Sustainable food systems in a Healthy Communities Lens

Part 2 in the Sustainable Food Systems series

February 27, 2014 • 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Jeff Kohl
Consultant
Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition (OHCC)

Janice Dunbar
Community developer
Huron County Health Unit

RECORDING NOTICE: This webinar is recorded and will be made available to the general public on the HC Link website.
Sustainable Food Systems
through a Healthy Community Lens

February 27, 2014

Jeff Kohl
Learning Objectives

• Learn about the principles of Healthy Communities and how they can be applied to the development of sustainable food systems.

• Learn about initiatives underway in Huron County and elsewhere to create sustainable food systems.
Webinar Outline

1. The food system
   - Overview
   - Terms and trends
2. Healthy community (HC) principles
3. Applying HC principles to food systems
4. Huron County initiatives
5. Resources
Trends and Challenges

1. **Hunger** (food bank use, kids at school, poverty)
2. **Diet-related illness** (obesity, diabetes)
3. **Loss of farms** (bigger, specialized, commodities)
4. **Low on-farm income** (need for off-farm income)
5. **Loss of skills** (farmers retiring)
6. **Loss of infrastructure** (storage, processing)
7. **Loss of farmland** (development)
8. **Weak linkages** (farmers, regulators, municipalities)
9. **Unsustainable farming** (inputs, transport, soil)
Canadian Stats

• We import roughly half the food we eat.
• We export about half of what we produce.
• Two-thirds of fruits and veggies are imported (from 150 countries around the world)
• Food we eat travels an average of 4,000+ km (Waterloo Region study found 4,497 km)
• Food is cheap in Canada: In 2007 we spent 10% of income on food (was 12.7% in 1997)
The Food Cycle
# Agricultural Value Chain

Farmers – Processors – Distributors - Retailers - Consumers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farmers (primary)</th>
<th>Missing Link (secondary)</th>
<th>Buyers (tertiary)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market Gardeners</td>
<td>Long-term Storage</td>
<td>General Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy Farmers</td>
<td>Processing</td>
<td>Retailers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commodity Farmers</td>
<td>Wholesalers</td>
<td>Restaurants, Caterers &amp; Bakeries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock</td>
<td>Distributors</td>
<td>Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple Syrup</td>
<td>Value Added</td>
<td>Processors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching Land &amp; Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rules and Regulations**
- Local Food Act
- Health Regulations
- Municipal OPs & By-Laws
- Labeling

**Innovative Farmers / Entrepreneurs / Demand for Local Food**
Three Types of Response

Emergency Relief
- Food banks
- Vouchers
- Social assistance
- Farm insurance

Capacity Building
- Food skills
- Farming skills
- Com gardens
- Com kitchens
- Marketing

System Change
- Policies
- Regulations
- Infrastructure
- Investment
- Sustainable farming
- Multi-sector linkages
Emergency Food

Food Banks - Toronto

Food Banks are needed:
They are also an expression of the problems with our food system.
Terms

Food Security
Everyone has access to safe, nutritional, affordable, culturally acceptable, food.

Community Food Security
Our food is produced through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice.

Sustainable Local Food Systems
Local production, processing and consumption of food, preservation of farmlands, sustainable/organic agriculture, liveable wages for farmers.
Food Sovereignty

Food is a Right
   Food is a basic human right. Policies should reflect this.
Farmers / Producers are Valued
   Sustainable livelihoods, livable wages and respect.
Local Food Systems
   Food is consumed close to where it’s produced.
Local Control
   Decisions about land, resources and food are made locally.
Knowledge and Skills
   Traditional knowledge is valued and shared.
Sustainable Agriculture
   Diverse, low input, sustainable food and farming systems.
Healthy Community Principles

1. **Holistic approach** that addresses the broad determinants of health (social, economic and environmental).

2. **Asset-based** community development that builds on the strengths of individuals, organizations and communities.

3. **Broad community engagement**, inclusion & participation.

4. **Multi-sectoral** collaboration & partnership.

5. **Political commitment** (especially of local governments).

6. **Healthy public policy** (e.g. food charters, minimum wage).
Determinants of Health

HEALTH

Health Services

Income and Social Status

Education

Physical Environments

Employment and Working Conditions

Social Support Networks

Healthy Child Development

Biology and Genetic Endowment

Social Environments

Gender

Culture

Personal Health Practices and Coping Skills

VALUES

BELIEFS

ASSUMPTIONS
Asset-based Community Development (ABCD)

• Values, uncovers and builds on assets, skills and strengths of individuals, org’s & communities.

