

## Homegrown Minneapolis Meeting Notes

*At our March 9 meeting, the Sub-Committee on the Commercial Use of Local Foods spent time discussing the role of retail grocers in the local foods movement in Minneapolis. They also articulated a series of questions that they would like to share with the Minneapolis Public Schools Foodservice, to gain a clearer sense of the status and opportunities associated with local, fresh foods in school meals.*

### What is role of local food coops in local foods movement in Minneapolis?

- Organic produce and packaged goods; organic deli foods
- Serve demands of customers
- In business with farmers to produce healthy, local, sustainably produced fresh foods
- We operate business to provide local foods to customers
- Bought organic farm and doubled size of warehouse
- Support, augment, and drive a local food economy
- Educational role; access to local foods
- Wedge plays large role in local foods movement
- Cooperative principles
- Co-ops 'side' with local and sustainable food movement
- How do we build on success of co-ops for large scale retailers?
- How do we get corner stores to carry and support local foods?
- What is role of corner markets and large grocery stores that sell to broad economic strata
- Can neighborhoods band together and work with City to make local/organic available to anyone interested?
- Where do Lund's/Byerly's/Kowalski's fit into the picture?
- How do we incentivize corner stores to include local foods?
- \*\*there are microloans for vendors
- Does the City allow farm trucks to drive through and sell in neighborhoods?
- What is role of Latino markets on Southside in carrying fresh, local produce?
- What role can CSAs play in feeding urban markets?

### Questions for Minneapolis Public Schools

- How much autonomy do individual schools within MPS have in terms of foodservice?
- What regulations are most problematic at federal, state and city level?
- Would schools support a levy to improve food quality in schools?
- How does the MPS foodservice deal with procurement of ingredients? What would need to be adjusted to accommodate procuring local, small scale produced foods?

- Could we implement a pilot program at a given school that would provide gardens, fresh local food, different menus than the rest of the district?
- Can we support MPS involvement in a study of the above?
- Are upgrading the school kitchens a district expense?
- Can MPS subcontract with outside foodservice for part of the time/some of the food?
- What are the volume and consistency needs of the district?
- What concerns does MPS foodservice have about current programs?
- How many 'cooking kitchens' currently exist in the City's schools?
- What does the central kitchen do exactly?
- What is the volume produced on a daily basis?
- What are low-hanging fruit in terms of making changes?
- Does the term "locally grown" mean anything to MPS foodservice?
- What are budget constraints?
- Can additional resources be directed toward the purchase of local foods?
- What are performance measures that the MPS foodservice establishes?
- What timeframe and innovations is MPS foodservice thinking about with respect to improving quality of school meals?
- What role can parents play to improve school food and include local food?
- Where are there school gardens and gardening curricula across the district? Which are extra-curricular and which are incorporated into the school day?

**Homegrown Minneapolis**  
**Subcommittee Meeting: Commercial Use of Locally Grown Food**

**January 28, 2009**

**9:30 – 11:00am, Common Roots Cafe**

Here are the dates we agreed on this morning for future meetings. All will be at Common Roots Café, 2558 Lyndale Ave S.

Monday, 2.16.09, 9-11am

Tuesday, 2.24.09, 12-2pm

Monday, 3.9.09, 9-11am

Thursday, 3.26.09, 9-11am

Monday, 4.13.09, 9-11am

Questions:

- Are there ways we can improve distribution?
- Can the City improve publicity/publicize?
- How can we use publicity?
- What is the City doing to connect gardening/urban agriculture to commercial uses?
- How can we make more farmland available for local food production?
- What purchasing does the City control?
- How can the City help let folks know which commercial uses serve local food?
- What do farmers need to know to produce foods for local consumption?
- What do we need to do to set up distribution and processing systems?
- What can we do to reduce over-regulation (make serving local food legal)?
- How can we address seasonality, volume and consistency concerns?
- How could the City incent restaurants to serve local food? How does it now?
- How can the City build preferences for local foods into its purchasing policy?
- What info do commercial uses need to start serving and/or serve more local foods?
- What resources are at our disposal?
- What is the message for pro-local food marketing and education?
- What gaps in info and education exist? (Potentials: connections to economic concerns like job creation, health, place/culture)
- How can we incent farmers, processors and distributors to get into the local foods market?
- How can the City advocate to other levels of Government in favor of local food consumption in commercial uses?
- How can we convince people (consumers, buyers at institutions, restaurateurs, etc.) that local food is cost-effective and/or make it cost-effective?
- How do we measure our progress?
- How do we connect local food to movements around fair trade and economic justice?
- How do we ensure fair prices for farmers?
- How do we define "local"? (May include: whole, nutritious, non-industrial, organic?)
- How do we tie local food to job creation (both rhetorically and actually)?
- How can health-based policies (trans fat bans, i.e.) help support local food?
- How can local become part of the idea of sustainability?
- How does the City define "sustainable"?

