

# Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development 2015 Highlights



## Director's Message

Local and regional food systems — while growing in popularity and support across the nation — are especially relevant in the Northeast, where farmers and producers have access to several large population centers that serve as lucrative markets for direct sales. In fact, our research has demonstrated that the positive economic effects of local food sales are especially strong in the Northeast when compared to other regions. In the last year we have been able to expand our work in the area of local and regional food systems development, further consolidating the Northeast Regional Center's position as a leader in this rapidly growing field.

This food systems work not only bridges our priority areas (jobs and entrepreneurship, regional foods, natural resources, and capacity building), but it also represents new multidisciplinary collaborations and builds significantly on past investments. For example, the Agricultural Marketing Service grant-writing workshops described below have supported on-the-ground Farmers Markets and Local Foods grants projects that have the potential to increase entrepreneurship and related employment nationally, in addition to strengthening local linkages between farmers and consumers.

The groundbreaking research on Enhancing Food Security in the Northeast through Regional Food Systems, our signature project, also

considers various land use scenarios under climate change and other simulations.

As in the past, we are deeply grateful to our growing network of collaborators in the region, nationally, and in Washington, DC for making this work possible, as we are to our sponsors for entrusting us with this important work. In addition, we rely heavily on our Technical Advisory Committee and Board of Directors Chairs in making this work possible.

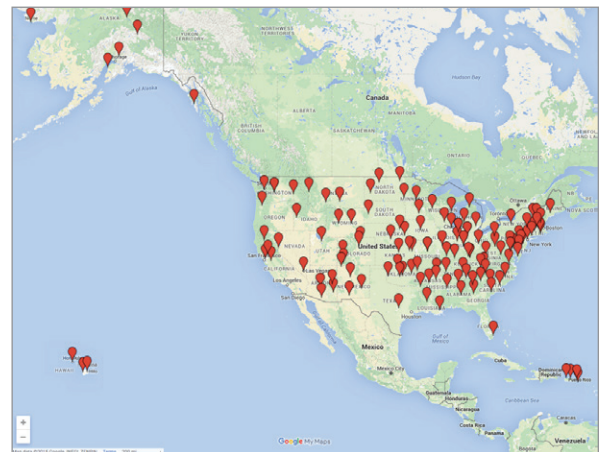
Stephan J. Goetz, PhD,  
Director and Professor  
University Park, PA

## Project Profile: The Agricultural Marketing Service Technical Assistance (AMSTA) program

In 2014, the Northeast Center was charged with leading an unprecedented collaboration with the national Extension Services in every single state, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, NIFA, and the three other Regional Rural Development Centers.

Together, we planned, designed, and implemented within only six months the AMSTA program — a national program to help potential grant applicants to the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Programs.

During the months that followed, **137 trainings were held in all 50 states, plus Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, reaching more than 3,000 participants, with a priority of engaging female- and minority-owned firms** (see below).



*Two-thirds of the participants who reported their gender are female. In comparison, just under one-half of U.S. firms are owned or co-owned by women.*



*Almost one-third of the participants who reported their race are minorities. In comparison, less than one-quarter of U.S. firms are owned by minorities.*



*"This was the first grant I ever applied for and got it. I could never have done it without the training and materials to refer to."*  
—workshop participant

## Board of Directors

**Dr. Steven Bonanno, Chair-elect**  
West Virginia University

**Dr. Brent Elrod**  
USDA-NIFA

**Mr. Robert J. Frazee**  
MidAtlantic Farm Credit

**Mr. Sheldon Jones**  
Farm Foundation

**Dr. Dyremple Marsh**  
Delaware State University

**Dr. Sabine O'Hara**  
University of the District of Columbia

**Dr. Timothy Phipps, Chair**  
West Virginia University

**Dr. Michelle Rodgers**  
University of Delaware

**Dr. Gary A. Thompson**  
Penn State

**Dr. Ann Tickamyer**  
Penn State

**Dr. Timothy Wojan**  
USDA Economic Research Service

## Technical Advisory Committee

**Dr. Charlie French, Chair**  
University of New Hampshire

**Dr. Paul Gottlieb, Chair-elect**  
Rutgers University

**Ms. Sarah Halstead**  
Katalyst Development Strategies

**Dr. James McConnon**  
University of Maine

**Dr. George Morse**  
University of Maine

**Dr. Stephan Tubene**  
University of Maryland Eastern Shore

**Mr. Andy Wetherill**  
Delaware State University

## Center Staff

**Dr. Stephan J. Goetz**  
Director and Professor

**Mrs. Kathleen Burke**  
Business Manager

**Ms. Kristen Devlin**  
Communications Specialist

**Ms. Stacie Vance**  
AMSTA Project Coordinator

## Contact Us

**Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development**  
Phone: 814-863-4656  
Fax: 814-865-3746  
nercrd@psu.edu | nercrd.psu.edu  
www.facebook.com/NERCRD

# Building Capacity

## New Small Grants Program Supports Interstate Extension Collaboration

The Center launched a competitive small grants program, the Regional Delivery of Successful Extension Program Planning Grant. These grants were designed to support Northeast state Extension Services and Land Grant University (LGU) researchers pursuing engaged scholarship to expand the breadth and depth of their rural development outreach programming/engaged scholarship by facilitating collaboration between Northeast states. An RFP was issued in February, and two proposals were selected to receive funding.

