood.org lately? If not, check out the “[Good Food in Michigan](#)” page for two new tools to help all of us learn more about what’s going on across the state.

Michigan Map

A Google-based [map of Michigan](#) shows where activities are taking place that relate to the six goals of the charter:

- Institutions source food from Michigan—where schools, colleges, hospitals or other institutions are located that are purchasing Michigan food.
- Farmers can sell in Michigan profitably—initiatives that provide farm and farm worker support.
- New agrifood businesses are created—locations of new food supply chain businesses.
- Residents have access to good food—locations of access points like farmers markets or healthy corner stores and initiatives to increase food access.

- Schools meet Michigan Nutrition Standards—locations of K-12 schools that have implemented these standards.
- Youth have food and ag school curricula and entrepreneurial opportunities—locations of schools that incorporate food and ag into their curricula and initiatives to promote youth food and ag opportunities.

National Good Food Timeline

An [interactive timeline](#) shows when good-food related events occurred, organizations formed or new programs began, helping to show how this movement has grown and continues to grow.

You can click on map locations and timeline events to learn more and find organization links.

Help us add to the map and timeline by adding your own events and locations! All you have to do is [login](#) to the website and then click on “create event” or “create location”! ■

New Good Food Map at www.michiganfood.org!

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Michigan Good Food is a policy initiative centered on the Michigan Good Food Charter, which was developed with input from hundreds of people across Michigan. The C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at MSU supports and disseminates communications around the charter.



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