The Cass County Food System Action Coalition serves as a broad-based effort to help identify and connect relationships, communicate assets of local and regional food systems, and develop programs that improve the health, economy, and environmental sustainability of partners in the regional food system of Cass County.

Mission:
To work with diverse individuals, organizations and institutions to engage and foster community best practices for food system health, access and economic viability.

Core Values:
Sustainability: Food systems developed with sustainability in mind for all factors: social, environmental and economic aspects enhance the viability of local community, business growth and best practices.

Transparency: Food systems are complicated and affect many different pieces of the community. Through transparent and accurate information, education on the various food system practices will assist in decision-making.

Inclusion: Food is a basic need, and a food system rooted in inclusive participation enables all people to thrive; a foundation of respect and trust creates a climate for everyone to contribute to healthy, vibrant food system.

Health: Food is inherent to health in all issues. We have the creative and innovative power in our communities to make choices that will lead us to a healthier Cass County.

Community: Fostering relationships and engagement for practitioners and consumers in the food system to build trust and ownership in Cass County.

Purpose
The Cass County Food System Action Coalition

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Community: Fostering relationships and engagement for practitioners and consumers in the food system to build trust and ownership in Cass County.

Partners:
Emily Krengel – Dietician CCHS-CCLFPC | CCC |
Gill Gillespie – Harrisdale Homestead
Ardis Gillespie – Harrisdale Homestead
Lavon Eblen – KJAN, Master Gardeners + Farmers Market
Chelsea Cousins – Montgomery Extension- Griswold resident
Emily Paulsen – Brun Ko Farms
Gaylord Schelling – Chair - Cass County Board of Supervisor
Duane McFadden – Cass County Board of Supervisor
Denise O’Brien – Rolling Acres Farm
DeeAnn Schreiner – Food Services Director- Atlantic
Kate Olson – Cass County Program Coordinator ISUEO
The snap-shot assessment is formatted as an overview of input received from public meetings and coalition discussions about the community food system in Northern Iowa. In addition, a snapshot of existing projects and programs that currently exist have been shown to allow for creative decision making for food system development projects.

The following sections will include:
- Abstract of each sector: production, processing, distribution, consumption, and resource management
- Abstract for each key impact area: economy, health, equity, education, environment, and policy.
- Snap Shot of each tactic within the sectors

**Community Food System Sectors:**
- Production .................................................. 3
- Transformation
- Distribution ................................................. 4
- Consumption
- Waste .......................................................... 5

**Impact Areas:**
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- Healthy
- Equity
- Education ................................................... 7
- Environment
- Policy

**Tactics:**
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- Faith Gardens
- Corporate Gardens ....................................... 10
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- Edible Landscapes ........................................ 11
- Incubator Farms
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- Mobile Processing Facilities
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- Farmers Markets
- Public Markets
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- Food Enterprise Center
- Education Centers
- Food Banks
- Food System Policy Councils
- Food Recovery ............................................. 17
Food sector that contains transformation or processing of food. This includes community projects, businesses, and organizations that offer preparation of fresh food products for markets, including processing, packaging, labeling and marketing of food.

Armstrong Farm: Lewis, Iowa
400 acres- 5 80 acre spaces. Part of the area is dedicated to the donation garden plot: 40x80' - 1/4 in butterfly habitat and 3/4 vegetable production. The rest of site includes corn- strips project, soy-strips project, and cattle: breeding project- genetic production- feed efficiency- electric bins (IACUC).

Food sector that contains production of food from small scale gardening to large scale commodity crops. This sector includes community projects, programs, businesses, farming etc. that involve raising of food (gardening, hunting, fishing, foraging and farming) of food.

Hennigsens Meat Processing Plant
Custom & retail beef and pork: Retail fresh cuts and sandwich meats. Including summer sausage, dried beef, Rolle Polse (both beef and pork)
https://www.facebook.com/Henningsens-Meat-Processing

I would like to have a refrigerated place where growers could sell their extra from CSA’s and Farmers Market

Food sector that contains transformation or processing of food. This includes community projects, businesses, and organizations that offer preparation of fresh food products for markets, including processing, packaging, labeling and marketing of food.
How do we focus on getting more local food to these high number of low-income individuals. Can CSA and Farmers Market Vouchers assist?

Anita Farmers Market; Anita, Iowa:
A unique farmers market off of Main Street within a park. The market features fruits and vegetables, homemade items, flowers and plants and more. Held June-October on Mondays 3pm-6pm

Food sector that pertains to the distribution and retail of food products. This includes community projects, businesses, and organizations that involve distribution and retail, such as: wholesale, distribution, warehousing, transportation, restaurants and retail markets of food products.

Sweet Joy Shop; Atlantic, Iowa:
Sweet Joy serves breakfast, lunch, and snacks. Amongst several variety of foods, they also love using locally grown produce and celebrate local artists’ work.

Rural towns: Having a local grocery store in small towns is important, especially for older people. Each town should have a set of core businesses.