- Sharing Scholarship and Innovations in the First Impressions Program
- Train-the-Trainer—Futures Workshops and Emergency Economic Impact Analysis

Learn more about the funded projects, comprising partners from seven states, at: <http://goo.gl/CPEFMR>.

*"I really appreciate your support with this grant. This has been a great experience allowing us to share and improve our program and establish relationships with colleagues in other states whose knowledge and expertise is undoubtedly going to help us with the First Impressions program as well as other programs. It is very exciting to see not only NE and NC states working together but now also being able to share with colleagues from across the country."*

— Doug Arbogast, Rural Tourism Specialist,  
West Virginia University Extension Service,  
and one of the planning grant recipients

## Learning Community Continues To Explore Impacts of Northeast Community Development Programs

The Center's efforts to evaluate the community, regional, and economic development (CRED) programs in the region continued this year, with the formation of a Learning Circle for the Northeast CRED Impact Indicators. Under the leadership of Special Projects Advisor George Morse, the group is exploring the practical ways in which they can collect credible data to evaluate the impact of regional CRED programs, and will share what they learn

with regional and national colleagues. Building on the work of the Center's 2013-2014 Evaluation Fellow Heidi Mouillesseaux-Kunzman, the Learning Circle members selected five indicators to focus on during their initial pilot program, which will examine a small number of CRED programs in two to six Northeast states.

The five indicators and a list of Learning Circle members are available in our annual report.

# Sharing Discoveries

## Center-Related Publications (Selected)

Etemadnia, H., S.J. Goetz, P. Canning, and M. Sadegh Tavallali. **Optimal wholesale facilities location within the fruit and vegetables supply chain with bimodal transportation options: An LP-MIP heuristic approach.** *European Journal of Operational Research*, 2015, vol. 244, issue 2, pages 648-661.

Goetz, S.J., M. Davlasheridze, and Y. Han. **County-Level Determinants of Mental Health, 2002-2008.** *Social Indicators Research*, 2015, vol. 124, issue 2, pages 657-670.

Han, Y. and S.J. Goetz. **The Economic Resilience of U.S. Counties During the Great Recession.** *The Review of Regional Studies*, 2015, vol. 45, issue 2, pages 131-152.

Liang, J. and S.J. Goetz. **Self-Employment and Trade Shock Mitigation.** *Small Business Economics*. Published online September 19, 2015.

Li, M., Goetz, S.J., Partridge, M., and D.A. Fleming. **Location Determinants of High-Growth Firms.** *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 2016, 28, issue 1-2, pages 97-125.

# Leading Innovative Research

## Food Systems Project Awarded a One-Year Extension; End-of-Project Conference Held in December

Close to 90 individuals are currently active in various components of the Northeast Center's signature food systems project, Enhancing Food Security in the Northeast (EFSNE), which is in its fifth year. Even as the team looks to exceed its initial project goals in some areas, team members are now facing the challenge of bringing this complex and dynamic project to an orderly and impactful conclusion. A sixth-year no-cost extension, awarded in September, puts the project in an excellent position to more fully and accessibly "tell the story" and communicate to a broader audience what we have learned.



Recent publications from the project include:

- Nicholson, C.F., He, X., Gómez, M.I., Gao, H.O. and E. Hill. Environmental and Economic Impacts of Localizing Food Systems: The Case of Dairy Supply Chains in the Northeastern United States. *Environmental Science and Technology*. Published online September 24, 2015.
- Eshleman, J. and K. Clancy. EFSNE context narratives: "The Northeast Food System: Context for Innovative Research" and "Food Security in the Northeast US." Published on the EFSNE website, February 9, 2015.

Visit the EFSNE project website at: <http://goo.gl/91Gr9J>

## New Grants at a Glance

**Local Food Resource Mapping Project** | USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)  
\$800,000 | September 1, 2015 – August 31, 2016 | Initial Partners: NC, MS, AZ, AR, KY and AK

**Drivers of Rural Innovation and Implications for Community and Regional Economic Development** | USDA Economic Research Service (ERS)  
\$130,000 | funded through September 30, 2017 | A competitive grants program | Partners: USDA ERS and three competitively selected grantees

**Assessing the Supplier Role of Selected Fresh Produce Value Chains in the United States** | USDA ERS  
\$44,788 | September 1, 2015 – August 31, 2016 | In partnership with the USDA ERS

**An Analysis of Entrepreneur Networks Using Twitter Connections** | E.W. Kauffman Foundation, Kansas City  
\$31,186 | July 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015 | Partners/PIs: Stephan Goetz and Yicheol Han, Penn State

**Impact of Health Care Reform on U.S. Farm and Ranch Population** (Led by University of Vermont) | USDA Rural Communities and Regional Development grant \$6,866 (sub-contract award), total funding: \$500,000+ | September 1, 2015 – 2018  
Partners: UVM is leading the team, which includes the Northeastern, North Central, Southern and Western Regional Rural Development Centers; University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies; University of Vermont Extension; Center for Rural Affairs; University of Maryland Extension; and Farm Foundation.

