



Preventive Medicine Health Policy Symposium

Sustainable Food Systems: Policy Challenges & Opportunities

March 2, 2012

Summary of event

This is one in a series of quarterly symposia on timely health policy topics, sponsored by the OHSU Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, the OHSU Preventive Medicine Residency Program, and the Portland State University, Mark O. Hatfield School of Government through a training grant from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration. We also have additional support for this event from the Portland State University, Institute for Sustainable Solutions and the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation.

The symposium consisted of opening comments by facilitator Sherril Gelmon, DrPH, Chair, Division of Public Administration and Professor of Public Health Portland State University, followed by one hour in plenary, an hour in small group discussions, and then about an hour of reporting and discussion about a “call to action” for individuals to get involved in food policy work. The plenary began with two overviews on food policy, public health, and sustainability, provided by Jennifer H. Allen, PhD, Interim Director, Institute for Sustainable Solutions and Associate Professor of Public Administration, Portland State University and Betty Izumi, PhD, MPH, RD, Assistant Professor of Community Health, Portland State. This was followed by brief provocative overviews in each of 6 topic areas, provided by a variety of experts in the field of Food Policy. The small group discussions were facilitated by a Preventive Medicine resident/Public Health student, and included one of the 6 experts in addition to symposium participants with a wide variety of backgrounds and expertise. The facilitators of each small group then summarized the discussion, and provided this summary back to the larger group for further discussion.

This document is a summary of the information provided by our speakers and experts, as well as a brief summary of the discussion and “calls to action” generated in each small group. The final page includes information about our sponsors, as well as Internet links to information that may be helpful should one choose to investigate these topics further.

Table of Contents

(Hyperlinked to section within text)

Summary of Plenary Session	2
<i>Speaker:</i> Jennifer H. Allen, PhD, Interim Director, Institute for Sustainable Solutions and Associate Professor of Public Administration, Portland State University	2
<i>Speaker:</i> Betty Izumi, PhD, MPH, RD, Assistant Professor of Community Health, Portland State University	3
Summaries of break-out groups	5
1. Food Justice: Exploring the Dynamics of Hunger and Community Food Security	5
<i>Speaker/expert:</i> Shawn DeCarlo, Metro Services Manager, Oregon Food Bank	5
<i>Facilitator:</i> Jennifer Gilbert, MD, MPH, Preventive Medicine Resident, OHSU.....	6
2. Implications of the Farm Bill for Food & Health Policy	6
<i>Speaker/expert:</i> Andy Fisher, MA, Co-founder, Community Food Security Coalition.....	6
<i>Facilitator:</i> Matthew E. Dubrow, DO, Preventive Medicine Resident, OHSU; MPH-HMP Student, Portland State University	7
3. Buying Local: Better Food in Institutions	9
<i>Speaker/expert:</i> Eecole Copen MS, RD, LD, Sustainable Food Programs Coordinator, OHSU Food & Nutrition.....	9
<i>Facilitator:</i> Mellisa Pensa, MD, Preventive Medicine Resident, OHSU; MPH-HMP Student, Portland State University	9
4. The Role of the Farm in Framing the Food Policy Conversation	10
<i>Speaker/expert:</i> Jill Kuehler MS, Executive Director, Zenger Farms.....	10
<i>Facilitator:</i> Anna Foucek-Tresidder, MPH, Public Affairs and Policy PhD Candidate, Portland State University.....	12
5. Local Sourcing: The Chef’s Influence on Policy	14
<i>Speaker/expert:</i> Greg Higgins, Owner, Higgins Restaurant.....	14
<i>Facilitator:</i> Christina Baumann, MD, Preventive Medicine Resident, OHSU; MPH-HMP student, Portland State University	15
6. Food as a County Issue	16
<i>Speaker/expert:</i> Kathleen West, JD, Director, Multnomah County Office of Sustainability.....	16
<i>Facilitator:</i> Tina Oliver, MD, Preventive Medicine Resident, OHSU; MPH-HMP Student, Portland State University	16
Helpful websites and sponsor information	18

Summary of Plenary Session

Framing the Food Policy and Sustainability Conversation

Speakers:

- **Jennifer H. Allen, PhD** - Interim Director, Institute for Sustainable Solutions; Associate Professor of Public Administration, Portland State University
- **Betty Izumi, PhD, MPH, RD** - Assistant Professor of Community Health, Portland State University

Notes from J. Allen:

CALLS TO ACTION:

- You interact with many people every day. Educate and share information with your friends, family, and colleagues.
- You are a trusted source of information. When you talk with your patients about their diets, bring in messages about sustainable food systems. Consider adding on to "eat more fruits and vegetables."
- If you are ready for the challenge, use food systems sustainability as a lens through which you go about your everyday food-related actions (e.g. buying coffee, eating breakfast, getting take-out food).
- Engage in policy where you can. Make a call to your policy-makers, work on changing rules and regulations where you work, etc.
- Collaborate with researchers to build a body of evidence to support more sustainable food systems.
- Create unusual alliances!
- Think critically about the food system. What do the words "local," "healthy," "organic," and "sustainable" really mean? How are these words used and thrown around?

