Growing Food Connections: Improving Food Equity in Communities of Opportunity

Julia Freedgood, AVP American Farmland Trust; Co-PI, Growing Food Connections
Paul Forgey, Director of Planning - Albany-Dougherty County, GA
Jorge Castillo, Community Development Planner - Doña Ana County, NM
Susan Whitfield, Director of Operations – No More Empty Pots, Dougherty County, NE

New Partners For Smart Growth Conference
February 2, 2017
Goal
Enhance community food security while ensuring sustainable and economically viable agriculture and food production

Approach
Increase local government capacity to strengthen community food systems through planning, public policy and partnerships
Project Leaders

University at Buffalo
The State University of New York

cultivating healthy places

American Farmland Trust
Saving the Land that Sustains Us

JOHN GLENN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

and Partners

American Planning Association
Making Great Communities Happen

National Advisory Committee

- Farmers
- Rural
- Urban
- Public Health Officials
- Law & Policy Experts
- Consumer Advocates
- Planners
- Students
- Professors
- Land Grant Universities
Growing Food Connections aims to address the concerns of struggling family farmers and underserved community residents by building capacity of local governments and their partners to create, implement and sustain food system policies and plans that both promote food access and foster a healthy agricultural sector.

Outcomes:
- Local and regional governments adopt and enact plans/policies to connect farmers with consumers in food systems.
- Universities train students in food systems policy and planning.
- Consumers, farmers, and farm advocates participate and shape local government food policy.

Team & Partners:
An interdisciplinary and multi-institutional team of researchers and practitioners to integrate research, education and extension to grow food connections across communities.

For more information, follow us: growingfoodconnections.org  growingfoodconnections@ap.buffalo.edu
Collaborating with Eight County Governments

- Chautauqua County, NY
- Cumberland County, ME
- Doña Ana County, NM
- Dougherty County, GA
- Douglas County, NE
- Luna County, NM
- Polk County, NC
- Wyandotte County, KS
Panelists

- **Paul Forgey**, Director of Planning - Albany-Dougherty County, GA
- **Jorge Castillo**, Community Development Planner - Doña Ana County, NM
- **Susan Whitfield**, Director of Operations – No More Empty Pots, Douglas County, NE
Dougherty County, GA
Planning, Food & Equity in Southwest Georgia
Planning, Food & Equity in Southwest Georgia

- Dougherty County in Southwest Georgia is a unique place that was shaped by its geography and history
  - Slavery, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, Civil Rights era, Pigford Law Suit
- Planning, and the lack of it, will shape the future
  - The process, not the document
  - Public buy-in and education
  - Agritourism regulations, vineyard, microbrewery, farmer’s mkt
  - COO, food hub, commercial kitchen, food, ag & equity conference
- The right individuals make all the difference
  - Charles and Shirley Sherrod
  - New Communities, Inc., Cypress Pond Plantation
Planning, Food & Equity in Southwest Georgia
Planning, Food & Equity in Southwest Georgia
Planning, Food & Equity in Southwest Georgia
Planning, Food & Equity in Southwest Georgia

Percent Black
by zip code, 2000
includes categories of African-American and Negro, as well as multi-racial and Hispanic Blacks
Planning, Food & Equity in Southwest Georgia

http://www.povertyusa.org/the-state-of-poverty/poverty-map-county/
Planning, Food & Equity in Southwest Georgia

Persistent Poverty Counties:
20% more of population at or below poverty for last 4 censuses.
Dougherty has qualified every census.

http://www.ruralhome.org/sct-initiatives/mn-persistent-poverty
Planning, Food & Equity in Southwest Georgia

http://www.albany.ga.us/content/1798/2879/2963/3320/default.aspx
Planning, Food & Equity in Southwest Georgia

What is Agritourism?

- A combination of agriculture and tourism
  - both leading economic sectors
- Provides farmers additional income
- Supports local food movement
- Crop and economic diversification
- Food security

Make sure your regulations allow
Value-added uses on agricultural land

http://www.albany.ga.us/content/1798/2879/2963/3320/default.aspx
Planning, Food & Equity in Southwest Georgia

East Baker Commercial Kitchen

- Started to preserve “separate but equal” school
- Evolved into commercial kitchen for community
- Provides education, training and support
- Intentionally inclusive

http://eastbakerhs21.wixsite.com/eastbaker-hs/services
Planning, Food & Equity in Southwest Georgia

“Farming is the engine of our national life.”
The Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad

Mission: develop a sustainable agricultural system that will produce at least one meal per day to all of the black people in America.