What would we like to see?

- Measurable Results
- Local food seen as economic development
- Catalyzing a large-scale change
- Minneapolis becomes famous for our local food support
- Ordinance and regulation changes
- Specific policy change recommendations

- New sustainability indicator and target(s)
- Stewardship of schoolchildren
- We educate kids and others to make healthy choices
- Connect local food to hospitals and health care
- Widespread availability and consumption of local food in institutions
- Change in habits of buyers, restaurateurs, consumers
- City leads by example (City employees become healthiest workers in town)
- Build more personal relationships between producers/restaurateurs/buyers/consumers
- Promotional/educational video
- System for 3<sup>rd</sup>-party verification of “local”
- Farmers involved in educational/promotional events
- Volunteers and/or paid canvassers go door-to-door convincing people to buy local
- Make it easy and/or more profitable for people who don't care to stock/buy/consume local
- Create demand

### Challenges/Obstacles

- Stereotypes (who eats local, how the food tastes)
- Hard to source
- Lack of prepackaged food
- Harder to prepare (menu changeability, cooking from scratch)
- Lack of standardization
- Storage/preparation facilities
- Lack of consistency in supply
- Lack of perception that local food is food security
- Pre-set contracts with distributors / food service
- Insurance/liability issues
- Perception that local food is “unsafe”
- On large scales, food is purchased on price alone, not quality – no quality metric
- Lack of info about what foods can be prepared and/or grown profitably locally
- USDA regulations
- Discordant regulations
- Foundations pulling out of funding local food nonprofit activity
- Lack of promotion
- Zoning
- City processes hard to navigate for small businesses (could special expertise or incentives be offered to commercial uses of local food?)
- How do we make “small” easy and efficient
- Advantages of “big” like Sysco, etc.
- Scale “ceiling” – how do we grow while keeping benefits of “smallness”
- Decision: do we grow “out” or “up”?
- Food product manufacturers – how do we help them grow to the next level?
- Aggregators and growers have different skill sets
- Aggregation is capital intensive
- We need more aggregators
- Cashflow difficulties for producers
- Lack of attention from U of M – or funding the “anti-local” food system
- Capital/credit crunch
- Colin Peterson's office
- Producer access to land
- Conversion from commodity to consumer market (a hurdle for producers)

### Resources:

- St. Paul schools have expertise in this area, and could provide a good model.

- Increasing understanding among the public that local food is better (healthier, more sustainable, better tasting)
- Retailers and restaurants have increased the visibility.
- Increasing demand.
- Local food advocacy organizations (IATP, LSP, etc).
- Willingness of the City and County to take a leadership role.
- Untapped potential resource: the University of MN.
- City/University relationship (specifically the University District Partnership Alliance).
- Colin Peterson: opening for potential change.
- Possible: local media campaign with public service announcements.
- Innovative thinking about a different kind of capital.
- Transition from nonprofit mindset to for-profit mindset. [Does this belong in challenges?]
- Wedge warehouse.
- Wedge farms.
- Cooperative grocers generally.
- Coop Partners.
- Farmers
- “Green Job” policy goals, which could be broadened to include sustainable local agriculture.

Attendees of the two meetings (breakout session and yesterday's) included:

Maggi Adamek, Co-Convener, U of M Research Fellow - Local Foods, Sustainability, and Wellness, [madamek@umn.edu](mailto:madamek@umn.edu)

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