Food sector that pertains to food access and consumption. This includes community projects, businesses, and organizations that involve education, preservation, preparing, food assistance, and building awareness of food.
Food sector that pertains to waste and nutrient management. This includes community projects, businesses, and organizations that promote recycling, reducing food waste, recovering, reusing, and composting food products or promoting other natural methods of waste recovery and nutrient management.

Open Door Mission: Omaha, NE
Open Door Mission will provide more than 240,000 nutritious meals this holiday season to the hungry and homeless in the Heartland. http://www.opendoormission.org/donation-needs/

Food sector that pertains to waste and nutrient management. This includes community projects, businesses, and organizations that promote recycling, reducing food waste, recovering, reusing, and composting food products or promoting other natural methods of waste recovery and nutrient management.
CHNA & HIP PRIORITY GOALS:

CASS COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN (HIP):

Promote Healthy Behaviors:
- Goal: Less than 25% of Cass County Residents will be obese
  - 28% of county are obese, and 60% are obese or overweight
  - Less than 8% of the population consumes 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day

Goal - Increase consumption of local foods through collaborative efforts: Continued resources for Healthy Cass County

STRENGTHEN PUBLIC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

Promote public awareness of community health issues and resources

IOWA YOUTH SURVEY 2015 (THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA, 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many times in the last 7 days have you eaten fruit or vegetables?</th>
<th>I didn’t eat any</th>
<th>Less than 1 time each day</th>
<th>1 time per day</th>
<th>2 times per day</th>
<th>3 times per day</th>
<th>4 times per day</th>
<th>5 times per day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fruits: 6th grade</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits: 8th grade</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits: 11th grade</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables: 6th grade</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables: 8th grade</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables: 11th grade</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Child Food Insecurity 2013: (Feeding America, 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Food Insecurity Rate</th>
<th>Children under 18 years</th>
<th>Child Food Insecurity Rate</th>
<th>Estimated number food insecure children</th>
<th>Likely income-eligible federal nutrition assistance</th>
<th>Not-likely eligible federal nutrition assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cass</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>3,151</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PERCENTAGE OF PRINCIPAL FARM OPERATORS: (USDA, 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census of Agriculture 2012-Cass County</th>
<th>Female Full Owner</th>
<th>Spanish, Hispanic or Latino</th>
<th>American Indian or Alaskan Native</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Black or African American</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farms</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>703</td>
<td></td>
<td>289,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>5,872</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Currently only 37% of households nationwide have gardens. By offering public access to foods it can improve food security and decrease miles traveled for fruits and vegetables (Long, 2015, p. 22)
Networks of relationships among people working toward food system development; incorporation of education, culture and arts to achieve goals; also including learning opportunities for individuals, organizations and the community for community food systems and existing programs.

**EDUCATION**

We need to better understand kitchen rules around school lunches—what does it take to get healthier, fresh produce and local foods into schools? Gardens have been shown to offer inter-generational and cross-cultural learning opportunities (Long, 2015, p. 18).

School gardens can promote respect for the earth, and provide improvements to existing green space (Long, 2015, p. 10).

**Organic Acres (USDA, 2012)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USDA Certified Organic Farms</th>
<th>USDA Organic Production Exempt from Classification</th>
<th>Farms with Sales from 1,000-4,999</th>
<th>Farms with sales over $5,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cass</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additive Statistics: Fertilizer and Chemical Applications (USDA, 2012)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commercial Fertilizer, Lime + Soil</th>
<th>Manure</th>
<th>Control-Insects</th>
<th>Weeds, Grass, Brush</th>
<th>Nematodes</th>
<th>Diseases in crops and orchards</th>
<th>Chemicals used to control growth: thin fruit-ripen, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farms</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>162,682</td>
<td>11,296</td>
<td>79,242</td>
<td>211,276</td>
<td>5,564</td>
<td>23,175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**POLICY**

System of principles that guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. Policies create a statement of intent and protocol.

**CASS COUNTY LOCAL FOOD POLICY COUNCIL IOWA**

Mission:
- Promote stable food systems
- Promote access to healthy, locally produced food
- Bring together organizations + individuals working in agriculture, community organizing, nutrition, health services, food retail, public policy, food services, school districts, etc.

(Cass County Iowa Local Food, 2014)

Number of food policy councils nearly doubled from 111 councils in 2010 to 193 councils in 2012: representing and advocating for health, environmental sustainability, economic viability and socially just food systems.

Reform local, state, federal policies to protect and incentivize horticultural producers at small scale: ecology (social and environmental). Food sovereignty, rural brain drain, we need culture, not cheap fuel and meat produced @ the expense of living communities.
**Backyard Gardens**

An area individually owned, typically in a residential neighborhood that is part of a personal yard. Gardens can be utilized for various growing purposes and can also be shared among neighbors if appropriate. They promote personal access to food and aesthetic, beautiful spaces.

