

# ASSESSING THE LANDSCAPE OF LOCAL FOOD IN APPALACHIA

5/1/2012

Written by Jean Haskell, Ph.D. for the Appalachian Regional Commission

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>p. 2</b>
<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<b>p. 3</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>p. 5</b>
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b>	<b>p. 8</b>
<b>ENTREPRENEURS</b>	<b>p. 17</b>
<b>EDUCATION AND TRAINING</b>	<b>p. 23</b>
<b>CULTURAL HERITAGE AND LOCAL FOOD</b>	<b>p. 27</b>
<b>BUILDING REGIONAL CAPACITY</b>	<b>p. 32</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>p. 36</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>p. 37</b>
<b>RESOURCES ON THE WEB</b>	<b>p. 42</b>
<b>STATE SYNOPSES OF LOCAL FOOD ACTIVITY</b>	<b>p. 45</b>
<b>ALABAMA SYNOPSIS</b>	<b>p. 46</b>
<b>GEORGIA SYNOPSIS</b>	<b>p. 48</b>
<b>KENTUCKY SYNOPSIS</b>	<b>p. 50</b>
<b>MARYLAND SYNOPSIS</b>	<b>p. 52</b>
<b>MISSISSIPPI SYNOPSIS</b>	<b>p. 53</b>
<b>NEW YORK SYNOPSIS</b>	<b>p. 55</b>
<b>NORTH CAROLINA SYNOPSIS</b>	<b>p. 58</b>
<b>OHIO SYNOPSIS</b>	<b>p. 61</b>
<b>PENNSYLVANIA SYNOPSIS</b>	<b>p. 63</b>
<b>SOUTH CAROLINA SYNOPSIS</b>	<b>p. 65</b>
<b>TENNESSEE SYNOPSIS</b>	<b>p. 68</b>
<b>VIRGINIA SYNOPSIS</b>	<b>p. 71</b>
<b>WEST VIRGINIA SYNOPSIS</b>	<b>p. 74</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>p. 77</b>
<b>GEORGIA ARC WORKSHOP AGENDA</b>	<b>p. 78</b>
<b>WEST VIRGINIA ARC WORKSHOP AGENDA</b>	<b>p. 79</b>
<b>NORTH CAROLINA ARC WORKSHOP AGENDA</b>	<b>p. 80</b>
<b>TENNESSEE ARC WORKSHOP AGENDA</b>	<b>p. 81</b>
<b>SOUTH CAROLINA WORKSHOP AGENDA</b>	<b>p. 82</b>
<b>GEORGIA ARC WORKSHOP NOTES</b>	<b>p. 83</b>
<b>WEST VIRGINIA ARC WORKSHOP NOTES</b>	<b>p. 84</b>
<b>NORTH CAROLINA ARC WORKSHOP NOTES</b>	<b>p. 88</b>
<b>TENNESSEE ARC WORKSHOP NOTES</b>	<b>p. 90</b>
<b>SOUTH CAROLINA ARC WORKSHOP NOTES</b>	<b>p. 92</b>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Food is all about networks; things that when connected together add up to more than the sum of their parts. Whether or not we care about food, the consequences of the way we eat are all around us. The global food system is a network in which we are all complicit. If we don't like the way it works, or the world it is creating, it is up to us to change it. . . .Our legacy to those who inherit the earth will be determined by how we eat now—their future lies in our knives and forks and fingers. (Carolyn Steel, *The Hungry City*, 2008)*

Many people across the Appalachian Region—farmers, food producers, chefs, researchers, nutritionists, teachers, economic developers, local food advocates, and many others-- are working tirelessly and passionately to make healthy, local food economies a positive part of Appalachia's future. It is because of their work and with their help that this assessment of local food in the Region has been possible. They have shared their projects, their stories, their concerns, their successes and challenges, and, often, their wonderful local food, the focus of all this work.

The project would not have been possible without the support of the Appalachian Regional Commission, including participation in local food workshops and forums by the Federal Co-Chair, Earl Gohl, Executive Director, Tom Hunter, and Chief of Staff, Guy Land. Research objectives and progress were guided by the sure and steady hand of John Cartwright, Director of Regional Planning and Research, and enriched by the insights of Ray Daffner, Entrepreneurship Initiative Manager. The entire local food project from its inception through the highly successful final food forum, attended by over 350 regional participants, happened because Kostas Skordas, Regional Planner at ARC, works selflessly, with tremendous insight, sensitivity, and humor, plus unending and unerring attention to people and details. He also believes that growing the local food economy shows great promise for the Region's economic and community development.

