Applying Entrepreneurship to Support Farm Viability, Economic Development, and Food Security

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- 50,000+ producers, service providers, institutions, enterprises, consumers, government agencies
Introduction

• Systematic understanding of entrepreneurship in agricultural and food industry, and linkages to our society, environment, and ecology

• Food networks versus food systems

• Theories versus practices

• Local, regional, and national implications

• Project update
What Agriculture and Food Mean

• Food - material consisting essentially of protein, carbohydrate, and fat used in the body of an organism to sustain growth, repair, and vital processes and to furnish energy” (Merriam Webster Dictionary)

• Tools and resources to create/support interactions of people, place, and prosperity

  ➢ New studies focus on quality of food, origins of food, characteristics of food, functions of food, and purposes of food from social, economic, and ecological aspects.

  ➢ USDA created the Know Your Farmers, Know Your Food initiative in 2009 to help connect producers with new opportunities in local and regional food markets. Since 2009, USDA has funded over 2,700 projects including creating new community food projects, supporting farmers’ market promotion and establishment, and strengthening beginning farmer and rancher development.
Food Environment Atlas

Overview

Food environment factors—such as store/restaurant proximity, food prices, food and nutrition assistance programs, and community characteristics—interact to influence food choices and diet quality. Research has been documenting the complexity of these interactions, but more research is needed to identify causal relationships and effective policy interventions.

The objectives of the Atlas are:

- to assemble statistics on food environment indicators to stimulate research on the determinants of food choices and diet quality, and
- to provide a spatial overview of a community’s ability to access healthy food and its success in doing so.

Note: The Food Environment Atlas application now has an improved high-resolution map export capability, no longer requires the Flash plugin, and is iPad compatible.

For developers: grab the API.
Design and Interpretation of Food Systems

Google Images

[Diagram of Local Food System Analysis]

[Diagram of Food Systems]

[Diagram of Economic Resilience]

[Diagram of Food System: Future Reality]

[Diagram of Food System ACTIVITIES and OUTCOMES]

[Diagram of Everybody Eats: How a Community-Based Food System Works]
Food Networks

Production
- Inputs
- Natural Resource
- Environment
- People and other inputs
- Climate
- Policy

Distribution
- Transportation
- Processing and handling
- Storage
- Safety

Use
- Intermediate use
- Consumption
- Waste
- Energy & Natural Resources

Relationship
- Connection
- Exchange

Confidence
- Trust
- Competency

Impact

Food Systems
A Framework for Planning and Implementation

• Needs and Priorities
• Culture
• Endowment
• Capacity
• Infrastructure
• Opportunities

Issues and Concerns for Rural America

• Social Characteristics
• Economic Characteristics
• Ecological Characteristics
• Political Characteristics
Entrepreneurial Strategies and Network Development

• An evolving trend in developing relationships between producers and buyers (individual, household, organization, institution).

• Growing interests in understanding availability, affordability, accessibility, and accountability with respect to food production, distribution, and consumption.

• New paradigm in market
  ➢ Multifunctional agriculture – agritourism, direct sales, value added, and off farm work (different from diversification)
  ➢ Network marketing – communication, quality of information and relationship, and mutual benefits for firms and customers (different from distribution channel)
Issues and Gaps in Designing and Implementing Entrepreneurial Strategies

- Types of communities
- Types of producers
- Types of buyers

Decisions
- Goals
- Budget
- Choices
- Location
- Preferences

Economic, Social, Environmental Impacts
Creative Strategies

• Bring food to buyers in a consistent and convenient manner
  • Community gathering and events
  • New communities under construction
    • Design concept and prepare for budget
    • Edible gardens, kids/family corner
  • Corporations and hospitals
  • Churches and other religion programs
  • Daycare, YMCA/YWCA, Red Cross, library, schools
• Mobile services with coordinated effort – Amazon and Whole Foods
Creative Strategies

**Affordable**
- Calculate your price, cost, and margin carefully
- Design a price level that is reasonable and competitive (who are your competitors?)
- Include, story, quality, and service in your price
- Be reasonable

**Work with non-conventional buyers**
- New York farmer’s market links to local restaurants
- Ohio local food links to Dollar Stores
- High-end value added - Cut flower, trendy healthy food, use of “waste” to create high value-added products
## The Biggest Problem in Resource – Labor

Responses gathered from 150+ farmers in WI, PA, VT, NH

- Lack of adequate labor pool
- Profit margin too small to support labor
- Cost of living exceeds wage limits
- Farmers not prepared for the reality of managing
- Increasing demand for “local” product
- Out-migration of youth
- Growing economy
- Low unemployment in non-Ag sectors
- Addiction issues
- Season extension
- Quality considerations

Responses gathered from new/beginning farmers and potential farmers across 30+ states

- Lack of employment opportunities on farms
- Lack of training and hands-on works on farms
- Lack of experience and skills to work with farmers
Dissemination and Practices

• Engage in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary collaborations

• Design innovative and collaborative programs
  - robotic system, auto sensor, renewable energy, biomass, creative farming in different scales, specialty crops and value added

• Empower non-conventional research, teaching, and outreach initiatives
  - non-ag background new farmer, K-12 education and training, consumer education
Innovations in Economic Development through Local Food Economies

Please choose only ONE location from our three regional events:

- September 12, 2017 | South Central & Southeastern North Carolina | Ellerbe, NC
  Ellerbe Springs Inn, 2537 North US HWY 220, Ellerbe, NC
- September 15, 2017 | Western North Carolina | Waynesville, NC
  Haywood Ag Center, 589 Raccoon Rd, Waynesville, NC
- September 19, 2017 | North Central & Northeastern North Carolina | Henderson, NC
  Vance/Granville Community College, 200 Community College Rd, Henderson, NC