**Public input:**
- Several individuals in Atlantic have gardens
- Anita: Kid and adult cooking classes
- Anita: Recipe sharing (online and in print) to help people learn how to use food and be creative

**Potential Community Impact:**
Cass County stated in their Health Improvement Plan that 28% of the county is obese, and 60% is obese or overweight; less than 8% of the population consumes 5 or more servings of fruit or vegetables per day... Goal is to partner with Healthy Cass County to increase consumption- and to decrease obese and overweight adults to 25% of population.

Backyard gardens could assist in that.

**Faith Gardens**

A garden with particular faith-based affiliations that promote access to food for individuals in need, building community, and creating multi-generational and cultural connections. Generally located near a faith organization or in a common space within the community.

**Public input:**
- Coaliton: There is a current lack of connections to faith-based organization interested in gardening
- Church land to use for community garden- family participates in one in DM- city provides water, church has land, families rent (given plots)
- David York: Methodist church- community garden; Steve Green

**Potential Community Impact:**
Can help promote food security- One acre faith garden donates to kitchens and pantries- and can help feed over 2000 families per year.

Therapeutic space can help relieve stress. Faith gardens create opportunities for volunteerism. Volunteering has been shown to develop community capacity and ownership in the community as well as increase social and relationship skills and benefit the mind Educates and build awareness about hunger, training opportunities for gardening (Long, 2015, p. 14)

**Corporate Gardens**

Land owned by an organization or business that allows for the use of gardening. Management typically includes volunteers from the organization or a non-profit organization that donates the food to those in need. These gardens build awareness of gardening methods and the food system needs in communities for staff, community members, and additional partners.

**Public input:**
- Hy-Vee currently has gardening programs: potential to support local
- The hospital has a strong program- would they offer gardening opportunities
- YMCA- looking into garden potential
- ISU Extension and Outreach office could create an educational garden about local food

**Potential Community Impact:**
- Potential for community partnerships and employee team building;
- Corporate gardens can assist in providing access to land for growing personal food

**Community Gardens**

A public garden that promotes a cross section between public and private entities open to all, or identified users for food access or educational opportunities. Community gardens can be created in a diverse spaces including: rural and urban settings, vacant lots, pocket parks, and local business plots

**Public input:**
- Atlantic: Plots for access to gardens on city lots that are being mowed. Also for social activity
- Atlantic: Vegetable gardens! Either plant together or each rent a plot- need this
- Need more community gardens for public access to grow food (rent space)
- Community garden- shared care so less commitment
- Have more community gardens! Can we find people to run them?
- Like community garden idea especially with condominium & apartments having small, shady yards
- Communities where retired people no longer can maintain a garden: Have FFA boys & girls work to plant the land no longer being used & share part of the produce with land owners & then the kids market the extra @ Farmer Markets & learn marketing.
- Dry place- perhaps downtown: Possible free garden to sell or use by anyone who participates. I know the organizing is difficult.
- Atlantic: More community gardens for public access to grow food (rent space)
Community Gardens

Public Input:
- Atlantic- downtown area: Idea: unoccupied stores tear down and garden- would need to be donated (Scout project, kids activity)
- Community garden- shared care so less commitment
- Have community gardens in ever town- retired people and kids

Potential Community Impact:
Community gardens have been shown to be a catalyst for neighborhood development and beautification and have opportunities to promote self-reliance, access to more nutritious foods thus creating lowered food budget costs. Community gardens also promote additional recreation opportunities and green space improvements that can minimize heat island effects.

School Gardens

Gardens that assist schools in promotion of alternative learning opportunities for Math, Science, English, and Nutrition. School gardens foster growth and knowledge about where food comes from and nourishes healthy living habits. School gardens show children that they are a part of something bigger in their community and school system.

Coalition discussion:
Interest in additional partnerships with schools- primarily for education and health benefits; is there an opportunity to bring back farm to school programs and learn from Atlantic Outdoor Classroom?

"Would love to see more school gardens- cost is an issue"

Public Input:
- CAM: School does an awesome job
- AMS: School garden would be cool
- Griswold: Would love to see more school gardens- cost is an issue
- Atlantic - Washington or HS: EOC (Education Opportunity Center) has used greenhouse- could use more often, expand or year round
- School Gardens: Expand to High School in Atlantic- use the food in the cafeteria or sell
- Incorporating all steps of food production into education- K-12 and college ... IWCC?