Throughout this research project, Dr. Katherine "Katie" Hoffman, the project's research associate, has been dedicated to turning up new information, tracking down project leaders and stories, and constantly arguing for the culture of the Region's food heritage as part of the economic pie. She does what Elizabeth Engelhardt describes in her book, *A Mess of Greens*; she understands "what *else* is being said when someone asks for a second helping of cornbread, carefully writes out a treasured recipe, opens a jar of garden tomatoes, or sneaks a sip of white lightning."

## BACKGROUND

An Appalachian Regional Commission report, *Appalachia: Turning Assets Into Opportunities* (2004) defined and elaborated a paradigm for sustainable, asset-based economic and community development in the region. The Commission identified its role as a strategic partner and advocate for such development.

The report cited the growing national prominence of asset-based development which builds upon the positive attributes of regions, communities, and businesses and minimizes impact while maximizing return in national and global competition. As the report says, “taking *what is* and turning it into *what can be* is the foundation for this strategy.”

Three categories of assets were identified in the report as having the greatest opportunity for moving Appalachia toward prosperity: natural, cultural, and structural resources. Scenic vistas, craft artisans, and old industrial sites are among the many assets with potential for sustainable development. The goals of asset development are economic prosperity and enhanced quality of life for the communities of Appalachia now and long into the future.

Asset-based development depends on innovation and leadership, as well as infrastructure, financing, and local return on investment. According to Kretzmann and McKnight in a study for ARC on community capacity building (2004), “the key to . . . regeneration, then, is to locate all the available local assets, to begin connecting them with one another in ways that multiply their power and effectiveness, and to begin harnessing those local institutions that are not yet available for local development purposes.”

Asset-based regional planning is not a new idea. In 1928, Benton MacKaye, who proposed the Appalachian Trail and thought deeply about sustainable development in Appalachia in his book, *The New Exploration*, believed effective regional planning depended on seeing “the simple potencies of life and life’s environment,” in effect, a region’s assets. He felt the job of regional planning was not to “make the country,” but to “know the country and the trenchant flows that are taking place upon it.” Planners must not scheme, but must reveal. Their job, MacKaye says, is “not to wage war—nor stress an argument: it is to ‘wage’ a determined *visualization*” (his emphasis). For MacKaye, the achievement of planning is “to make potentialities visible. . .and audible. It must be *heard* as well as *seen*.” Regional planners must fight “with the sharp weapon of visualization for the intrinsic human values” of their place.

In Spring 2009, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) convened the section editors of the award-winning *Encyclopedia of Appalachia* in a series of conversations to identify existing and emerging assets in the Region and to think creatively about how these assets might best be used for economic development and enhanced quality of life in Appalachia. Facilitated by Dr. Jean Haskell, the Whisman Scholar for ARC, and her research associate, Dr. Katherine Hoffman, the scholars visualized together the ways in which lessons from the ten years of exhaustive work on the *Encyclopedia* could be applied to continued sustainable economic and community development.

The group of scholars identified natural, cultural, and structural assets and added a category of intellectual and skill set assets that exist in the Region. In their written responses and their discussions in the consultations, they suggested extensive strategies for development of these assets in ways that are sustainable and life-enhancing for the region. The results of this series of conversations are documented in the report, *Lessons Learned: Visualizing the Potency of Appalachian Assets* (2009) on file

with the Appalachian Regional Commission.

One area that received enthusiastic attention was Appalachia's tremendous assets in agricultural heritage and local food economy. Identified assets included an ongoing tradition of small farming and home gardening; the Region's vast food diversity, knowledge of seed saving and growing heirloom varieties of local foods; an emerging infrastructure of farmers markets, food processing facilities, kitchen incubators, and canneries; a growing trend for chefs in the Region using locally grown foods in their menu offerings, plus ever-expanding culinary training; a rich heritage of traditional foodways and of craft, music, storytelling, literature, and custom related to food; and, some of the nation's most respected leadership in the sustainable, local foods movement.

From these conversations with the editors, ARC launched an exhaustive assessment of food system development in the 13 states and 420 counties of the Appalachian Region. The author identified numerous organizations and leaders involved in the local food movement throughout Appalachia, examined the depth and breadth of activity in various parts of the Region, synthesized best practices and available resources, and began to understand the gaps and needs for expanding this growing sector of the economy. The results revealed a vigorous and growing regional food economy that has the potential to increase employment opportunities, improve community vitality and quality of life, and become a sustainable and healthy part of Appalachia's future economic and community development.