Is health primarily a social issue, an economic issue, an environmental issue, or all of the above? *All of the above.* If we don't provide a healthy environment, a strong social network, access to affordable preventive health care and other health services, we aren't going to have healthy people.

Sustainability is the same – it has to be an integrated whole. Sustainability, like health, is about understanding systems – the body as a system, our communities as systems, the interconnections between social, environmental and economic factors. What the concept of sustainability means to me is a system that addresses social, economic and environmental considerations in an integrated way and with a long term view.

When I have asked audiences from the food-related world what the concept of sustainability means to them, I have often gotten the response "longer shelf life" - meaning that the date on your canned food ensures a long term food supply. I have laughed at this response, but there is some truth to it. If we create a food system that can effectively meet our social, economic and environmental needs effectively in the long term – a system that provides access to nutritious food, that provides stewardship of our landscapes and that provides farmers with the ability to survive - we all should indeed have a "longer shelf life."

You know the story of the blind people and the elephant? Everyone was holding onto a different part of the elephant and while they thought they understood what they were holding on to, they didn't understand it was part of an elephant. You are in the health field and you know that you can't treat a patient as an unrelated set of parts and expect to have a healthy person as a result. You can't ignore the sores on the feet that may indicate diabetes and not think about what access that person has to nutritious food.

Food systems are an elephant and we all tend to hold on to our parts. You have nutritionists but they don't understand how they relate to farmers who are the ones who provide us with fresh fruits and vegetables. You may work on hunger issues but not understand how you relate to folks dealing with low-income health care. One day some of you may work in a clinic in a low-income neighborhood, providing health services to people who desperately need them. You could become leaders in the effort to make sure that a neighborhood is not a food desert – that it is instead a place where your patients and families have access to affordable, safe, nutritious food without having to travel one hour or more on a bus to find that food. This may be one of the most lasting impacts you and your clinic could have.

Our conversation today is about understanding that we all have a part in making sure we have a healthy elephant. If we only pay attention to our part of the elephant we may not achieve a sustainable food system - one that provides us with landscapes that produce fresh foods, that ensures we don't have food deserts in low-income neighborhoods, which ensures access to nutritious food.

Hopefully today's event will give you some things to chew on such as the impact of the dollar you spend at the store, or the efforts you can make to ensure your institution is helping contribute to a healthier food system. At the end of the day the Institute for Sustainable Solutions is hosting a reception for you, with delicious food from Food Front Cooperative Grocery, and one reason we are particularly pleased to sponsor this event is because food is also about community building – sharing food is a wonderful way to create relationships, bridge gaps and celebrate our common goals. We hope you forge many such relationships today.

Notes from B. Izumi:

As a dietitian and public health professional, I am particularly motivated to focus on issues at the intersection of these links because of the severity and inequities associated with obesity and diet-related chronic diseases. In the United States, the childhood obesity rate has tripled in one generation. Today, about 17% or 12.5 million children, ages 2-19 years, are obese, and racially/ethnically diverse children continue to bear a disproportionate share of the burden. Among adults, diet-related chronic diseases (heart disease, some cancers, stroke, diabetes) continue to be among the leading causes of death in the United States. Heart disease alone was the cause of death for more than half a million Americans in 2009.

The severity of, and inequities associated with, the childhood obesity crisis and its long-term health outcomes make childhood obesity *prevention* one of our nation's most important health-related challenges. We know that poor diet is a major contributor to obesity and other diet-related chronic diseases. Yet despite the well-known health benefits, few Americans meet dietary recommendations for healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables. Overall, race/ethnic minorities and individuals with low incomes are at greatest risk for low fruit and vegetable

intake. We also know that eating behavior is complex and is influenced by factors at multiple levels including individual factors (i.e. demographic, cognitive, behavior, biological) and social (e.g. peer interactions, social support), physical (e.g. restaurants, workplace), and macro-level (e.g. food policies, societal norms) environments.

Like most dietitians, I was trained to promote healthy eating habits through sharing knowledge about nutrition. But it didn't take long once I entered the workforce to see that healthy food choices can only be made within the context of a supportive environment. As an OSU Extension agent, I taught nutrition education to individuals with low-incomes including pregnant and parenting teens and Head Start parents. For the most part, these individuals didn't need more knowledge about what foods are health promoting and what foods aren't. On the most immediate level, they needed increased access to healthy foods (i.e. affordability and availability). Increasingly, researchers and dietitians are emphasizing the need for environmental and policy strategies that increase the availability of healthy foods for all individuals.