Community Interview- Kate Olson
Potential for schools gardens-
- High School and Ag teacher interested- greenhouse and horticulture program trying to expand
- CAM schools in Massena- have a great greenhouse and project: vegetable sales for fund-raiser and tied into outdoor classroom (nature education) - Naturalist for the county into vermi-composting (middle school cafeteria) -- Cass County Conservation runs the outdoor classroom project

IOWA YOUTH SURVEY 2015 (THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA,)

Youth Fruit Consumption:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IN THE LAST 7 DAYS, HOW MANY TIMES DID YOU EAT FRUIT?</th>
<th>I DIDN'T EAT FRUIT</th>
<th>LESS THAN 1 TIME EACH DAY</th>
<th>1 TIME PER DAY</th>
<th>2 TIMES PER DAY</th>
<th>3 TIMES DAYS PER DAY</th>
<th>4 TIMES PER DAY</th>
<th>5 OR MORE TIMES EACH DAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6TH GRADE</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8TH GRADE</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11TH GRADE</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Youth Vegetable Consumption:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IN THE LAST 7 DAYS, HOW MANY TIMES DID YOU EAT VEGETABLES NOT INCLUDING FRENCH FRIES, FRIED POTATOES, OR POTATO CHIPS</th>
<th>I DIDN'T EAT VEGETABLES</th>
<th>LESS THAN 1 TIME EACH DAY</th>
<th>1 TIME PER DAY</th>
<th>2 TIMES PER DAY</th>
<th>3 TIMES DAYS PER DAY</th>
<th>4 TIMES PER DAY</th>
<th>5 OR MORE TIMES EACH DAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6TH GRADE</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8TH GRADE</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11TH GRADE</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Potential Community Impact:
School gardens assist in eliminating barriers for participants; ability to offer age and developmentally appropriate opportunities; plan activities that are sustainable for participants as well as managers of the site (Herder).
Students participating in gardens at school are more willing to eat and grow product. Gardening promotes increased fruit and vegetable intake and willingness to taste fruits and vegetables: 98% of children enjoy tasting the new fruits and vegetables and 96% enjoy working in the garden (Long, 2015, p. 10)

CASS COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN (HIP): Promote Healthy Behaviors:
Less than 25% of Cass County Residents will be obese
- 28% of county are obese, and 60% are obese or overweight
- Less than 8% of the population consumes 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day
Increase consumption of local foods through collaborative efforts: Promote continued resources for Healthy Cass County, and strengthen public health infrastructure
Edible Landscapes

Combine form and function to create practical and edible environments in communities. Edible landscapes build up the environment, increase diversity, and improve food security and horticulture therapy through a connection to nature. Edible landscapes are unique because they incorporate various forms of food such as: fruit trees, berries, herbs, and vegetables with ornamentals.

“Downtown area- unoccupied stores tear down and garden”

Coalition Discussion:
• Many opportunities for areas around the county to include production of local foods as an aesthetic amenity: i.e. trails and parks, ISU Extension office;
• Produce in the park- YMCA garden program and potential expansion within the YMCA programs

Public input:
• Atlantic: Yes, that would be great- I could pick myself
• Atlantic- downtown area: Idea: unoccupied stores tear down and garden- would need to be donated (Scout project, kids activity)
• Love the idea of Edible Landscapes and Farm to School Chapters

Potential Community Impact:
Currently only 37% of households nationwide have gardens, by offering public access to foods it can improve food security and decreased miles traveled for fruits and vegetables; opportunity to connect with park systems and vacant plots for food access

Offers healthy food access within public realms of a city. Currently only 37% of households nationwide have gardens. By offering public access to foods it can improve food security and decrease miles traveled for fruits and vegetables

Community Supported Agriculture

A partnership between farmers and community members working together to create a local food system. There is shared risk of production, allowing for producers to concentrate on growing food and caring for the land and for consumers to receive ultra-fresh, and often times, unique produce and recipes for cooking.

“CSA’s we have are great!”

Public input:
• CSA’s we have are both great! Have done both, would do either again- we travel more now, so FM fit our schedule better.
• More organic food access
• I would like to have a refrigerated place where growers could sell their extra from CSA’s and Farmers Market that could supplement families’ food by allowing families to pick up, say, $10 worth of overripe products for free.
• Permaculture; I’m going to try seed Amaranth; I was going to plant filberts but don’t care for the flavor; I’d love to have Chestnuts grown locally for sale but I don’t have the room.

Contact info: Larry Greufe 712-250-2529

Community Interview: Denise O'Brien

Founded WFAN; involved in Pottawatomie county collaborators and Practical Farmers of Iowa.

Many different interests, including cost analysis of local food systems- how does this work compare to NE Iowa’s collective work with large money input; also compare how much time vs. how much money is needed for local food systems.

Farm-To-School- how to work with schools? We need strong support from community, parents, teachers, chefs, etc. Interested in Farm 2 School Nutrition and helping kids eat better.

CSA- program has always been organic and always wholesale. The farm has a greenhouse/ hoop house; produces turkeys/ chickens- family and local eggs (on Thanksgiving have around 50 turkeys).

Denise partners with Amber Mohr- Avoca, IA Fork Tail Farms- 3 acre homestead. They collaborate on Thanksgiving Turkeys- Amber produces 30 turkeys for Thanksgiving and also harvests crops (peas, sweet potatoes, green beans).