Muhammad Farms: 1556 acres in Terrell County

http://noimoa.com/
Planning, Food & Equity in Southwest Georgia

“We believe that the local food movement is not about 10 miles or 100 miles. We believe that the local movement is about the decentralization, deindustrialization, and decommoditization of the American food industry. We believe that it is grown by a group of passionate people who are bound by family core values, rather than by faceless corporations that are bound by quarterly earnings reports.”
Planning, Food & Equity in Southwest Georgia

Shirley & Charles Sherrod
Planning, Food & Equity in Southwest Georgia

Founded to “educate, engage and empower communities through grassroots organizing and advocacy.”

http://www.swgaproject.com/
Southwest Fresh is a project to promote economic development and increase food access. The project's vision is to develop a self-reliant food system that supports economic growth and development. Sponsored by a grant from the Kellogg Foundation.

Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative for Social and Economic Justice
To eradicate historical race, class, cultural, religious and gender barriers experienced by southern rural black women.

http://www.swgaproject.com/
Planning, Food & Equity in Southwest Georgia

New Communities, Inc.
- Model community land trust
- Dream of self-contained community
- Political value of land ownership
- Denied USDA funding, foreclosed 1985

Resora
- Formerly Cypress Pond Plantation
- Purchased with USDS settlement dollars
- Working farm, retreat, research, events
Planning, Food & Equity in Southwest Georgia

Key Points

• Every place is unique and shaped by its history and people
• Social justice must be addressed in all plans
• Intentional diversity
• Community buy-in critical for successful plan implementation
• Cultivate and support leadership
Planning, Food & Equity in Southwest Georgia

Paul Forgey, AICP, CFM
Director of Planning,
Development Services & Code Enforcement
City of Albany

Phone: (229) 438-3932
Fax: (229) 438-3965
240 Pine Avenue, Suite 300
Albany, GA 31701
www.albany.ga.us
Doña Ana County, NM

Promoting Regional Food Connections

Opportunities / Challenges
PLACE

Doña Ana County, NM
People

Population  215,000
Hispanic /Latino  67%
Persons In Poverty  25%

- In Doña Ana County, 59,300 people live in communities without access to good food.
- 28.4% of children in DAC are food insecure
- Grocery Stores Per 100,000
  - DAC: 10.99
  - NM: 12.2
  - US: 21.2
- DAC adults with inadequate fruit and vegetable consumption: 80.8%
- DAC Adult Diabetes Rate: 14%
- DAC Obesity Rate: 31.8%
Community

- **Colonias**
  Legacy developments

- **Historic Economic Development**
  Agriculture-based (cultivation, processing, distribution)

- **Crops – Mesilla Valley**
  Pecans
  Cotton
  Alfalfa
  Onions
  Grapes (wine)
  Chiles
Community Engagement

La Semilla

Learn, Grow, Inspire

Change will impact all of us

Cultural Food & New Food Staples

Change invites people to be themselves

There’s nothing like our roots, you let us eat our plants, too!

Therapeutic nature of food

It’s about more than just food

Ownership, Taking Initiative

Healthy food is medicine

School Garden

Reaching you

Connect

 чувство

Our stories

Quando nuestras familias son saludables, estamos sanos

Through farming, I want to eat fresh food everyday

We cook together as a family

We cook for my younger siblings

La Semilla brings us together to talk about food & our connections

It’s about more than just food

Relationships and Our Ties

Passion

Friendship

I am not alone...

Preventative care

I want to work in preventative care

Wants to learn. Young people

Learn how seeds of young people can affect me, my family and my community

Impact on family, friends & neighbors

Cultivate health, work in preventative care

Healthy food is medicine

Owner ship

Take Initiative

Healthy food is medicine

School garden

Reaching you

Connect

Our stories

Quando nuestras familias son saludables, estamos sanos

Through farming, I want to eat fresh food everyday

We cook together as a family

We cook for my younger siblings

La Semilla brings us together to talk about food & our connections

It’s about more than just food

Relationships and Our Ties

Passion

Friendship

I am not alone...

Preventative care

I want to work in preventative care

Wants to learn. Young people

Learn how seeds of young people can affect me, my family and my community

Impact on family, friends & neighbors

Cultivate health, work in preventative care

Healthy food is medicine

Ownership

Taking Initiative

Healthy food is medicine

School garden

Reaching you

Connect

Our stories

Quando nuestras familias son saludables, estamos sanos

Through farming, I want to eat fresh food everyday

We cook together as a family

We cook for my younger siblings

La Semilla brings us together to talk about food & our connections

It’s about more than just food

Relationships and Our Ties

Passion

Friendship

I am not alone...

