



USING LOCAL FOOD BANKS TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY OF SMALL AND LIMITED RESOURCE FARMS

Presentation at the Prosperity for
Small and Medium-Sized Farms and
Rural Communities Programs PD
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GROWING FOODS LOCALLY

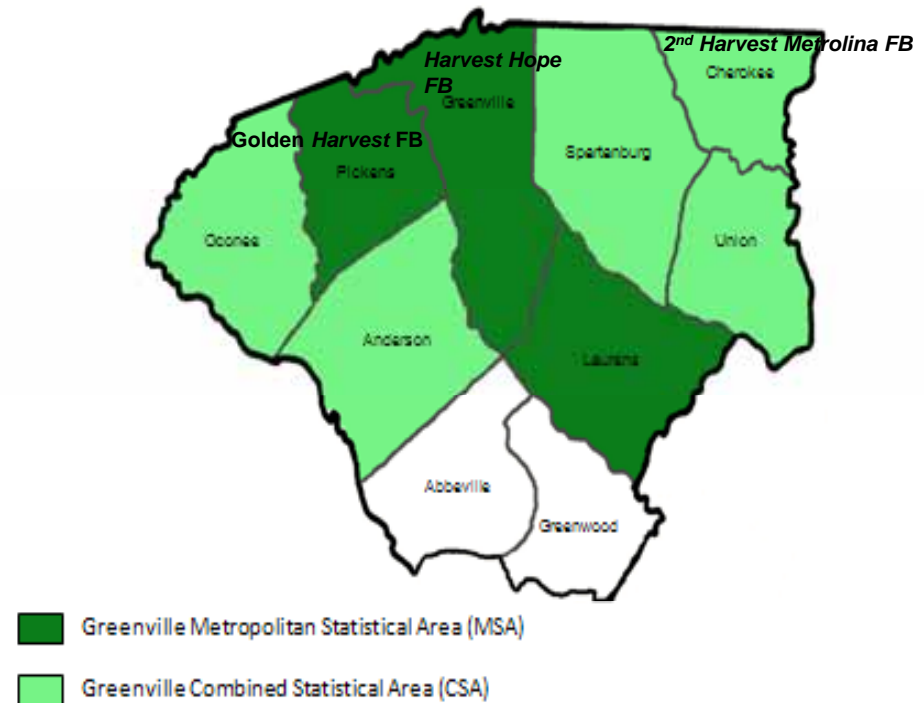
- Sponsors: Lowcountry Food Bank and Clemson University
- Project Goals:
 - Provide nutritious food to food bank clients
 - Use the local food assistance system to grow small farms
 - Promote local community economic development
 - Transform how food banks operate
- Robinson, K.L., K. K. Robinson, C.E. Carpio and D. Hughes, “Linking Sustainable Agriculture and Community Development: The Lowcountry Food Bank’s Use of Locally Grown Foods,” *Journal of the Community Development Society*, Vol. 38, No. 3, Fall 2007.



FINDINGS FROM LCFB STUDY

- Increased farm profits
- Increased crop yields
- Improved crop quality
- Provided impetus for exploring possibility of “scaling up” the project in the rest of S.C.

South Carolina Upstate



○ Research Interest

- King, *et al* (2010) - The link between local food systems and community development was found to have benefits beyond those of individual producers: “Nearly all wage and proprietor income in the local supply chains is retained locally, but local areas also retain a large share of wage and proprietor income from the mainstream supply chains.

○ Research Questions

- Can small, limited resource farmers benefit from access to a local nonprofit intermediary that will take on the critical roles of transportation, storage, and marketing the local brand?
- How much can these farmers gain by using a non-profit intermediary relative to using traditional farmers markets or for profit brokers?
- Are the gains (if any) from using a non-profit intermediary enough to sustain and expand the operations of small farmers?
- For which commodities are the gains likely to be sufficient to adapt the non-profit intermediary as the key broker for small farm producers?
- Will use of a non-profit intermediary for small farm distribution and marketing provide added stimulus to the local economy proximate to small farm operations?