• Uses Appreciative Inquiry.

• Sees social capital as an important asset.

• Inclusive and participatory.

• Focus on Community Economic Development.
“The Glass is Half Full”

NEEDS:
People and communities have problems, deficiencies and needs.

ASSETS:
Individuals and communities have skills, assets and strengths.
Engaging Community Leaders

- Individuals
- Institutions & Governments
- Community Organizations
Broad Community Engagement
Multi-Sectoral Approach

Social
- Social contact & inclusion
- Celebrations
- Festivals
- Culturally appropriate
- Skills development
- Adapted for ability

Environment
- Safe
- Nutritious
- Low input farming
- Conservation of...
  - Soil
  - Water
  - Energy
  - Biodiversity

Economy
- Poverty & Income
- Access to food
- Livable wages
- Infrastructure
- Support for farms and businesses
- Cooperative sales & marketing
Principles of Community Economic Development (CED)

1. Use of local goods and services
2. Production of goods for local use
3. Local re-investment of profits
4. Long-term employment
5. Local skill development
Principles of CED

6. Local decision-making

7. Stewardship and the natural environment

8. Community resilience

9. Human dignity
Havana, Cuba
Cuba
An amazing story of innovation & resilience

1. 1989: 57% of caloric intake from Soviet Union
2. Overnight: Cuba responsible to feed population
3. 2.2 million people in Havana alone
4. People took matters into their own hands
   – Planted beans, tomatoes, bananas … anything
   – On balconies, terraces, front yards, empty lots
Cuba: Innovation & Resilience

1994 – formed Urban Agriculture Department

- Government facilitated rather than squelched efforts
- Made it legal/free to convert public lands to gardens
- Trained extension workers and volunteers to support
- Created “Seed Houses” to provide info and inputs
- Created infrastructure of Farmers Markets

1998

- Over 8,000 officially recognized gardens
- All organic (no pesticides imported)
- Produce 50% of county’s vegetables
1. Farm Gate Sales – brochure and website
2. CSAs - marketing
3. Community Events
   - Speed-dating
   - Stirring the Pot
   - Workshops (wine, cheese, raising goats)
4. Food Hub
Fitzroy Beef Farmers Co-op
CSAs – Equiterre – Quebec (2006)

1. Montreal-based NGO
2. Over 100 CSA’s
3. Fresh food to over 9,000 families
4. All are certified organic or in transition
5. CSA farmers are younger
   – 20% of Quebec farmers are under 34
   – Over 50% of CSA farmers are under 40
Equiterre Case Study – the challenge

• 10 CSA’s Studied
• Average size of 3 ha (7 acres)
  – Average turnover (gross revenues) = $130,000
  – Net income from CSA portion = $3,528
  – Net loss from other farm operations = $6,255
• Most work off-farm to make ends meet
Our Mission

FoodNet Ontario is a province-wide network of organizations and individuals working together to create sustainable local food systems and achieve (community) food security in communities across Ontario.
Learn More

Our Vision

FoodNet Ontario will help communities across Ontario develop sustainable local food systems by facilitating communication and cooperation, and encouraging a wide range of participants in the food system to work together to develop effective programs and policies.
Learn More

The Ontario Community Food Security Network gratefully acknowledges the funding for this project provided by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.
Resources - General

- HC Link: [www.hclinkontario.ca](http://www.hclinkontario.ca)
- Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition: [www.ohcc-ccso.ca](http://www.ohcc-ccso.ca)
- Asset-based Community Development Institute: [www.abcdinstitute.org](http://www.abcdinstitute.org)
- Appreciative Inquiry: [http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu](http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu)
- The Community Tool Box: [http://ctb.ku.edu](http://ctb.ku.edu)
- Tamarack Institute: [http://tamarackcommunity.ca](http://tamarackcommunity.ca)
- Ontario Local Food Fund and Local Food Act: [www.Ontario.ca/localfood](http://www.Ontario.ca/localfood)
- Intervale Center (food hub in Vermont): [www.intervale.org](http://www.intervale.org)
- Local Food Plus (Ontario Farmer Certification): [www.localfoodplus.ca](http://www.localfoodplus.ca)
Resources – Food Systems

• Food Secure Canada (food sovereignty and food policy): www.foodsecurecanada.org

• Just Food – Ottawa (leading edge work on food systems): www.justfood.ca

• Sustainable Local Food in Southern Ontario (great report): www.metcalffoundation.org

• The Economic Development Potential of Local Food and A Healthy Community Food System Plan (great reports produced by the Region of Waterloo): www.wrfoodsystem.ca