



EATING HERE

**CULTIVATING A ROBUST FOOD
SYSTEM IN GREATER PHILADELPHIA**



WHAT DO YOU BRING TO THE TABLE?

As growers, providers, producers, distributors, and consumers we play a part in our region's food system. But just as our tastes have changed drastically over the years, the way we grow, harvest, process, package, deliver, and prepare the foods we eat has, too. The challenge is making sure that it all changes for the better.

That's where you come in.

Together, we can grow a robust, sustainable, secure, and equitable food system. We have all the ingredients. We just have to use them responsibly, and make choices that ensure the success of our region's economy, the health of its people, and the resilience of its natural resources and environment.

Eating Here grew from the *Greater Philadelphia Food System Study* that evaluated the natural, economic, and social resources of Greater Philadelphia's foodshed — the 100-mile radius around Philadelphia that serves as the theoretical source of our food. This plan and its recommendations provide guidance on strengthening our complex food system so it sustains our region for decades to come.



OUR VISION IS TO CULTIVATE A FOOD SYSTEM IN WHICH WE:

- SUPPORT LOCAL AGRICULTURE AND GROW THE LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY WHILE IMPROVING PROFITABILITY FOR FARMERS.
- PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT.
- ENSURE SAFETY, SECURITY, AND HEALTHFULNESS OF FOOD AND THE FOOD SUPPLY.
- IMPROVE NUTRITION WHILE REDUCING OBESITY AND PREVENTABLE DISEASES.
- ENSURE RESIDENTS OF THE REGION HAVE ACCESS TO ENOUGH NUTRITIOUS FOOD TO EAT.
- ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES.

To achieve our goals of building a sustainable and resilient food system, we have based our recommendations around six core values:



FARMING and SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE



ECOLOGICAL STEWARDSHIP and CONSERVATION



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



HEALTH



FAIRNESS



COLLABORATION



FARMING AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

For centuries, agriculture has been an essential component of Greater Philadelphia's regional identity and economy. But with less land available for production, and industry profitability on the decline, many fear that more farms will disappear and more farmers will retire.

WAYS WE CAN MAKE AGRICULTURE MORE VIABLE, PROFITABLE, AND SUSTAINABLE:

- **Keep farmland affordable through a range of new business models** like lease agreements that would allow new farmers to grow into the industry or retirement accounts that would allow farmers to build equity, plan for retirement, and eventually sell or lease their land for continued agricultural uses.
- **Increase access to capital.** Mission-driven investors and commercial lenders have increased opportunities to fund agriculture and food-related businesses, part-time and urban farmers, and food entrepreneurs.
- **Provide additional tax relief and incentives for fresh food production.** Current federal funding programs could fund property acquisition, building rehabilitation, energy conservation, and job creation activities.
- **Cultivate new community gardens and urban agricultural programs** by working with agriculture professionals and community advocates.
- **Improve the livability of communities** by integrating appropriately scaled agriculture into urban and suburban zoning ordinances, by expanding farmland preservation programs in all communities, and through other municipal and county policy initiatives.
- **Expand programs around local foods**, small farms, fruit and vegetable farms, and urban agriculture through partnerships with county cooperative extension offices.
- **Keep more farmland in production** by connecting experienced farmers with eventual successors.



58% OF FARMS IN PENNSYLVANIA AND NEW JERSEY REPORTED NET LOSSES IN 2007

FOOD SYSTEM FORWARD THINKERS

Our Food System Forward Thinkers are organizations and businesses that are using competitive grants made available through the Food System Implementation Grants program, administered by DVRPC with funding from the William Penn Foundation, to transform recommendations into reality. In total, \$500,000 in grants were awarded.



FARMFUTURES

The Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA), the largest statewide, member-based sustainable farming organization in the United States, received an implementation grant to support the creation of “FarmFutures,” a project designed to connect aspiring farmers and land. PASA is partnering with a team of organizations, including the Fox School of Business at Temple University, Willistown Conservation Trust, and The Reinvestment Fund to reach out to prospective farmers and interested landowners and explore financing models. www.pasafarming.org



EXPANDING CITY HARVEST GROWERS ALLIANCE

SHARE operates a community food distribution center providing affordable food packages through numerous host sites in the region. They also support gardeners and greening projects. In partnership with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, they have sponsored a variety of urban agriculture programs including the City Harvest Growers Alliance (CHGA), which provides fresh produce to those in need. This implementation grant is supporting the growth of a model urban farm and the construction of a CHGA Green Resource Center at SHARE’s site in Philadelphia. The model urban farm will offer skills-building workshops and informal education. The Green Resource Center will provide seedlings and materials to neighborhood growers who will donate a portion of their harvest back to local food cupboards and pantries. www.sharefoodprogram.org