In addition to considering the multiple determinants of eating behavior, effectively addressing obesity and other diet-related chronic diseases and their associated health inequities also requires a comprehensive approach that enables consideration of the many factors (production, processing, distribution, consumption, recycling/waste) and individuals involved in getting food from "farm to fork." Our food system has undergone major changes over last several decades due to political, technological, sociocultural, economic, and environmental changes. For example, a 2006 federal study found that agricultural production in the U.S. would need to change substantially in order for all individuals to eat according to the Dietary Guidelines from domestic sources (fruit and vegetable production would need to increase by approximately 13 million acres).

Due to low prices for commodities promoted through the Farm Bill (e.g. corn, soybeans), food manufacturers are incentivized to use these low-cost commodities as ingredients in processed foods. There are disparities in access to foods that are associated with positive health outcomes such as fresh fruits and vegetables and organically produced foods. Organic foods tend to be more expensive than foods that are conventionally produced so individuals with low-incomes have to spend a greater proportion of their income to buy organic foods.

Studies have shown that low-income and racially/ethnically diverse communities have poorer access to supermarkets and other stores that sell fresh fruits and vegetables than higher income and predominantly White neighborhoods. The impact of our food system on health inequities goes beyond nutrition. Low-income and racially/ethnically diverse individuals and communities also suffer disproportionately from environmental health threats such as exposure to agricultural pesticides and emissions from concentrated animal feeding operations. Food systems can be more or less sustainable. There is a strong and growing movement to increase access to healthy food in low-income and racially/ethnically diverse communities through national and local initiatives including those that are led by organizations represented here.

Summaries from breakout sessions

1) Food Justice: Exploring the Dynamics of Hunger and Community Food Security

Speaker/expert: Shawn DeCarlo, Metro Services Manager, Oregon Food Bank

Facilitator: Jennifer Gilbert, MD, MPH, Preventive Medicine Resident, OHSU

Notes from S. DeCarlo (Unedited transcript):

Most common definition of Food Justice: Food justice seeks to ensure that the benefits and risks of where, what, and how food is grown, produced, transported, distributed, accessed and eaten are shared fairly. Food justice represents a transformation of the current food system, including but not limited to eliminating disparities and inequities. Just take the first part – the benefits and risks of where, what and how food is grown, produced, transported, distributed, accessed and eaten are shared fairly. We can all feel what that means, but what does it look like in practice?

If that is justice, then what is this – Hunger – more than 1,000 emergency food boxes are distributed every day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year (on average) in Portland. That food will feed a family of four for 3-5 days. That's over 3,000 unduplicated people in Portland eating from an emergency food box every single day of the year. This doesn't include hot meal sites, homeless shelters, summer food sites, school lunches, backpack programs at schools, senior meal sites like Loaves and Fishes or any of the programs operating outside the OFB emergency food network. OR has the country's highest rate of child food insecurity at 29%. Reynolds and David Douglas have the 3rd and 4th highest poverty rates among students in OR – 32% and 31%. 1 in 3 kids, or 8,000 children living below the poverty line. As a reminder, the poverty level for a family of four is currently \$23,050 a year, having gone up \$700 since last year.

Obesity / Hunger paradox – higher rates for minorities, women, low-income - most visible manifestation of food injustice. Feed the poor and uninsured cheap calories marketed to them incessantly and accessed by their meager wages. Poverty conflated with gluttony - an ultimate solution. Food as Profit – Commodification - Farm Bill. Commodity crops – Corn – HFCS. Starts to sound like a conspiracy. But government policy informed by the needs of local populations can invigorate local food systems and increase overall Community Food Security. That's the idea anyway. Specific to anti-hunger work and policy. CROPS program of Multnomah County – intentional production for emergency food system. 25,000+ lbs over 2 years.

Backyard gardeners – just reported by OFB network agencies in Portland – over 65,000 lbs. last growing season alone (and it was a bad one). FFLC in Eugene – barley lentil soup mix with local farmer. Commitment by OFB to 240k pounds sourced for emergency food system. More than the farmer has capacity to commit to. OR legislature bill on fish by-catch – By-catch useable by food banks. Processor may accept a portion as payment.

Justice is never achieved through complacency or what MLK Jr. called “the tranquilizing drug of gradualism.” It must be liberated from the grasp of those that would profit at the expense of the weak.

Notes from small group discussion on Food Justice:

The group spent the majority of the time learning from each other and better understanding the issues of food security, especially as they interface with hunger. Food security issues, which were discussed more in depth included food sovereignty, the right to food, and impacts of food globalization (e.g., dependencies on other countries for food supply).