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- Proposed Activities
 - Establish price premiums
 - Estimate net revenue impacts
 - Assess the viability of local food banks in marketing role
 - Estimate the impacts on the income and employment in Upstate SC
- Contingent Valuation Methods to evaluate consumer preferences
- Survey of small/medium-sized farms to analyze the current potential supply of local grown products
- Develop local networks between food banks and farmers to supply food products needed by local food banks
- IMPLAN models to be used to estimate and compare impacts with those of mainstream marketing channels

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Changes in Knowledge
 - Consumer Preferences
 - Demand for local farm products
 - To whom to promote locally grown products
 - Availability of local produce from local region producers

POTENTIAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS

- Changes in Conditions
 - More markets for local farmers' products
 - Local farm sales contribute to a healthy local economy
 - Increase in revenues to local farmers
 - Revenue generated from local sales stays within local economy
 - Sustainability of small and medium-sized farms
 - Residents buy greater amounts of locally grown produce
- Changes in Actions
 - Increase in sustainable agriculture practices
 - Increase in produce quality
 - Access to strategically located direct markets near rural Upstate communities
 - Increase in networking and sharing resources among stakeholders
 - Local officials establish sustainable economic development policies relative to small/medium-sized farms



PROGRESS UPDATE

- Received project approval March 2011
- Recruited local food bank managers
- Started to identify small farms in the Upstate
- Begun surveying small farmer participants
- Charted retail, wholesale prices of all locally grown produce and fruit
- Created crop harvest schedules to drive produce into food banks year around
- Completed report on food bank infrastructure and potential as a direct market for Upstate small-scale farm produce and fruit



CURRENT FINDINGS

- Upstate food banks purchase very little produce; mostly donated. Approx 10 million lbs of produce circulated 2010 from three food banks serving Upstate
- Currently main food bank in Upstate does not to sell produce and fruit; they give it away without usual 19 cent per lb maintenance fee.
- Some produce can be purchased with 19 cents per lb or lower because that's more than wholesale price.
- Currently finding out what lowest price is that farmers will require for their produce and fruit.
- One food bank willing to explore the possibility of a separate enterprise (501c3) to sell farmer produce. There is a demand for produce from affiliating agencies.
- No Upstate farmers are donating or selling produce to food bank currently; only farmers located elsewhere. Room for linkage.
- There is potential for local farmers to sell produce through the processors and wholesalers affiliated with the food bank system.
- There is potential and willingness for our partner food bank (HHFB) to distribute produce to all food banks in S.C. and to major farmers' markets



FOOD BANKS RECRUITED

- Of the three food banks examined, Harvest Hope Food Bank, Greenville is in the best position to accomplish the goals of Clemson's research project. The regional director and CEO are interested in an exclusive partnership with Clemson.
- They have refrigerated warehouse space and distribution systems needed to move large volumes of produce throughout the state.
- It has a trained volunteer workforce. It has 4 trucks (one 24 foot box; three 20 foot trucks) that it uses to pick up product from various vendors.



IDENTIFIED SAMPLE OF FARMS THAT DONATE PRODUCE TO HHFB

Farm	Lbs. Donated
Cedar Creek Farms	19,148
Marvin Davenport	14,086
Dixie Belle Farms	105,630
Healds Valley Farm	122,328
Jackson Bros Farms	255,017
James R Sease Farms	46,415
James Sease Farms	22,495
J. A. Watson & Sons	10,009
McColl Farms	61,030
Nesmith Produce	1,177
Schaefer Farms	40,040
Senn Brothers	104,458
Severt & Sons	50,985
Torrey Farms	41,265
Walter P Rawl & Sons	539,105
Wm Bolthouse Farms	41,104
Williams Farm	76,260
Totals	1,550,552

- A few of the produce vendors were examined to determine the various types of business that are currently associated with HHFB relative to securing produce, besides just farmers.
- An examination of the various networks of agencies indicates that farmers in the Upstate could gain access to new wholesale and retail markets through their association with the HHFB.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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