Potential Community Impact:

Consumers can save up to %39 by purchasing from CSA vs. supermarkets, and the sale goes to a member in the community, with a high likelihood that those dollars will also stay within the community.

2 farms currently marketing through a CSA: may be opportunity to continue to grow direct markets. Community members who participate in CSA's have sa
Urban Farms

Urban land utilized to maximize local food outputs and assists in meeting needs for local food production and community food security. Farms enhance communities by providing a sustainable food source within city limits develops community capacity; and promoting food access within city limits. Farming in the city enhances the built environment.

“Atlantic- downtown area: Idea: unoccupied stores tear down and garden- would need to be donated (Scout project, kids activity)”

Potential Community Impact:
With every $1 invested in an urban farm or garden, $6 are generated in worth of vegetables. Assist in mitigating soil erosion in urban centers and can assist in decreasing carbon footprint by lowering the amount of miles traveled to market.

Rural Agriculture

Contributes vast amount of products into the local and regional food system with practices that are typically environmentally conscious practices, socially equitable, and humane to animals. Rural and Sustainable farms are most often operating at a larger scale than urban settings and can thus provide larger quantities into the food system through various means of retail and wholesale marketing, aggregation, or direct sales.

“Need for farmers to have an avenue to send non-purchased foods within the season- i.e. cooperatives/auctions…”

Coalition Discussion:
- Is there a way to work with local restaurants, food service, and hospitals to know the amount spent on local food purchases?
- Is there a way to work with local restaurants, food service, and hospitals to know the amount spent on local food purchases?
- Cass County & environment: Agriculture is an important part of the local economy & community – people should have opportunities to participate as producers & others in the community should understand what is produced & how.
- Local Fish Farm
- More organic food access
- High Tunnels, grants, David Young; Need non-traditional, USDA options
- Consumer awareness of how food grows (effort, resources needed)
- Permaculture; I’m going to try seed Amaranth; I was going to plant filberts but don’t care for the flavor; I’d love to have Chestnuts
- Consumer awareness of how food grows (effort, resources needed)
- Permaculture; I’m going to try seed Amaranth; I was going to plant filberts but don’t care for the flavor; I’d love to have Chestnuts

Community Interview- Armstrong Farm

The site has 400 acres- 5-80 acres spaces. Part of the area is dedicated to the donation garden plot: 40x80’- 1/4 in butterfly habitat and 3/4 vegetable production. Cindy Haynes from ISU manages program, there are 8-10 master gardeners involved. Volunteers help to manage, weigh and deliver product. They have had 1800 pounds donated. Every other day pick and all of products are donated (Anita, Atlantic, Griswold, Ann Wickham, and Atlantic Summer Meals). There is also a Monarch Butterfly habitat area that has been developed as a research component. The rest of site includes corn-strips project, soy- strips project, and cattle: breeding project; genetic production- feed efficiency- electric bins (IAUCU). There is an existing green house in Atlantic- 24x40’ or 24 x 36’. It had operated a maize heating system and corn burning. The satellite site in Greenfield has organic vegetables/ oats and grapes, as well as sorghum.

Rural Agriculture

Potential Community Impact:
- 3 Farms listed in Market Maker for direct sale options
- Continuation of rural farming preserves family legacy and natural heritage of the land

Processing Facilities + Mobile Processing Units

Physically or chemically altering foods to add value. Processing facilities work with everything from produce to dairy to meat and array of activities from mincing to emulsifying to cooking and preserving. This is a way for farmers to add-value to their product, but can be a large investment. Independent processing centers can help establish economic growth and opportunities.

Mobile slaughter units (MSUs) go directly to farms and can generate creative, niche markets for both animal and produce. Since Mobile Processing Units go directly to farm or specific locations, they offer locally processed, locally raised products.

Public input:
- SW Iowa: Ability to process ag products is a great value-adding aspect for local foods. This can enable small and medium scale producers to make a decent living. Also can enable using goods profitably.
- I would like to have a refrigerated place where growers could sell their extra from CSA’s and Farmers Market that could supplement families food by allowing families to pick up, say, $10 worth of overripe products for free.

Community Interview- Kate Olson

There is consideration of a poultry processing site with Golden Hills. They have grant funding, project coordinator, etc. There have been a few road blocks and have not found processors that are interested in making the modifications to process poultry and make infrastructure improvement. It started because anyone who wanted to build or upgrade, didn’t have the market base to keep the new organization consistently busy

Potential Community Impact:
- Processing facilities assist in increasing product value and offer niche products. There are also opportunities for multiple-scales of businesses and incubator opportunities.
Public input:
• I would like to see most local cafes and restaurants sell local produce in season & meats. This provides a great economic development opportunity to support local foods and to provide the highest quality ingredients.

“\textit{I would like to see most local cafes and restaurants sell local produce in season...}”

Public input:
• I would like to see most local cafes and restaurants sell local produce in season & meats. This provides a great economic development opportunity to support local foods and to provide the highest quality ingredients.