BEETS FOR SALE AT THE PENNINGTON, NJ FARMERS' MARKET

CREDIT: NATHAN SIEMERS



THE HOPE GARDEN AT STENTON FAMILY MANOR

Formed in 2007, Weavers Way Community Programs (WWCP) seeks to foster local food production, economic literacy, sustainable environmental practices, and healthy lifestyles in northwest Philadelphia. In 2009, WWCP started a community garden project at Stenton Family Manor, a shelter for homeless families. Implementation grant funds are supporting strategic and business planning that will allow Hope Garden to grow into a larger urban agriculture project. www.weaversway.coop



ECOLOGICAL STEWARDSHIP AND CONSERVATION

Water and land are limited resources. When managed responsibly, they serve as invaluable assets and necessary ingredients for a robust regional food system.

WAYS WE CAN PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT WHILE SUPPORTING OUR FOOD SYSTEM:

- **Implement market-based solutions to protect natural resources** such as marketing programs or new brand development that encourage land managers and owners to use agricultural lands productively while ensuring our region's biodiversity.
- **Compensate farmers for ecosystem services their lands provide** to clean our air and water, mitigate flooding, and reduce greenhouse gases.
- **Encourage alternative energy use on farms** to reduce dependence on fossil fuels, lower farmer's costs, and improve their resiliency and ability to provide for their own needs.
- **Preserve farmland and protect our agricultural soils** while supporting and revitalizing already developed areas.
- **Expand composting programs to reduce and reuse food waste** that creates methane and increases landfill costs.
- **Tie urban and rural areas together** through regional transfer of development rights that ultimately keep agricultural land in production while meeting other regional needs, including energy creation.

**37% OF UNDEVELOPED LAND WITHIN
OUR 100-MILE FOODSHED IS CONSIDERED
IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL SOIL**



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A robust food system creates an abundance of jobs in agriculture, transportation, distribution and logistics, manufacturing, food retail, and food preparation. With these jobs come salaries and wages that empower more of our residents to become active participants in, and supporters of, our food system and regional economy.

WAYS WE CAN GROW OUR FOOD SYSTEM AND ECONOMY:

- **Implement business development strategies** ranging from training programs to financing innovations to reduce the barriers of entry for entrepreneurs and farmers.
- **Work with vendors to source healthier, local, and sustainable items.** This will also support our local businesses and make our region more self-sustaining.
- **Expand healthy food retail outlets** to improve the health of local residents and local economies. Food retail outlets can serve as centers for greater economic activity and new jobs may provide living wages and opportunities for career advancement.
- **Increase funding for successful marketing campaigns,** such as Jersey Fresh, PA Preferred, Buy Fresh Buy Local, and Philly Homegrown to increase demand for local foods and support systemic changes.
- **Encourage agritourism and culinary tourism** to strengthen connections between our region's producers and consumers, and to create economic growth in related industries.
- **Create Food Enterprise Zones** and provide incentives for urban food production, value-added food processing, and healthy food retail outlets to attract jobs and businesses.
- **Apply global efficiency strategies on a local level** to expedite distribution methods, control costs, and identify and replicate proven supply chain strategies.



APPROXIMATELY 300,000 JOBS IN GREATER PHILADELPHIA'S ECONOMY ARE IN THE FOOD SECTOR

CREDIT: M. McCLELLAN FOR GREATER PHILADELPHIA TOURISM MARKETING CORPORATION

FOOD SYSTEM FORWARD THINKERS



ADVANCED FOOD SAFETY CERTIFICATION

The Common Market, a local foods distributor from the Philadelphia region, opened its doors in 2008 committed to supporting local farmers while providing affordable food to wholesale customers. An implementation grant is enabling The Common Market to engage a food safety consultant and ultimately obtain third-party food safety certification. The certification will allow it to provide local foods to a greater number of wholesale customers including large, local food service businesses and caterers.

www.commonmarketphila.org



HEALTH

Healthier foods allow us to lead healthier lives. Unfortunately fresh, local, and nutrient-rich foods are more severely affected by price increases and market conditions, which put their purchase out of reach for many in our region. Food prices haven't increased alone. They have risen alongside increases in preventable diseases and the prevalence of obesity.