With this clear trajectory for community and economic development, ARC launched a series of workshops on the topic of Appalachia's growing food economy throughout the region. The five workshops, held in Georgia, West Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and South Carolina, brought together nearly 400 people in the region to discuss the region's food assets, gaps in regional food systems, and strategies for growing local food economies. Some of the most important national leaders in the local food movement, who live and work in Appalachia, were speakers. Agendas and summaries of the discussions from the workshops form Appendix A of this report.

From these meetings, a picture emerged of local food efforts in the region that can inform ARC policy on support and advocacy for Appalachia's local food economy. Topics of most concern to the workshop participants in every part of the region centered on the following categories: (1) Creating appropriate infrastructure; (2) Encouraging entrepreneurship; (3) Providing education and training programs; (4) Sustaining community heritage; and (5) Strengthening regional capacity in local food system development.

These categories provide the framework for this report, assessing what exists in the region now, identifying gaps and challenges in each category, and recommending strategies to improve the region's burgeoning food economy.

## INTRODUCTION

### GROWING THE APPALACHIAN FOOD ECONOMY

Appalachia boasts many assets for community and economic development—beautiful landscapes, sparkling waterways, abundant flora and fauna, internationally famous music and craft, a good work force, natural energy resources, a rich and complicated history, and so much more.

But perhaps the Region's most vibrant assets, and maybe the most sustainable, are its food and agricultural assets. As Gary Nabhan says in *Place-based Foods of Appalachia*, the local foods of Appalachia “are treasures of global importance, just as much as the bluegrass music of the same region.”

Nabhan is not the only one who sees the food produced in Appalachia as a treasure. A 2011 study identified Appalachia as the most diverse foodshed in North America.

Anthropologist and former farmer, James Veteto, claims we should “just go ahead and say it: People across . . . Appalachia are crazy about plants and animals. In my lifetime of interacting with Appalachian farmers, gardeners, and wildcrafting enthusiasts, I have never ceased to be amazed by their knowledge and love for all things green and growing.”

Bill Kovarik in *Appalachian Voices* says, “farming in Appalachia is somewhat different from the rest of the nation. Despite the economic challenges, there seems to be a Faulknerian quality of endurance among Appalachian farmers.”

Bloggers have called food in Appalachia “particularly distinct,” perhaps the best example of “hyperlocal, community-driven cuisine,” concluding that “Appalachia boasts one—if not *the*—strongest, original, and consistent regional cuisines in America.” Another blogger writes that “a natural adoption of local, sustainable, and organic principles means that Appalachia really should be ground zero for city-slickers planning their next culinary odyssey.”

What has produced such lavish praise for a food culture that has at times been misunderstood and the subject of food jokes? Appalachia is discovering that attention to sustainability of agrarian landscapes, protection of clean water, conservation of heirloom seeds and plants, production of good, local food and food products, connection of food to the rest of the region's rich culture, and culinary traditions that bring good food to the table have enormous benefits for community and economic development.

Communities in Appalachia have felt the impact of the locavore or local food revolution sweeping the country. Farms are increasing in number, farmers markets have become ubiquitous, local food is the new buzzword in tourism and for regional restaurants, and demand for local food products has soared.

Some communities, however, are struggling to meet the growth, needing improved infrastructure, more and better trained farmers and other entrepreneurs, more education for growers and consumers, enhanced community capacity to deal with planning and policy issues, and innovative ways to maintain local culture and heritage while growing community economies.

Good news for the region has been growing support for sustainable agriculture and local food in

government agencies that set policy and from voices influencing the government on policy and funding. In 2012, the United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a goal to create 100,000 new farmers and provide loans to beginning farmers that will total nearly \$2 billion, with emphasis on specialty crops and organic food.

The USDA's Regional Innovation Initiative urges collaboration in five key areas, one of which is regional food systems and supply chains. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack argues, "We need generations of leaders in American agriculture to continue our position as the number one agricultural country in the world."

Charles Fluharty, director of the Rural Policy Research Institute, gave forceful testimony in 2012 to the United States Senate Agriculture Committee that effective rural development requires a regional approach and more investment in rural programs from the federal government and major philanthropic organizations. He noted he was encouraged by the Obama Administration's guidance to create a "Place-Based" domestic policy. Part of his argument that rings especially true for Appalachian experience is his observation that "the people appear ahead of the policy development process," since rural communities themselves have realized how critical collaborations are to their future competitive advantage.