Redwood Lounge in Anita is an existing place that buys local when they can

Potential Community Impact:
The National Restaurants Association is noticing more interest in what people are eating and where it comes from, thus leading to increased purchases from local and regional producers. Opportunity for education for producers, business owners and consumers on seasonality and what grows local

Food Trucks
Food trucks promote food access through creative ways: restaurants on wheels; they also provide a strong cultural identity for the community. Food trucks offer unique ways of incorporating economic development into the food system through incorporation of mobile food vending for diverse backgrounds and cultural experiences.

Potential Community Impact:
The average food truck start-up requires between $55,000-75,000: about $200,000-400,000 less than bricks and mortar.
• Economic Development Generation: In 2012 $650 million in revenue was generated from food trucks-approximately 1 percent of the total U.S. restaurant sales. It is expected that by 2017, food trucks will generate 3-4 percent of the revenue, or about $2.7 billion
Food trucks offer a business model with relatively low start-up cost that assists persons with diverse backgrounds and socioeconomic status

Farmers Markets
Existing city space is re-used as a market for all individuals to socialize and purchase fresh and affordable products that reflect regional and community diversity. Farmers Markets bridge social gaps and create access to affordable, healthy food choices in urban and rural communities.

“\textit{Need more accessible local foods than just once a week at a Farmers Market?”...“How do we focus on getting more local food to high number of low-income individuals?}”

Coalition Discussion:
• Is there a need for more promotion of the farmers markets/ access to farmers market? – Double up bucks program/ Farmers Market Promotion Program
• Atlantic- potential for chamber bucks to be used to generate additional access for all markets

Public input:
• Atlantic: We need more garden foods.
• Lewis, Griswold: More distribution, selling points
• Less expensive vendor fees at Produce in the Park
• Produce in the park- good, but don’t need more
• Like Farmers Market better CSA
• Would like to see kids day at the market and an organized market for surrounding communities
• I would like to have a refrigerated place where growers could sell their extra from CSA’s and Farmers Market that could supplement families’ food by allowing families to pick up, say, $10 worth of overripe products for free.

Potential Community Impact:
Farmers Markets may be able to assist in increasing fruit and vegetable consumption- a CHNA & HIP Priority Goals: less than 25% of Cass County Residents will be obese
• Less than 8% of population consume 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables/ day

Public Markets
Public Markets build grocers and retailers that benefit the local economy and deliver seasonal and assorted product, improve their carbon footprint and increase options for natural and organic production. Offering retail products allows for an additional benefit of consumers being able to celebrate regional and cultural food from their home.
Grocery Stores

Stores come in many sizes and shapes and offer various specialties in regards to retail products. Smaller format stores include convenience stores, delis, and health food stores. Within the local food realm, a common goal is also to enhance community economic development. Local grocers can assist in this movement by offering retail products that celebrate regional and cultural food.

“Each town should have a set of core businesses.”

Public input:
- Rural towns: Having a local grocery store in small towns is important, especially for older people. Each town should have a set of core businesses.
- More organic food access

Potential Community Impact:
Grocery stores offer opportunities for use of Women Infant and Children as well as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs. There are 33 stores within the region that are Iowa WIC approved. Opportunities for both locally owned businesses, promotion of local produced goods, and continued promotion of supplemental programs exist within grocery stores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Supermarkets &amp; Grocery Stores</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retail Food Establishments</td>
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<td>Cass</td>
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SUPERMARKETS: A full line of fresh produce, fresh meat and poultry, dairy, dry and packaged foods, and canned and frozen foods.

CONVENIENT STORES: A limited line of products that generally include milk, bread, soda, and snacks. May be connected to a gasoline-station. Specifically used for access to low cost items: bread, eggs, milk.

SPECIALTY FOOD STORES: Narrow line of specialty products such as meat, fish, fruits and vegetables, baked goods, or other foods.

WAREHOUSE CLUBS AND SUPERCENTERS: A general line of groceries along with other types of merchandise including apparel and household goods.

Food Hubs

Food Hubs are a bridge between consumers, buyers, producers and food businesses. They provide a middle ground for the food system. This business or organization manages aggregation, distribution, and marketing of products that are primarily from local or regional producers.

“SW Iowa: Marketing opportunities at direct market is limited in Cass County/older rural areas. Efficient & cost effective distribution opportunities can enable expansion of local food production.”

