Food Systems from the Farmer View
Local Food Demand - Now What?

Texas Organic Farmers & Gardeners Conference
February, 2018    Georgetown, Texas
Presentation by: Sue Beckwith, Ava Cameron, Dr. Rebekka Dudensing
Texas Center for Local Food

• Vision: Sustainable Texas food systems that are healthy for people, animals, and the planet.

• Purpose: Increase farmer net income and create quality rural jobs in Texas

• Farmer-directed

• Economics

• Resource and Referral
Texas Center for Local Food - Projects

- USDA FoodLINC - leveraging value chains for increased wholesale sales e.g. Austin Good Food Purchasing Program
- Local Food Price Study
- Food hub feasibility
- Farm and food business resources directory and event calendar
- Local Food Leader training statewide
- Beyond Fresh: Farmer Guide to Value-Added Processing
- ELF - Elgin Local Food Center
- Farmers Market Metrics
- Elgin ISD After School local food and agriculture
- Hurricane Harvey Emergency Relief

Texas Center for Local Food has 2 staff people
Collaborators

National Center for Appropriate Technology
Austin Foodshed Investors
Sustainable Food Center
City of Elgin
Elgin Economic Development Corp
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
City of Austin Office of Sustainability
Advocacy Outreach of Elgin
Elgin ISD
Oklahoma State University
Growers Alliance of Central Texas
USDA Rural Development
Iowa State University
Capital Area Council of Governments
Wallace Center

Austin Community College
Prairie View A&M University
GROW Local South Texas
USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
Texas Organic Farmers & Gardeners
Farm & Ranch Freedom Alliance
Stellar Gourmet
Bernhardt’s Farm
Green Gate Farm
Methodist Ministries
Texas Farmers Markets
National Farmers Market Coalition
Central TX Young Farmers Coalition
Austin/Travis Cty Food Policy Board
Texas State University
Bastrop County Tourism

And YOU!
USDA FoodLINC
Connecting rural suppliers with urban buyers

Organizations and Locations

1. La Montanita Co-op
2. Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
3. Communities Unlimited
4. The Conservation Fund
5. Louisville Farm to Table
6. Common Market Georgia
7. Appalachian Sustainable Development
8. Metro Washington Council of Governments
9. Fair Food
10. Soul City Hospitality

New Food LINC Coordinators
11. Family Farmed
12. Texas Center for Local Food
13. Food Commons Fresno

Project Locations
USDA FoodLINC
Leveraging value chains
Catalyzing Collaboration and Equity

Shared Mission Values
Examples:
- Farm viability
- Farmland preservation
- Healthy food access
- Sustainable production methods

Shared Operation Values
Include, but are not limited to:
- Accountability
- Long-term commitment
- Open and ongoing communication
- Transparency

Input suppliers
Farmers/ranchers
Aggregators/processors
Distributors
Members of local food systems
Consumers
Restaurants, food, service, and food retail
Waste disposal
Compost

How Does Value Chain Thinking Impact My Farm?

- It Worked! Farmers markets, sustainable and organic farms of the 70s, 80s, 90s

- Markets are changing
  - Farm-to-School in 42,587 schools
  - 42% of U.S. school districts
  - Farmers Markets 8,144

- Demand is increasing - Austin area est. $50M for local food budget of Austin ISD + UT + Convention Center about $25M/year

- People and institutions (schools, hospitals, grocers, etc.) are changing where they spend their money.

- Local + Clean That’s YOU!
Can farmers get a fair price selling to institutions?

How does this demand lead to more rural jobs?

How do we meet this demand?

How do we find resources to help us?
# Vegetable Price Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetable</th>
<th>$ Diff</th>
<th>Vegetable</th>
<th>$ Diff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer squash</td>
<td>- $ 0.04</td>
<td>Eggplant</td>
<td>+ $ 0.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Okra</td>
<td>+ $ 0.45</td>
<td>Lettuce (1 lb bag)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cucumbers</td>
<td>- $ 0.22</td>
<td>Cabbage</td>
<td>- $ 0.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carrots</td>
<td>- $ 0.53</td>
<td>Broccoli</td>
<td>+ $ 0.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bell peppers</td>
<td>- $ 0.16</td>
<td>Potatoes (red)</td>
<td>- $ 0.91</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
<td>- $0.51</td>
<td>Sweet Potatoes</td>
<td>--</td>
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Funded by St. David’s Foundation. Conducted by TCLF, Texas State, TX A&M AgriLife Ext.
Broccoli

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Farm 1-50 lb</th>
<th>Farm 51-100 lb</th>
<th>Farm 101+ lb</th>
<th>Wholesale Buyer</th>
<th>Ref Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median Upper</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>2.14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<td>3.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median Lower</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Findings and Next Steps

• Discussion tool, not final answers.

• Farmers are willing to serve more wholesale demand.

• Price is important to buyers, but so is preparation (e.g., diced bell peppers, baby carrots), especially in schools.

• Value-added opportunity for farmers?
Texas Center for Local Food Resource Directory

http://texaslocalfood.org

Ava Cameron

AskMe@TexasLocalFood.org
Actions

Network with other farmers and ranchers

Participate. Share your voice.

Meet your local school board

If you’re interested in wholesale, let us know

Help us build the resource directory

Hold farm tours

Join your agriculture, civic & community organizations

Know your price and claim it

“Go on and do your work. Do it well.” - Ursula K. Le Quin
THANK YOU! Questions?
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