Carolyn Steel, a British architect, conceives of communities built around food in her book, *Hungry City: How Food Shapes Our Lives* (2009). Using the Greek word *sitos*, meaning food, and *topos*, place, she believes we should aim for "sitopian" communities, since utopian communities have never proven workable for the long-term. She says, "sitopia is a practical alternative. The world is already shaped by food, so we may as well start using food to shape the world more positively. We live in a world shaped by food, and if we realize that, we can use food as a really powerful tool—a conceptual tool, design tool, to shape the world differently."

The Union of Concerned Scientists released a 2011 report that cited evidence of the boom in local and regional food systems: more than 7,000 farmers markets (up from just 340 in 1970), more than 4,000 community-supported agriculture ventures, and sales of agricultural products through direct marketing channels at \$1.2 billion in 2007. After careful examination of the economic potential of local food systems and public policies that support them, they conclude that "further growth in this innovative, entrepreneurial sector has the potential to create tens of thousands of new jobs," adding "it's an investment we can't afford not to make."

The annual National Restaurant Association's survey of professional chefs on the Top 20 Trends in food for 2012 lists locally grown meat and seafood, and locally grown produce in the top two positions. Other trends include sustainability, locally-produced wine and beer, farm/estate branded ingredients, micro-distilled/artisan spirits, and good nutrition for children.

Even big business is changing its perspective. In 2012, an event in New York on slow food and big business focused on businesses willing to commit to sustainability and to sharing stories of how small beginnings can achieve scale. One blogger commented, "the fact that these food leaders are getting together says a lot about the public dialogue today. They *are* listening."

The Appalachian Regional Commission has been listening for some time. The ARC has supported research on local food, a series of workshops across the region on growing the Appalachian local food economy, and an important region-wide food forum that attracted over 350 participants with representation from all thirteen Appalachian states.

Results of ARC research and regional engagement point to a vigorous, growing regional food economy that promises to be a viable, sustainable, and healthy part of Appalachia's transitional economic growth. Growth that is life-enhancing and that brings positive public attention to Appalachia.

As Anthony Flaccavento, noted advocate for local food, has said, "If a region known primarily for its coal mining, tobacco farming, and clear-cutting can come to exemplify sustainable development, it will be difficult to ignore." Asheville-based Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, which keeps its finger on the pulse of the local food movement, says unabashedly that Appalachia "leads the country in developing local food systems that build local economies, sustain farms, and insure that everyone has access to the freshest and healthiest locally-grown foods."



## INFRASTRUCTURE

In Appalachia's agrarian history, farmers built a local infrastructure to get their food to consumers. Small farm stands or roadside produce stands sold directly to customers. Farmers trucked products to wholesalers or grocery stores, doing most of the processing on their own farms (e.g., killing hogs, smoking meats, etc.). Home canning and community canneries helped preserve food for home use and for sale. In today's more sophisticated agricultural economy in the region, the same needs exist for growing food, food aggregation and distribution, food processing, and food preservation. Many communities are rapidly developing the kind of infrastructure needed to move food from farm to table, but there are also major gaps needing to be filled in other parts of the region.

At its most basic level, agricultural infrastructure begins with soil and seed. Good soil is critical and many farmers in the region do their own composting for soil enrichment. In some communities, this has become an entrepreneurial opportunity to create community compost centers for farmers and gardeners. For example, Appalachian Organics in north Georgia uses poultry litter to create organic compost that sells for \$60 per ton and an identically named Appalachian Organics in Travelers Rest, South Carolina, uses worms and worm castings for its organic mulch. French Broad Organics and Frog Holler Organiks offer organic compost in the Western North Carolina area. Seeds are equally critical for the local food system, not genetically engineered seeds produced by Monsanto and other industrialized farm operations, but seeds saved from year to year and even heirloom seeds handed down through generations, all locally adapted to the place where they are grown.

Drawing upon the oldest agricultural heritage in the Appalachian region, the Cherokee Traditional Seeds Project in Cherokee, North Carolina, led its initiator, Kevin Welch, to create the Center for Cherokee Plants, a Tribal seed bank and native plant nursery. Welch believes that the Cherokee tradition of gathering wild plants is a kind of farming and hopes to revive this ancient knowledge among the tribe. With similar goals, the Appalachian Center for Ethnobotanical Studies at Frostburg State University in Maryland is a collaborative that is devoted to multidisciplinary study and conservation of native plants of Appalachia. Their aim is to foster economic growth in the region through networking among growers, retailers, and consumers and helping develop enterprises that use regional plants. Hoping to conserve culture as well as plants, the center documents traditions in Appalachia of harvesting native plants and using botanicals and develops programs for Appalachian schools.