WAYS WE CAN IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF OUR REGION AND FOOD SYSTEM:

- **Increase public awareness of healthy food** through interactive programs and educational experiences that are appropriate for different audiences and respectful of the resources they have available.
- **Limit the toxic food environment** that has led to unhealthy eating and overeating by exploring more stringent zoning, marketing, and vending and procurement standards to limit the accessibility of unhealthy foods.
- **Promote healthy eating by leveraging nutrition assistance programs** and increasing use and redemption at outlets offering fresh, healthy, and nutritious foods.
- **Increase healthy options for foods served in publicly owned facilities** to not only increase customer demand for healthier foods, but also create a fundamental shift in supply.
- **Reduce the over use of antibiotics.** While proponents argue that antibiotics allow farmers to increase productivity and reduce their impact on the environment, their use has increased human resistance.
- **Look for leaders and forge partnership with health care providers.** These partnerships can also lead to new programmatic innovations and interventions.
- **Establish stricter nutritional guidelines in schools** and allocate more sizable budgets to increase nutrition and create healthier, long-lasting habits.



BETWEEN 2001 AND 2007, THE PERCENTAGE SPENT ON FRUITS AND VEGETABLES REMAINED STEADY AT 19% FOR “FOOD AT HOME” EXPENDITURES, WHILE THE PROPORTION SPENT ON “OTHER FOOD” INCREASED STEADILY FROM 28% TO 32%

- **Improve relationships with food** and raise public awareness of and support for our local agricultural heritage through festivals and events such as Mushroom Festival in Chester County or the Cranberry Festival in Burlington County.

FOOD SYSTEM FORWARD THINKERS



GET FRESH AT MANNA

Metropolitan Area Neighborhood Nutrition Alliance (MANNA) provides nutrition services to people suffering from HIV/AIDS, cancer, and other life-threatening illnesses in eastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey. MANNA seeks to enable individuals and families to maintain and achieve independence as they cope with illness. An implementation grant makes it possible for MANNA to augment its existing home-delivery meal service with a series of cooking and nutrition education classes. Funds also support the inclusion of locally grown produce in client meals. www.mannapa.org



FAIRNESS

Food is something many of us take for granted. Some of us know where our next meal is coming from. Others aren't as fortunate. Food insecurity is a growing problem in our region, affecting roughly 880,000 households on both sides of the river. Low wages and unemployment are contributors, but what are the solutions?

WAYS WE CAN BRING BALANCE AND FAIRNESS TO OUR FOOD SYSTEM:

- **Establish long-term eating habits and healthy behaviors** through food choices, education, and activities in local schools, which will also create customers for our local food providers.
- **Focus on food safety** balancing the need for consumer protection while not overburdening and over-regulating small- and mid-size producers and inhibiting their operations.
- **Restructure subsidy programs** to ensure competition and fairness, and to promote diversity in agricultural production while increasing profitability for U.S. farmers.
- **Strengthen and enforce anti-trust laws** to ensure a competitive and fair marketplace with diverse consumer choices.
- **Recognize the need for and contributions of guest workers in the agricultural sector** and reform immigration laws accordingly.
- **Maximize food programs** like SNAP, school lunch and breakfast programs, and WIC, and create incentives for healthy food purchases.
- **Address waste, hunger, and malnutrition** by collecting excess fruits and vegetables from regional producers and distributing them to food banks, food pantries, and other outlets through gleaning programs.
- **Connect transportation services to improve access** to healthy foods by redirecting routes, locating farmers' markets at transit stops, and creating partnerships with transit providers for direct service, deliveries, or both.



THERE ARE ROUGHLY 230 COMMUNITY GARDENS IN PHILADELPHIA

GARDEN ROWS AT MILL CREEK FARM, PHILADELPHIA, PA. CREDIT: BECKY SWEGER.

- **Reduce hunger by creating jobs that pay living wages** and empowering those personally affected.
- **Improve labor and living conditions for farm laborers and families** through programs, strategies, and vital services including healthcare.
- **Emphasize the need for jobs that pay living wages** to reduce hunger.
- **Improve labeling practices to include nutrition information, production or growing practices, and the producer's share of the food dollar** that allow consumers to make more informed decisions and producers to be more fully compensated.
- **Work with charitable food providers to include capacity-building in their development** activities and incorporate more fresh fruits and vegetables. Gleaning programs, gardening activities, and expanded ability to refrigerate foods can all be part of the solution.
- **Promote responsible purchasing among large-scale buyers** that reflect equity along the food chain and achieve system-wide practice improvements.
- **Support and expand low-income CSA models** to increase fresh food access and provide fair compensation for farmers. Upfront costs can be overcome through work shares and revolving loan funds.

