

Building a Better Food System in Southeastern Michigan

Food System Economic Partnership



Jennifer Fike, Project Manager

www.fsepmichigan.org

What is FSEP?

A collaborative, non-profit organization working to build a better food system in southeastern Michigan.

FSEP Mission

FSEP exists to catalyze change in the food system of southeastern Michigan.

We provide research, education and outreach with urban and rural partnerships, resulting in agricultural development opportunities, sustainable communities and healthy local economies.



Five County Partnership in Southeastern Michigan

- Jackson
- Lenawee
- Monroe
- Washtenaw
- Wayne



The Beginning....

FSEP actually grew out of the remarks of one local farmer.

"Something needs to change in the agricultural economy or we'll all go out of business". (Chuck Koenn, 1999)



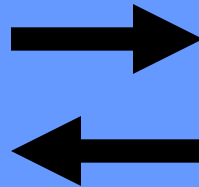
Regional Approach to the Food System

Food system is made up of agriculture from rural areas and cluster industries and markets in the urban areas.

RURAL



URBAN



Benefits from a Regional Approach

Urban

- **Business development**
- **Job creation**
- **Reduce chronic unemployment**
- **Increase consumer access to local foods**
- **Reduce sprawl**
- **Reuse of older buildings**
- **Neighborhood development and revitalization**

Rural

- **Strengthen farm businesses**
- **Increase agricultural viability**
- **Preserve rural quality of life**
- **Reduce development pressures on farmland**
- **Increase opportunities for farmland preservation**

← **More efficient use of regional infrastructure** →



What is a Local Food System

- Supports **long-term connections** between farmers and consumers
- Meets economic, social, health, and environmental needs
- Links producers and markets via **locally-focused infrastructure**
- Promotes **environmental health**
- Provides **competitive advantage** to local food businesses
- Celebrates region's **culture, history, and ecology**
- Equitably share **risks and rewards**

(Source: Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture)

FSEP Leadership Team Representation

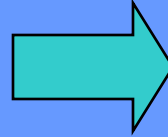
- Agriculture
- Community Organizations
- Food Businesses
- Resource Providers
- County Government



FSEP Committees

- Business Innovation and Networking
- Education and Outreach
- Research and Development
- Farm to School





Farm to School

....or College or Cafeteria or Institution



Farm to School

- Happening on National and International Scale
- Grass Roots Movement
- We have the possibility here in SE MI to do Farm to School in a powerful way on par with leading national examples.



Farm to School Components

- Broad umbrella that may incorporate a number of related components:
 - Healthy Local Food in School Meals
 - Schoolyard Food Production and Gardening
 - Curricular Integration of Food and Agriculture
 - Health, Food, Cooking, Nutrition Education
 - Visits to Local Farms
 - Farmer Visits to Local Schools



Positive Outcomes of Farm to School

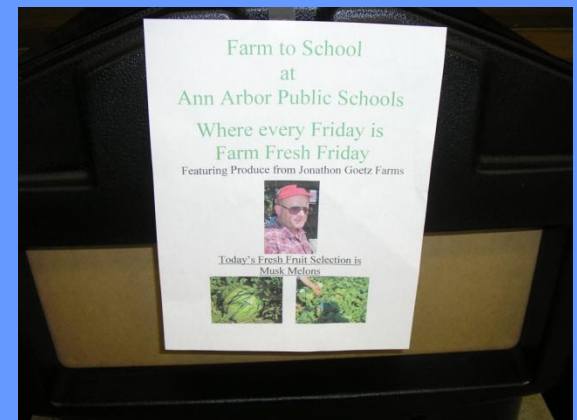
- Increased consumption of fresh healthy foods at school
- Increased awareness of local food and farming and its impacts on health, community, economy and environment
- Increased participation in school lunch program
- Enriched educational experiences
- Education and experience that motivates children towards healthier eating habits that will last a lifetime
- Increase in local markets for local farm goods
- Increased support, connectivity, mutual benefit between farm and non-farm community

FSEP Farm To School Program

- Approach: Relationships, No “Right” Way, Community Based
 - Form Farm to School Collaborations with a handful of SE MI school districts and community organizations to implement Farm to School programs.
 - Help develop local food infrastructure for Farm to School

2007-08 Pilot Projects

- Ann Arbor Public Schools
 - Large (30 schools), urban, contracted food service
 - Ann Arbor Farm to School Collaboration includes the schools, Chartwells Food Service, The Agrarian Adventure, Project Healthy Schools, Washtenaw County Health Department, Ann Arbor Farmers Market, Food System Economic Partnership
- Pilot Program Initiatives
 - Farm Fresh Fridays
 - Farm Fresh Food in the Classroom



2007-08 Pilot Projects

- Chelsea Public Schools
 - Small (6 schools), rural, self-operated food service
 - Partner is Move Forward, a community nonprofit providing nutrition education in some of the schools
- Current Initiatives
 - Farm Day
 - Food of the Month



2007-08 Pilot Projects

- The Henry Ford Academy
 - Charter high school in Dearborn affiliated with The Henry Ford with food provided by their food service department.
- Initiatives
 - Ongoing use of several local products
 - Posters for the dining area
 - Surveys, interviews with students



Future Plans

- Continue to implement and document pilot programs
- Prepare a toolkit of tested farm to school program components for other schools in SE Michigan
- Create application process for interested Jackson County schools
- Implement program in Jackson County in 2008-09 school year

2008-09 Farm to School



- Created toolkit of farm to school program components
- Created application process for interested schools
- Jackson and Wayne County Expansion
- Continue providing technical assistance to pilot schools as needed

To learn more:

- Visit our web site at:
www.fsepmichigan.org