Our calls to action include:

- Use money to purchase/ “vote” for certain foods (e.g., local and non-processed)
 - Participate in a community garden
 - Also investigate linking current unused community garden plots with Oregon Food Bank or other organizations
 - Strive to change the perception of food, e.g., educate to the benefits of eating foods when they are seasonally available
 - Work with PSU’s Food Pantry to broaden its offerings
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2) Implications of the Farm Bill for Food & Health Policy

Speaker/expert: Andy Fisher, MA, Co-founder, Community Food Security Coalition

Facilitator: Matthew Dubrow, DO, Preventive Medicine Resident, OHSU; MPH-HMP Student, Portland State University

Notes from A. Fisher:

Implications of the farm bill for food and health policy

Farm Bill

- Every 5 years
- In 2008, \$285 billion, two of every three dollars on nutrition programs (will be four of every five dollars in 2012)
- 30% commodities, conservation, credit
- Oriented towards major crops, such as corn, soy, wheat, cotton, rice.
- Little funding for “specialty crops.”

When is it happening?

- Expires in September
- Senate taking up hearings and may pass a bill by early summer
- Could be a one year extension

Implications on public health

REALLY HARD TO DO THIS WITHOUT BEING A WONK

1. Supply and demand. Farmers overproduce then prices get low. Cheaper to supersize and HFCS. More calories in the system. Ethanol reduces supply, but may have global impacts on hunger.

2. In terms of F&V consumption: the farm bill does little to support “specialty crop” farmers or reduce prices of F&V.
3. Best way to influence health in farm bill is through food stamps. Some claim increases in snap lead to healthier purchases. Haven’t seen research on it. Others claim need to restrict bad foods within snap, or incentivize good foods, or shop at FMs.
4. Increase access to healthy food through smaller programs that bring new grocery stores, farmers markets, urban farms, as well as help local farmers get products to market.

Notes from small group discussion on the Farm Bill:

Overall the feeling in the discussion group was that given the size and political power of the Farm Bill, addressing food policy issues at a local level was the avenue to pursue rather than lobbying for change at the federal level

The agricultural and food policy omnibus that is traditionally referred to as the U.S. Farm Bill funds the programs and operational affairs of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Beyond the farm subsidies that are traditionally associated with this bill it also funds a breath of programs ranging from schools lunches, to crop insurance, to forestry conservation.

In the 2008 bill, 67% of its 5-year budget of \$285 billion was spent on nutrition programs. 61% of that nutrition budget funded the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which accounts for 41% of the Farm Bills total 5-year budget. In addition to SNAP the nutrition budget also funds Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), as well as a number of other supplemental nutrition programs.

After traditional grain crop commodity support, crop insurance, wildlife conservation programs, and natural resource conservation is accounted for in the budget, a minute portion remains for specialty crop support, farmer’s market programming and local food systems. Specialty crops are generally anything that is not a grain crop including most fruit, nuts and vegetables.

How the Farm Bill could be used or changed, directly or indirectly to influence food policy and food access was the primary topic of the small group discussion. The majority of the concepts that emerged revolved around a local synergistic approach working with SNAP to improve healthful food access.

- ***Improving accountability and reporting of SNAP use information.*** Several issues of accountability arose. There was a general consensus that SNAP dollars being spent on unhealthful food was commonplace. In fact, this is an anecdotal perception. There doesn’t seem to be any actual method for tracking what SNAP dollars are spent on. Individual retailers can keep track of that information, but no one else has access to that information. So the federal government really doesn’t have a way to know what SNAP dollars are being spent on. In that way, it is difficult to determine how to target the buying behaviors of SNAP recipients, or if changing their buying behavior is even necessary. Creating a relationship with retailers who are paid by SNAP for purchases made by SNAP recipients that mandates an aggregate reporting of SNAP purchases would be help determine purchasing behaviors, if

an intervention would help improve nutrition, and what incentives might influence a change in behavior.

- **Improve access to healthful food through SNAP education and incentives.** Helping people make the most of their SNAP dollars through by promoting the ideas that frozen food can be just as healthful an alternative as fresh produce. Offering incentives through retailers for the purchase of healthful foods and perceived disincentives for the purchase of unhealthy food. Broccoli is 2 for 1 with snap, but cookies are not. Using SNAP contact points as an opportunity for local organization to provide dietary education and healthful food awareness.
 - **Cultivating local legislative support.** Elected officials could also help to put elements in place that help farmer's markets thrive. That support could be in the form of supporting the markets with free use of public park space, zoning considerations, parking waivers, etc.... that will make it easier and more cost effective for farmers to bring their products to urban environments.
 - **Encouraging and legalizing farmer's market supported discounts.** Although locally supported farmer's market discount programs are in use, that practice is technically illegal. Portland's own 50% off SNAP discount at the farmers' markets is not condoned by SNAP or the terms of its federal funding. Discount programs around the country like Portland's have generally been ignored, but enforcement may come. The benefit of these programs for those who need access to healthful food will be lost unless allowances for programs like these can be safeguarded and encouraged by statute.
 - **Changing perception in disadvantaged and marginalized populations.** The popularity of Farmer's markets with individuals living in food deserts has dwindled recently. Several of the participants in the discussion felt that the "fashionability" of the markets has resulted in increased prices, an environment where using SNAP is perceived as being uncomfortable, and the general perception that advantaged people shop at the markets and disadvantaged people do not. There is a significant opportunity to act at a local level with community groups and farmer's market organizers to change this perception and encourage the disadvantaged and recipients of SNAP to return to the markets.
 - **Using mobile markets that accept SNAP.** Mobile farmer's markets or produce trucks that can easily access neighborhoods where fresh and frozen healthful food is absent have been shown to be effective in cities around the United States. Encouraging and promoting their use at a local level and ensuring that they are SNAP ready would be an avenue worth exploring. This would be a potential low cost solution to access disparity and help remedy healthful food deserts.
 - **Forming an exploratory committee to investigate the option of Oregon administering its own supplemental food assistance program.** Budget dollars from the Farm Bill could be funneled directly to the state and Oregon would be responsible for the administration of the benefit. If this were feasible, perhaps the state would be able to use the budgetary allotment to a better advantage for Oregonians in need of assistance.
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3) Buying Local: Better Food in Institutions