Community Interview- Ellen Walsh-Rosman
Goal- to strengthen the local economy/job growth/farmer expansion
Also owns a restaurant- local food/ breakfast and lunch in Harlan

Before starting Farm Table- grew veggies and sold wholesale; has been selling to others since November 2013; In September 2014 got a kick starter program grant; in November-December (2015) looked for space; April 2015 received space from City of Harlan with walk in cooler and low paying rent.
The transition has been popular for home/ work separation and needed storage
Farm Table Deliver Site Set-up
- Walk in cooler (dairy)
- Freezer
- Packing supplies- other needs/ supplies for sale: bulk seed/ soil
- Dry storage
- Walk in cooler for produce in the works
- Washing station and packing station
- Office space/ Resource center- meeting space for farmers
- Would like to have processing kitchen: Pre-interest assessment starting in October 2016; Marketing and Food Systems Initiative grant application in October 2016

Currently work with Hy-Vee in Omaha and Ames; Des Moines- Amish Growers/ Blue Gates; All times- Lacewing/ Salama/ Lees Greens/ Story City Locker/ 7 Pines/ Grinnel Heritage/ Wallace House

Operation: Full time-delivery/ warehouse manager; Part time book keeper; Part time social media; Cold calls and Marketing
### Composting Programs
Reduces carbon footprint and enhances environmental quality through school gardens and education through hands-on learning.

### Potential Community Impact:
- Offers education on nutrition, high quality local food for children and enhances classroom learning.
- Provides an average 5% increase in income from farm to school sales for individual farmers.
- Financial opportunity for producers and processors by opening the door to an institutional market.

### Cooperatives
Typically in the shape of a grocery store, market, or distribution hub, cooperatives are collectively-owned by workers and/or customers. The goal of being cooperatively owned is to bring the highest quality and best value to members of the business. Many cooperatives offer education opportunities to members, high quality product, member decision making and control, and support for their local communities.

### Potential Community Impact:
- Offers opportunities for mutual benefit within the community and enhances options for community and economic development.
- Cooperative businesses stabilize communities because they are community-based business anchors.

### Farm to School
Implementation for farm to school can include procurement from local farmers, education on agriculture, food, health, and nutrition, and school gardening where kids have an opportunity to learn through hands-on experiences. The goal for farm to school is for children, producers and communities to be vibrant.

#### Public input:
- Atlantic MS & HS: Kids need to understand food production & valuable life skills.
- Every school in Cass County & environment: F to S provides both marketing opportunities for local producers & educational opportunities for students to learn about the foods they eat.
- Farm to School: Expand this project- use food in the school system as much as possible.
- Love the idea of Edible Landscapes and Farm to School Chapters.
- Anita: Kid and adult cooking classes.

#### Potential Community Impact:
- Financial opportunity for producers and processors by opening the door to an institutional market; average 5% increase in income from farm to school sales for individual farmers.
- Provides education on nutrition, high quality local food for children and enhances classroom education through hands-on learning.
- Reduces carbon footprint and enhances environmental quality through school gardens and composting programs.

### Auctions
Multiple business models exist for auctions- cooperative, individual sales, for-profit organizations, etc. They are established to allow for consumers to purchase from local/ regional producers. The auction method offers a true supply and demand environment. Auctions can offer a variety of products depending on the organization and producers supply, many also offer choices like wholesale pricing.

### Shared-Use Kitchens
Shared-use kitchens have the opportunity to bridge a full range of issues in the local food system, including access to healthy foods. Shared-use kitchens provide comprehensive and diverse approaches to offering opportunities to value-added product, and cook from a shared-location to create a self-financed, sustainable business model.

#### Coalition Discussion:
- SWIFFI/ Farm Table Delivery and Shelby County Chamber/ Economic Development are doing a pre-feasibility study for the opportunity of a shared-use kitchen @ the Farm Table Site; there may be potential to collaborate.

#### Public input:
- SW Iowa: Developing value-added products can provide income generation opportunities and diversify opportunities for local producers. The trick is to make them cost-effective or incubator businesses.

### Potential Community Impact:
- Have a broad public purpose. They celebrate regional culture through food and local business opportunities.
- Operate as business incubators; operating under community health and safety standards for value-added products.
- In addition, shared-use kitchens support the local food system; creating a space for both farmers, culinary providers, and entrepreneurs to develop holistic partnerships that support the local food system from start to finish.

### Local Food Coordinators
Many groups and organizations can play a role in initiating a local food system. However, experience suggests the most efficient way to build a sustainable and effective local food system is to have a person serve in a leadership role to orchestrate and coordinate its evolution. The creation of a resilient local food system requires the participation of many different community stakeholders: producers, consumers, institutions, businesses, and government agencies.

#### Community Interview: Kate Olson
The local foods coordinator could potentially work with Healthy Cass/ Public Health/ and local foods as a project coordinator. Kate doesn’t believe that Cass County could support a full time local foods coordinator, and may make sense under the larger Healthy Cass Coalition.

A board of supervisor outsourced public health to Unity Point in Des Moines— (Unity Point manages home care/ hospice across the state- but haven’t separated out the public health staff for county). Now public health person back in hospital system- Beth Olson is now the coordinator full time and the coordinator for healthy Cass County. Would it make sense for that person to have time in their schedule to be a project manager, and house local foods project? Healthy Cass, Cass County Action Coalition still need to figure out who owns what project or who knows what information. Other options to have county to appoint a person to go to the food policy council, that is still in the first year of implementing improvement plan.