**12 active grants totalling \$8.2 million in funding**  
For more information on our funded projects,  
visit: <http://goo.gl/9ICA04>

## Engaging a National Network of Experts Around Agricultural and Rural Development Policy Issues

The National Agricultural and Rural Development Policy (NARDeP) Center was



formed in 2012 to provide information about the increasingly contentious and complex rural policy issues facing the U.S. One recent NARDeP output is a special issue of the *Journal of Food Distribution Research*, which dedicated its November 2014 issue to exploring how food entrepreneurs are affecting their local food systems. The set of six case studies featured was prepared for the NARDeP-themed collection on local food systems and interactions with entrepreneurship. This special issue is available online at: <http://goo.gl/y5fQVu>

## Goetz Recognized for Outstanding Public Service through Economics

Stephan Goetz received the 2015 Outstanding Public Service through Economics Award from the Northeast Agricultural and Resource Economics Association for his research, leadership and longtime service as director of the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development. The award honors economists who have applied agricultural, environmental, consumer, resource or community development economics in a unique way that has contributed toward solving important problems and improving the welfare of society.

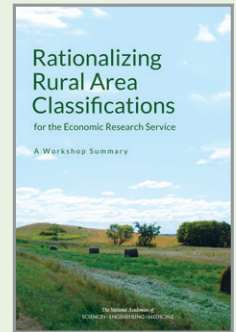
"Under Professor Goetz's leadership, the Center has helped coordinate important multi-state projects with policy-relevant research and outreach components," said Todd Gabe, of the University of Maine, in nominating Goetz for the award. "These efforts — which have involved numerous students, faculty, staff members and stakeholder groups — focus on key policy issues such as land use, local foods and community economic development."

Read the full story: <http://goo.gl/xZ70Zi>

## National Academies Workshop Convened to Examine How the U.S. Classifies Rural Areas

The USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) maintains four highly related but distinct geographic classification systems to determine the degree to which a given U.S. location is rural. This year, ERS engaged the National Academies Committee on National Statistics to organize and convene a two-day workshop where experts and stakeholders would examine the data, estimation, and policy issues that underly these classification systems maintained by ERS. Northeast Center Director Stephan Goetz served on the committee, and he and Center Postdoctoral Scholar Yicheol Han were

commissioned to examine the use of statistical modeling to evaluate rural area classifications. Their resulting research paper is archived on the National Academies website: <http://goo.gl/6lGuiS>. A report (pictured at right) summarizing all of the presentations and discussions from the workshop is available at: <http://goo.gl/A0rLb0>.



## Education and Industrial Variety Power High-Growth Companies Nationwide, Center Study Finds

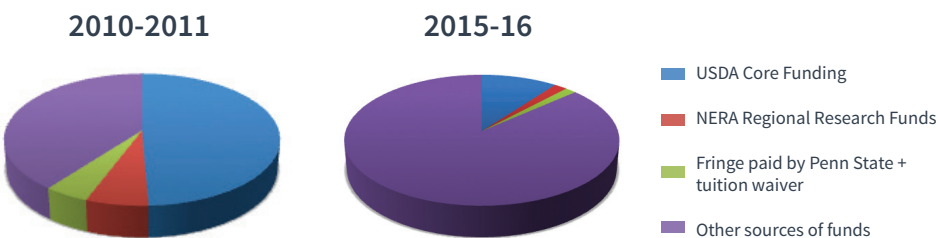
High-growth companies are not just found in California's tech-rich Silicon Valley. According to economists at the Northeast Center, these fast-growing firms are found across the U.S. and in a variety of industries.

In a study of Inc. Magazine's list of 5,000 high-growth companies, the researchers suggest that access to college-educated employees and the presence of industrial diversity, more than geographic proximity and technology, helped boost a community's ability to host high-growth firms.

"We were aware of the Inc. 5,000 database and we thought it would be interesting to determine, if we could, what do communities — or counties or cities, for that matter — offer that makes them more attractive places to these firms, which are the fastest growing companies by revenue in the country," said Stephan Goetz, director of the Northeast Center. "From that, the two things that stand out for us are that these firms are found in many different sectors, not just in the high tech space, and that these companies are found across the United States."

Read the full press release and access the paper at: <http://goo.gl/FdTnN4>.

## Perspectives on NERCRD Funding



## Download our entire annual report

You can access our full-length annual report using this QR code, or by visiting us on the web: <http://nercrd.psu.edu/>



Connect with us on Facebook at [facebook.com/nercrd](https://www.facebook.com/nercrd) and on Twitter @NERCRD

The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development receives core funds from USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, the Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors and the Pennsylvania State University, College of Agricultural Sciences.

This material is based upon work supported by annual base funding through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture or those of other funders.

© 2015 The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, The Pennsylvania State University.



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

National Institute  
of Food and  
Agriculture



PennState



Northeastern Regional  
Association of State  
Agricultural Experiment  
Station Directors