Speaker/expert: Eecole Copen MS, RD, LD, Sustainable Food Programs Coordinator, OHSU Food & Nutrition

Facilitator: Mellisa Pensa, MD, Preventive Medicine Resident, OHSU; MPH-HMP Student, Portland State University

Notes from E. Copen:

Q. What do you think of when you think hospital food?

Q. If you were a patient, what do you think your meal would look like?

Q. If you went to the cafeteria, what do you think your options would be?

-Did you ever think you could order Curry quinoa spinach salad –with a savory-sweet curry-lime yogurt sauce, chopped bell peppers, toasted sliced almonds, mango and dates tossed with spinach, with your choice of grilled chicken, salmon or tofu from the patient menu?

-or a Carmen Ranch, Food Alliance Certified, Grass-Fed, and Locally grown hamburger on a whole grain bun from the patient or retail menu?

-Did you think it possible to get a quick vegan, gluten free locally made pocket pie for lunch from a hospital store?

-or what about locally grown or produced veggies, cheese, berries, fruits, breads and jam from a farmers market at work?

1. Large Budgets of healthcare institutions leverage the industry.
 - a. Carmen Ranch Wholesaling.
 - b. Increased local produce at mainstream distribution companies
2. Opportunity to walk the talk of healthcare at the institutional setting
 - a. Farm stand @ Richmond Clinic- optimize for low income
 - b. Farmers' market educates thousands just by its presence.
3. Advantage of a large # of employees in 1 place, consistently, everyday. A perfect population and opportunity to educate. Not just the patients but the staff
 - a. Educational signage in cafes or at the market.
 - b. On Patient menus
4. Creatively solve the dilemma of affordable vs. necessary for maintaining BOTH human and environmental health?
 - a. Balanced Menu Project- purchase less meat and better quality
 - b. Creative menu creation to use less expensive cuts of better quality.
5. Have to be willing to get creative & take risks
 - a. Natural Food Store on campus
 - b. Set up new relationships

Notes from small group discussion on Buying Local:

The "Buying local" group discussed some inherent challenges to buying local include access, time, cost, money, and changing habit both at the individual and institutional level. In addition,

we discussed concerns about the integrity of the label "local" contrasted with the importance of marketing local foods to help inform purchases. To help increase local food in Portland, we believe that education is important, and can be facilitated by programs such as farm-to-school. We also believe that bringing farms to the people is important, and can be enhanced through farm stands and markets.

Our calls to action include:

- Get involved in learning about where your food comes from at home and work
 - Look for local foods
 - Ask questions of your grocer, restaurant server, and farmer about how the food was grown
 - Support local practices with your wallet
 - Look for grants that support farming and food education
 - Ask "why not?" of institutional guidelines, and find work-arounds where possible
 - Write to your legislators regarding farm legislation, especially the farm bill
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4) The Role of the Farm in Framing the Food Policy Conversation

Speaker/expert: Jill Kuehler MS, Executive Director, Zenger Farms

Facilitator: Anna Foucek-Tresidder, MPH, doctoral student at PSU, Portland State University
Public Affairs and Policy PhD Candidate, Portland State University

Notes from J. Kuehler:

- Zenger Farm is a working urban farm that models, promotes and educates about sustainable food systems, environmental stewardship, community development and access to good food for all.
- Our programs include Youth Education, which serves over 5,000 youth a year through field trips and summer camps, Healthy Eating on a Budget, which provides workshops on shopping for and preparing healthy meals on a limited budget for outer SE Portland families, the Lents International Farmers Market, which provides fresh affordable food to the Lents community and a marketplace for immigrant and emerging farmers and the Urban Farm Project, which operates a small farm business and teaching classes in sustainable agriculture techniques.
- My topic is "The Role of the Farm in Framing the Food Policy Conversation" but I think its more appropriate to reverse that to how food policy supports the farm.
- America loses an acre of farm and rangeland to development every minute.
- The average age of farmers in the US is 57.
- At the same time, there is an increased interest in local sustainable agriculture. A great number of young people are interested in farming. At Zenger Farm we offer a farm apprenticeship program that only pays a few hundred dollars a month and we

receive over 60 applications every year. The increased interest is also on the consumer side. More people want to know where their food comes from and how it is grown and raised.