Preventative care

I want to work in preventative care

Wants to learn. Young people

Learn how seeds of young people can affect me, my family and my community

Impact on family, friends & neighbors

Cultivate health, work in preventative care

Healthy food is medicine
Doña Ana County, NM

http://www.lasemillafoodcenter.org
http://www.vivadonaana.org
http://www.rrfb.org
http://extension.nmsu.edu/index.html
http://pdnihl.org
Back to the Future: Food Systems Economy

- Focus on agriculture-based business
- Balance traditional/new communities
- Local economic development
Policy and Planning

- Urban Ag/Food Policy Plan (City)
- Comprehensive Plan (County)
- Unified Development Code (County)
- Health In All Policies (Regional)
Local / Regional Dynamics

- **Regional food focus**
  - Processing, value added products
  - Seeking successful models
- **Small farms, community farms**
  - Cooperation vs. competition
- **Re-use: agriculture-based business**
  - Private-public partnerships
    - NM Greenhouse
    - Wholesome Family
Healthy Food Financing Initiative

Doña Ana County, NM
Social Integration
Climate

Doña Ana County, NM
U.S. – Mexico Border
Politics
Tomorrow
¡Gracias!

Jorge Castillo
Doña Ana County Community Development Planner

jorgec@donaanacounty.org
(575) 525-6106
845 N. Motel Blvd
Las Cruces, NM 88007

https://www.donaanacounty.org
Douglas County, NE

Food, Equity and Urban Agriculture
About Douglas County

- Population over 500,000
- One third of state population lives in Douglas County
- Poverty Rate 15%
- Unemployment 22%
- Eligible for free or reduce lunch 48%
- 1 in 5 children food insecure (state of NE)
- 1 in 7 adults food insecure (state of NE)
Douglas County Steering Committee

- 22 representatives
- Local government, local stakeholders from nonprofits, profit, business, educational institutions, small farmers, health department
- Urban ag policies review, assessment, recommendations
Levels of Advocacy: Federal, State, Local

- USDA Local Foods for Local Tables conferences in 2015 and 2016
- LB 175 Seed Saving and Community Garden Act
- Douglas Cty Environmental Services - Comprehensive Land Use Development Plan
- Urban Gardens and Vacant Lot Tool Kit
What is happening in Metro and Regional Area

- Metropolitan Area Planning Agency
  Heartland 2050 – Local Food Initiative
- City of Omaha – Planning Department – Urban Gardens
- Douglas County Health Department – Healthy Neighborhood Stores
- Tomato Tomato – Community Support Agriculture
- Center for Rural Affairs – State wide Food Policy Council
- Whispering Roots – Greenhouse (aquaponics)
- No More Empty Pots – Community Centered Food Hub
- City Sprouts – Decatur Urban Farm
- Omaha Public Schools – Farm to School
Douglas County Health Department – Healthy Neighborhood Stores

- **Afoma Corner Store**: 5522 S. 30 St., Omaha
- **Cubby’s**: CW Hadan Dr., Bennington
- **J-N-D Grocery**: 6341 N. 24 St., Omaha
- **T-N-A Grocery Store**: 3247 N. 42 St., Omaha
- **Las Nena’s**: 4901 S. 24 St., Omaha
- **KNJ Grocery**, 3301 California St., Omaha
- **Phil’s Foodway**: 3030 Ames Ave., Omaha
- **Selena’s Market**: 3228 California St., Omaha
City Sprouts partner with Crazy Gringa Hot Sauce

- Collaboration using local products
- City Sprouts grows them
- Provides revenue for City Sprouts Urban Farming Internship Program
- Viable model for urban food production, processing and sales
- Strengthen the local food economy
No More Empty Pots

• 3.7 million capital campaign
• P1: Shared-use Commercial & Production Kitchens
• Create living wage earning opportunities;
• Support lifelong learning and self-sufficiency;
• Connect people and resources to an improved integrated and resilient food system.
Susan Whitfield
Director of Operations
No More Empty Pots

(402) 502-1642
8511 North 30th Street,
Omaha, NE 68112
swhitfield@nme pomaha.org
http://www.nmepomaha.org

Douglas County, NE