



## **Global and Regional Food Distribution**

Friday, May 6, 2011

10 AM to 12 PM

**Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission  
Co-convened with Rob Amsterdam of A.P.E., Inc. and  
Sam Earle of Local Food Systems, Inc.**

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Alison Hastings, Senior Environmental Planner at DVRPC, welcomed speakers and participants. She reviewed DVRPC's ongoing and upcoming projects, including the current Food System Implementation Grant program and future county-oriented work.

### **An Overview of Global and Regional Food Distribution Systems**

Rob Amsterdam of A.P.E., Inc. discussed the challenges inherent in the distribution of perishable food and food products, including, in particular, moving these products from field to market in a timely and efficient manner. Maximizing such efficiency while managing unintended consequences, according to Amsterdam, is just one of the many challenges faced by food producers and distributors. Distribution being an essential component of the food system, it is vital for food system stakeholders to know about and understand this activity.

### **"Regional Food Hubs"**

Jim Barham, an agricultural economist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service, discussed that agency's role in studying and promoting regional food hubs. He explained regional food hubs to be centrally located facilities with a business structure designed to achieve the "aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing" of locally or regionally produced food products, though he indicated this definition continues to be revisited. He described the USDA's "Know your Farmer, Know Your Food" Initiative, launched in 2009 to spur a national conversation about local and regional food systems and economic opportunities. Highlighting the benefits of food hubs, Barham described the Local Food Hub in Charlottesville, VA as an example. Started in 2009, this organization aims to enhance local food distribution, increasing availability of local food and supporting local farmers.

Barham also stressed the importance of collaboration with partners for food hub research and projects, and explained USDA's partnership with the Wallace Center at Winrock International, the National Good Food Network, the National Association of Produce Market Managers, and the Project for Public Spaces. Together, these organizations have completed two phases of research and implementation: identification of existing food hubs and how they operate and identification of opportunities for collaboration and improvement. Additional information is available at:

[www.usda.gov/knowyourfarmer](http://www.usda.gov/knowyourfarmer) and [www.makinggoodfoodwork.com](http://www.makinggoodfoodwork.com).

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### **“What is the Port’s Role in the International and Domestic Movement of Food”**

Frank Camp, a marketing representative from the Philadelphia Regional Port Authority, provided an overview of the elements of the global food supply chain, including harvest, packing, trucking to ports, ocean transportation, customs and inspection, and domestic distribution. He explained the Philadelphia ports’ role in this network, and the unique capabilities and functions of the port when it comes to food importation. Camp also discussed the tools used to keep our food and nation safe, such as radiation checks. He highlighted the Philadelphia ports’ importance for shippers of perishable products, including its connections to a broad geographic area stretching up and down the east coast and into the Midwest and Canada. The Philadelphia ports also have unique expertise in the transport and storage of specific foods and ensure that they are well-staffed by needed government inspectors and officials. Camp discussed the benefits of having port facilities like these in the Greater Philadelphia region and the challenges of managing and maintaining a well-functioning, prosperous port.

### **Closing Remarks**

Sam Earle of Local Food Systems, Inc. closed the meeting by posing questions about how to integrate the values of local and regional production into the industrial food system and how to incorporate the efficiencies of industrial food production and distribution into local and regional production and distribution.

### **One-Minute Reports**

Stakeholder Committee members gave one minute reports on current activities and upcoming events.