- We're in a rich time of innovation in the local food movement. Producers are exploring topics like food hubs, mobile slaughter units, and farm to institution programs.
- However, there are great barriers to both the farmer and the consumer to participate in the movement.
- From the consumer side, access is a big barrier. At Zenger Farm we are trying to reduce that barrier through a food stamp match program at the Lents International Farmers Market, which matches every food stamp dollar spent at the market. We also offer one of the first CSAs in the state that is accepting food stamps for shares. We also connect all of our access programs with education to ensure that participants have the tools to sustain themselves.
- From the growers' side, access to land, capital and education is a big barrier for folks who are just getting started. Zenger Farm is currently training young growers through our apprentice program but many young folks lack the next step, finding the land and capital to launch their own businesses. East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District, along with many partners, is developing a farm incubator program where participants will receive several acres of growing space to launch and build their business until they're prepared to go out on their own.
- For the movement to continue to thrive we need policies that support the creativity and allow the innovation to flourish.

Friends of Zenger Farm (FZF): Incorporated in 1999, FZF was created to preserve Zenger Farm, a 16-acre property in Southeast Portland, transforming it into a community-learning center for sustainable food systems, environmental stewardship and local economic development. Zenger Farm is one of the last operational farms within the City limits. Owned by the City of Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services, FZF has a long-term lease on the property to provide unique demonstrational learning opportunities for youth, families and farmers in sustainable agriculture, storm water management, wetland ecology, food security and local economic development.

FZF Programs include:

- *Youth Education Program:* Over 5,000 Portland students visit Zenger Farm each year for field trips and summer camps. FZF reserves 40% of field trips for Title I schools that have little opportunity for outdoor, experiential field trips, and whose students are at highest risk from obesity and diet-related diseases. Interactive educational activities focus on topics such as planting, harvesting and preparing fresh foods, as well as composting, conservation and wildlife viewing.

- *Zenger Urban Farm Project*: Through operation of a small farm business, FZF demonstrates sustainable agriculture and provides training each year for hundreds of citizens on topics like care and pruning of fruit trees, keeping chickens for egg production, beekeeping and production of honey, and use of worm-bins for composting. Zenger Farm’s new Community Supported Agriculture program is one of the first in the state to accept SNAP (formerly food stamps) as payment for shares, allowing more people to access fresh, healthy food straight from the farm.
- *Lents International Farmers Market (LIFM)*: FZF launched the LIFM in 2004 in partnership with other community organizations, in response to a community survey in which 23% of Lents residents identified themselves as “food insecure.” LIFM provides affordable, fresh, culturally diverse produce to the Lents community. Since 2008, food stamp dollars spent at the market have been matched 1:1. Due to the success of the program, five other markets in Portland have started their own food stamp match programs. The LIFM also has a Community Table, where neighbors can sell the extras from their backyard gardens.
- *Healthy Eating on a Budget*: Healthy Eating on a Budget is Zenger Farm’s latest program, educating underserved families in outer SE Portland in how to shop, prepare and eat healthy meals on a limited budget. In two years over 500 adults and 200 youth have participated in the program, with participants gaining new skills in providing healthy affordable meals for their families.

Notes from small group discussion on the Role of the Farm:

Bridging knowledge gap between policymakers and small farms, how can they educate and inform one another?

- Bridge very local-scale farmers and policymakers
 - Zenger Farms– historically a dairy farm
 - 1994 purchased by city of Portland
 - Established a nonprofit
- New policies around urban farming
 - Portland Food Code
 - Some codes are prohibitive in allowing farmers to sell their food
 - Does this indicate that a review of these policies is necessary in order to capitalize on the “local-vore” movement?
- Farmers have to be generalists to keep up with changing policies
- Symposia (like this one) can act as a bridge between community members/advocates/farmers and policymakers and government officials. Why is there no political representation?
- Policy-makers are politicians, so we need to talk about the people they are accountable to (their constituents)
 - Politicians respond to stories and individuals, not statistics