### Potential Community Impact:
- Anita- Recipe sharing (online and in print) to help people learn how to use food and be creative.

#### “Farm to School: Expand this project-use food in school system as much as possible”
- “Help starter businesses with a place they could utilize for their products to see if their are markets!”
Food Enterprise Centers build businesses through entrepreneurial investments in local food, approaching scaling up the food system through a self-financed, sustainable profitable model. Many of these programs work hard to include shareholder loyalty by including options to buy into the company or provide memberships. This strategy builds a market base and assists in community capacity and financial sustainability.

**Potential Community Impact:**
Opportunity for many new businesses and beginning entrepreneurs to start new business and develop potential new products utilizing local ingredients.

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**Awareness Campaign**
Marketing campaigns build public support for a particular issue that an organization seeks to resolve or get behind. Typically, the campaign is a comprehensive effort between multiple partners. A campaign should speak to a targeted audience and seek out a particular action, for social behavior improvements.

**Public input:**
- Fund it! Fees—somewhat reduced! To help find a way to fund!
- 4-H Clubs/County-Wide: Produce as projects/exhibits
- All over: Education on value + pricing for local foods— not a garage sale
- Consumer awareness of how food grows (effort, resources needed)

**Potential Community Impact:**
Awareness campaigns can effect behaviors of individuals, or build relationships that change lives. Strategic development of campaigns can have lasting positive impacts on building awareness for a particular organization, initiative, or topic.

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**Education Centers**
Teach young and old alike about agricultural systems through hands-on experience. These centers can take on many perspectives from sustainable agriculture production, the history of agriculture, or philosophies and theories behind best management practices of production. Many centers offer learning labs, workshops, and many different types of opportunities to learn about types of food production and ways to integrate food production into life at home.

**Public input:**
- Atlantic: What to grow, how to cook, information + classes for lower income residents
- Food & preservation classes for kids—many not learning from parents
- Cooking demos with local foods

**Potential Community Impact:**
Agricultural education centers allow for immersion into the landscape that is being portrayed and developed; creating a lasting impact on the user. Providing access to agricultural systems and community-based curriculum or educational opportunities, allows for students (young and old) to be better connected and aware of their environment.

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**Food Banks**
Offer dry, cooled and freezer storage space for distribution to individuals. Many food banks serve partner agencies (pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters). Food within the food banks are donated from food drives, individual donations, retail donations and other sources. Food banks store and have direct service programs and partner agencies to give out food to individuals in need.

**Public input:**
- Atlantic: Separate from food banks, more access to free produce—many cannot afford every couple of weeks
- Food pantry pick up at the end of Farmers’ Market
- Cumberland/Messena: There are folks who are hungry/lack access to food—community meals or pantry?
- Collect surplus—currently take to Open Door Mission

**Potential Community Impact:**
Food banks are community leaders and assist people in need. Food banks are also able to advocate for programs that are at the root causes of poverty.

Food banks provide meals by looking into opportunities for wasted food; provide services for disaster release and targeted programs for children and seniors, and lead in the fight against hunger by raising awareness, advocating for food-insecure individuals and conducting research.

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**Food System Policy Councils**
Bring together multiple community sectors around common goals for the community food system. Food policy councils support communities in their efforts to rebuild, with existing community assets, local and regional food systems. This collaboration assists partners within various scales of communities to move forward in food system change through coordinated efforts for policy change. Food policy councils defend and articulate the priorities of the community that inform local and regional policies to continue to enhance the opportunity for implementation of local food systems.

**Cass County Local Food Policy Council**

**Mission:**
- Promote stable food systems
- Promote access to healthy, locally produced food
- Bring together organizations + individuals working in agriculture, community organizing, nutrition, health services, food retail, public policy, food services, school districts, etc. (Cass County Iowa Local Food, 2014)

**Potential Community Impact:**
Number of food policy councils nearly doubled from 111 councils in 2010 to 193 councils in 2012: representing and advocating for health, environmental sustainability, economic viability and socially just food systems.
**Food Recovery**

Bridge between food waste and fighting hunger. Food recovery works to offer opportunities for individuals, organizations, and farmers to donate food that is not used rather than throwing it away. This can be done through gleaning programs at farms or supermarkets where non-sold goods are donated to food banks; or can be offered through new programs like phone applications where individuals and businesses can link up with food banks and food pantries for needed donations of food.

**Public input:**
- Atlantic - Separate from food banks, more access to free produce - many cannot afford - every couple of weeks
- Food pantry pick up at the end of Farmers’ Market
- Cumberland/Messena: There are folks who are hungry / lack access to food - community meals or pantry?
- Collect surplus – currently take to Open Door Mission

**“Food Pantry pick up at the end of Farmers Markets”**

**Potential Community Impact:**
Provide additional means for individuals to have access to nutritious foods
Allow for additional venues for volunteer programs and organizations to give back to their community