FOOD SYSTEM FORWARD THINKERS



BUILDING THE FARM TO SCHOOL MOVEMENT IN PHILADELPHIA

Fair Food maintains a local food farm stand at Reading Terminal Market, serves as an intermediary between farmers and wholesale buyers including stores and restaurants, and educates the public about local foods through publications such as the Philadelphia Local Food Guide. Working with the Health Promotion Council, The Food Trust, and the School District of Philadelphia, Fair Food is increasing healthy food options in Philadelphia schools by expanding its existing farm to school program to other schools. The implementation grant is supporting training and site visits for school staff, peer marketing among youth, and tool and resource development to support the program's expansion. www.fairfoodphilly.org



**MANY SCHOOLCHILDREN IN PHILADELPHIA
EAT MOST OF THEIR MEALS AT SCHOOL**

**ACCORDING TO THE USDA'S 2007 CENSUS OF
AGRICULTURE, GREENSGROW FARMS IS ONE OF
17 FARMS WITHIN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA**



URBAN AGRICULTURE AT GREENSGROW FARM IN PHILADELPHIA, PA. CREDIT: MELISSA SHILLING



LOCAL INITIATIVE FOR FOOD EDUCATION

An urban farm located in northeast Philadelphia, Greensgrow grows a variety of nursery products, fruits and vegetables for Philadelphia residents, and has recently embarked on a program that connects residents to farm-fresh foods through a "city-supported" agriculture program. In 2010, the farm launched Local Initiative for Food Education (LIFE) to increase the number of low-income households participating in its CSA program. Greensgrow is using grants to enhance and expand its low-income CSA program and create interactive cooking classes and videos that show how to prepare items available in weekly CSA shares. www.greengrow.org



COLLABORATION

With financial resources dwindling, and the need for services becoming greater, efficient and effective solutions can only be achieved by tackling these overwhelming challenges together.

WAYS WE CAN COLLABORATE AND BRING CHANGE TO THE FOOD SYSTEM:

- **Build capacity and expand our expertise** by continuing to engage the Food System Stakeholders Committee and seeking best practices from across the region and country that can be replicated here.
- **Support the growth of local food businesses** by working with governments, health departments, and other local authorities to reduce the burdens for operating legitimate businesses in our region.
- **Pair food system policies with sustainability and economic objectives** to create a more resilient food system.
- **Improve connections between the marketplace and farmers** by creating professional opportunities to build personal relationships.
- **Reduce institutional boundaries and internal barriers that are inhibiting success.** Government agencies should look beyond their domains to build their capacity to make meaningful changes in our food system.
- **Learn best practices from other industries**, especially those that have matured, on ways to deal with operational adversity.
- **Speak with a collective voice** to reinforce shared goals, bring consistency to the message, and unite all stakeholders including health, natural resource protection, and social justice.

SO WHAT CAN YOU BRING TO THE TABLE?

Here are the roles each of us can play in strengthening our food system.

CITIZENS

- Purchase healthy, nutritious, and local foods whenever possible.
- Support local, county, and state funding referendums for open space and farmland preservation.
- Grow a garden, join a CSA, or both.
- Compost at home or through a program.
- Use your influence as an employee, citizen, and neighbor to strengthen our local food system.

EDUCATORS

- Teach your students about the importance of nutrition and the need for fresh, healthy, and local foods.
- Consider integrating agriculture and gardening initiatives into your curriculum.
- Incorporate local foods into school meals and snacks.

BUSINESSES

- Support the local economy by supporting local food providers.
- Reduce your businesses' impact on the environment by making more responsible purchasing and contracting decisions.
- Use fresh local food providers for special events and dining functions.
- Become a leader in your local food system through your actions.

POLICYMAKERS

- Listen to the concerns of farmers, independent business owners, and community groups to develop innovative solutions.
- Encourage sustainable food production and reduce the restrictions that inhibit the growth and sustainability of our food system.
- Improve healthy food access by experimenting with incentive programs and partnering with nonprofit groups.

Learn more about what you can do and find the full *Eating Here: Greater Philadelphia's Food System Plan* at dvrpc.org/food.

EATING HERE

Greater Philadelphia's Food System Plan is a comprehensive and collaborative effort bringing together a stakeholder committee comprising farmers, antihunger advocates, farmland preservation experts, public officials, small business owners, and others to increase the security and economic, social, and environmental benefits of the regional food system that feeds Greater Philadelphia.

Read the full plan and discover ways to strengthen our agricultural sector and economy, decrease waste and want, improve public health, protect our region's soils and water, and encourage diversity, innovation, and collaboration at

www.dvrpc.org/food



Provided funding to make this and other Food System Stakeholder Committee activities possible.