- Talk in terms of values, Good old' American values
- Talk about economics
 - Ag is the second leading economy in this state
 - Job creation
- We need more organizations like Friends of Family Farmers (<http://www.friendsoffamilyfarmers.org/>) to support small farmers navigate the rules/regulations and find (or be found by) customers
- We need potential partnerships that are not yet obvious – interdisciplinary partnerships! Food is linked to nearly large policy area; those connections should be capitalized on!
 - We need partnerships:
 - county-to-county
 - public/private
 - work with Jeff Cogan
 - health systems/educators
- Resources for farmers
 - Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)- a USDA program and co-level (<http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/>)
 - Small Farm Funding Resources (http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/small_farm_funding.htm)
 - For rural folks: Conservation districts for a list of OR conservation districts <http://www.nacdnet.org/about/districts/directory/or.phtml>
 - Federal level: redirect subsidies from commodity crops to small farms
- Give out recipes at farmers markets – the knowledgebase has been lost. Cooking is based on a year round availability of all foods; consumers will need assistance to cook seasonally.
- Farm Apprenticeship in Multnomah County – annual- already filled for this year. Beginning Urban Farmer Apprenticeship (BUFA) program: <http://web.multco.us/sustainability/bufa>
- Right now, there is still a limit on the size of a garden even on large properties. Does this make sense?
- Farm Bill - One already passed
 - Adding more \$
 - Two new positions created
- Farmers still sell mainly through distributors
 - Missing piece- cold storage close to consumers. Small farmer have a difficult time securing access to storage for distribution.
- Food Hub – an online tool to advertise similar to Craigslist <http://food-hub.org/>

Call for Action

- Call Food Policy Council in action; Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council: <http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=42290&>
- Increase dialog between counties and across sectors
 - Multnomah Food Initiative: <http://www.multnomahfood.org/>

- Neighborhood Associations are a great place to start to get involved
 - Local granges- have a political voice as they are long standing farmers' organization and are looking to connect with younger farmers to take over the mantle.
 - Farm Bureau – Big Ag
 - OSU Extension Service – a great education resource
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5) Local Sourcing: The Chef's Influence on Policy

Speaker/expert: Greg Higgins, Owner, Higgins Restaurant

Facilitator: Christina Baumann, MD, Preventive Medicine Resident, OHSU; MPH-HMP Student, Portland State University

Notes from G. Higgins:

Why Sustainable/Organic Food?

I. What's the issue? –

Eating is not only a biological necessity and a core part of our culture and community, but it is also a significant political and agricultural act.

- A) America is experiencing a dietary crisis.
- B) Epidemic obesity, diabetes and heart disease.
- C) We have become a “Fast Food Nation” – sugar and bad fats predominate - “Super-size Me”.

II. How did we get here? – Industrial agriculture, does this system work?

- A) The primary issue is price – cheaper food is the goal.
- B) Economy of scale is one of the solutions – larger corporate farms, processing plants and distribution systems.
- C) Packaging, additives, refrigeration and transportation are substitutes for freshness.
- D) A requisite of productive agriculture and ranching are the routine application of synthetic chemical compounds – fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, fungicides and sub-therapeutic antibiotics and steroids.
- E) Marketing and mass media are the driving forces behind food sales – corporations and not individuals determine our food system and choices.

III. Healthy food is the solution – but what is it?

Per capita worldwide we spend the lowest % of our income on food and the highest % on medical care.

- A) Local sustainable/organic food production.
 - 1. Fresher food is better tasting and more nutritious.
 - 2. Reliance on local growers helps strengthen rural communities.
 - 3. People of all income levels deserve access to fresh, healthy, minimally processed food.

4. Consumers play key roles in the decisions, which shape our food system.
 - B) Whole or minimally processed foods.
 1. Fresher – more nutrients.
 2. Fewer additives.
 - C) Local – minimizing transportation.
 1. Maximizes seasonality and freshness.
 2. Reduces waste – over packaging
- IV. What's the food at Higgins?
- A) Regional Cuisine – what is it & why?
 1. A body of recipes, style of cooking and techniques.
 2. Group of common ingredients.
 3. Defined by climatic and geographic boundaries.
 - B) Seasonal – the PNW's micro-climates.
 1. Varied environments – Desserts, mountains, coastline.
 2. Persistent climatic variations.
 3. Micro-climates.
- V. What are the benefits from a localized sustainable/organic food economy?
- A) Better diet = Better health.
 1. Local = fresher & more nutritious.
 2. Whole foods = less sugar and bad fats – fewer additives.
 - B) Environmental gains – lessens pollution.
 1. Better land stewardship.
 2. Reduces greenhouse gases through reducing transport.
 - C) Cultural benefits – helps to build communities.
 1. Improves urban – rural interface.
 2. Celebrates food and cultural diversity
 3. Strengthens family & community – cooking & eating together.
 - D) Economic – Keeps food \$\$\$ in the region.
 1. Merchants.
 2. Farmer's markets.
 3. Artisanal producers.
 4. Restaurants.
 5. Farmers, ranchers, fishermen and others.

Education, awareness, sound planning and policymaking are necessary to manage and sustain the bounty of our region. We must be aware of the differences offered by a local cuisine and food system to those of a global food economy and its “Fast Food Cuisine”. Consumer preferences are a key influence on both systems – remember to vote with your fork.

Notes from small group discussion on Chef's Role:

A chef has many roles: educator, craftsman, entertainer, businessperson, purchaser, catalyst of change. The chef's direct sphere of influence includes his/her customers, staff, suppliers, and

the local economy. One avenue for organized influence on broader food policy is through the Chef's Collaborative. However, professional associations active in food policy are few.

Attitudes that can be changed by chefs' influence include:

- Expectations of having everything all the time (instead, acceptance of seasonal availability)
- Conceptualization of food as just calories and nutrients
- Relationship with food
- Understanding of the importance of local food sources
- Ethics around food

Chefs can be engaged in policymaking as spokespeople for food policy issues. Making policy initiatives understandable would make chefs more likely participate in advocacy efforts.

6) Food as a County Issue

Speaker/expert: Kathleen West, JD - Director, Multnomah County Office of Sustainability

Facilitator: Tina Oliver, MD, Preventive Medicine Resident, OHSU; MPH-HMP Student, Portland State University

Notes from K. West:

Food system work is just starting to be seen as a local government issue across the country. When I started working with local government 6 brief years ago, outside of a very narrow band, 2 perspectives:

- Food system work not our mission
- Portland food scene is great, there isn't anything else to do

Food system work is now a priority policy issue at the county – signature issue for Office of Sustainability and county's Health Dept. Oregon is second hungriest state in the nation with highest number of hungry children. Over half of Multnomah County adults are overweight or obese. Chronic diseases, in part caused by diet, are on the rise, wreaking havoc on families and stressing our healthcare system. Over \$4 billion is spent on food in the Portland region and yet only 5% of the food we consume is locally produced; therefore we are missing a huge economic opportunity to create jobs.

Office of Sustainability and Health Department convened community to develop a 15-year strategic action plan to create a healthy, equitable and prosperous local food system. That plan, called the Multnomah Food Action Plan, is being implemented across the food system and bringing together unlikely partners to achieve the community's shared vision and goals. I encourage everyone to join the more than 500 organizations and individuals who have already signed the online Declaration of Support and commit to a specific action or two at www.multnomahfood.org. From that Plan, the Office of Sustainability has launched a beginning urban farmer training in 2011 and in 2012 will be releasing a Jobs & Food System Economic Cluster Strategy to create jobs at every skill level.

There are two main ways to influence policy development at the county:

1. Get involved with the Portland/Multnomah Food Policy Council
2. Participate at the annual Multnomah Food Summits in June.

Notes from small group discussion on Food as a County Issue:

Our group discussed the complexities of county/government management of our food supply. Multnomah County responded to this issue by forming the Multnomah Food Initiative, which brings food players to the table. This group formed the Food Policy Action Plan, which has 4 pillars: affordability, access, quality and sustainability. There is minimal work being done elsewhere in the US, and so the FPAP was modeled after a plan in England. The FPAP has four “actions”, each of which is divided into distinct goals: local food, healthy eating, social equity and economic vitality. Much can be done individually and professionally to further their goals. More information can be found at: multnomahfood.org. Remember! *“Persistence wins over smart any day.”*

Individual and professional calls to action:

- Can attend Food Policy Council Meetings
(<http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=42290&>)
 - Consider creating more forums to discuss issues and get excited
 - Find out who is on committees for the Farm Bill, call them and express your views
(<http://www.ag.senate.gov/about>).
 - Call or email your mayor (Sam Adams in Portland → portlandonline.com/mayor) or county chair (Jeff Cogen in Multnomah county → web.multco.us/chair), as they pay attention to what people call about.
 - Sign up for the quarterly newsletter (multnomahfood.org)
 - Form closer relationship between PSU and Multnomah County (if you work/study at one of these locations)
 - Increase collaboration between counties – there is a lot of interest/work in Multnomah County, but what about other counties?
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Websites/Resources:

oregonfoodbank.org → Oregon Food Bank

multnomahfood.org → Multnomah Food Initiative; Multnomah Food Action Plan

portlandcsa.org → Portland Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition

oregonfarmersmarkets.org → Oregon Farmers' Markets Association

zengerfarm.org → Zenger Farm

friendsoffamilyfarmers.org → Friends of Family Farmers

nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/small_farm_funding.htm → Small Farm Funding Resources

nacdnet.org/about/districts/directory/or.phtml → National Association of Conservation Districts (for a list of Oregon conservation districts)

www.or.nrcs.usda.gov → USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Oregon site

web.multco.us/sustainability/bufa → Multnomah County Beginning Urban Farmer Apprenticeship (BUFA) Program

food-hub.org → Food Hub (gathers professional food buyers, wholesale producers, distributors and industry suppliers in one dynamic community)

portlandonline.com/bps → Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council

portlandonline.com/mayor → Contact Portland Mayor Sam Adams

web.multco.us/chair → Contact Multnomah County Chair Jeff Cogen

<http://www.ag.senate.gov/about> → Farm Bill Committee members and information

higginsportland.com → Higgins Restaurant

Thank you all very much for attending, participating and sharing your ideas with the group!

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This document was assembled and edited by Tina Oliver.