One of the region's most well-known heirloom seed collectors is Bill Best in Berea, Kentucky, who has over 500 Southern Appalachian heirloom bean varieties and over 50 Southern Appalachian heirloom tomato varieties, as well as some varieties of numerous other vegetables. He has become a regional expert on heirloom seeds (or, he says, perhaps an "eccentric"). In Cattaraugus County, New York, there is an annual TickleTown Seed Swap and programs on sustainable living. At a seed swap at Pine Mountain Settlement School in Kentucky in 2011, a local food blogger wrote the "experts and amateurs gathered for an ancient ritual that has taken on modern importance, seed saving. Due to our geographic mountain fortresses, seeds grown in Appalachia remain largely untainted by commercial agriculture and genetic engineering (GE or GMO). We hillbillies take such things for granted. We know that there is a stash of White Hastings bean seed hidden in Grandma's freezer. We know that Johns Creek Bevin's

Tomato is perhaps the lip smackenest summer pleasure in the garden. . . .In those tiny little seeds there is our history.”

Another element of Appalachia’s agricultural history has long been farmers selling products directly to consumers in roadside stands or farmer’s markets. When tourists first started coming to the mountains in great numbers in the 1950s, homemade, wooden roadside stands filled with produce and jams and jellies and ciders were ubiquitous on the landscape. Small farmer’s markets were a staple in many communities. Today, direct sales of farm products to consumers take many forms, such as larger farmer’s markets, pick-your-own farms, on-farm stores, community-supported agriculture (CSAs), and direct sales to grocers, restaurants, and institutions such as schools, hospitals and prisons. Often these sales are facilitated by websites for internet orders. The local food infrastructure and agricultural entrepreneurship have grown in complexity and sophistication.

A 2010 report on local food systems by the USDA showed that farmer’s markets nationwide had increased by 92% between 1998 and 2009. Current research shows that nearly every county in the Appalachian region either has a farmer’s market or has access to one in the area. Some farmer’s markets such as the Western North Carolina Farmer’s Market in Asheville are large, permanent facilities that offer space for farmers from all over the North Carolina mountain region, food service, and shops, a combination that also attracts a great many tourists. Similarly, the Capitol Market in downtown Charleston, West Virginia, the capital city, has both outside market stalls in season and permanent spaces inside a large market space that sells produce, local wine, chocolates and other West Virginia products and a restaurant. The Athens, Ohio Farmer’s Market, the largest open-air market in Ohio, has filled all of its 100 spaces for vendors and maintains a waiting list. Smaller markets, such as the one in Jonesborough, Tennessee, have become community gathering places, with a seating area for visitors and live music from the local area. Foods for sale include produce, beef, lamb, baked goods, goat cheese, shitake mushrooms, sorghum, plus plants, pottery, wood items, and textiles. An online ordering system allows for mid-week deliveries and they accept SNAP/food stamps to make fresh food available to local income individuals. The Jonesborough market is typical of many markets across Appalachia.

A 2011 news story in the *Chattanooga Times Free Press* points to both the successes and challenges of farmer’s markets and direct farm sales to consumers. At local markets, the farms within 100 miles of Chattanooga sold only \$10.3 million of local food products directly to consumers in 2007, up from \$6.7 million in 2002, but still a low percentage of total food sales by the farmers. Nevertheless, some of the farmers did more business in one day than in their farm’s history and see the markets as a reinvestment in the local economy, along with their growing Community Supported Agriculture businesses. Gaining Ground, a local food organization in Chattanooga, reported that, “if Chattanoogaans spent just 5 percent more of their food budget—about one meal a week—to buy food from local farmers, more than \$100 million would be injected back into the local economy every year.”

Anthony Flaccavento, founder of Appalachian Sustainable Development in Virginia, maintains that the growth in such ventures is strong and continuing to grow, from 1,700 farmer’s markets in 1995 to over 7,000 currently (USDA Agricultural Marketing Service). Flaccavento says in the article that “it’s a trend that’s both deep and broad. It’s sweeping. It’s covering much of the nation.” Responding to a critique

of farmer's markets that they are "elitist," or cost more than working people, seniors on fixed incomes, or the poor can afford, Flaccavento undertook a study of 24 farmer's markets in 19 Appalachian communities across six states. He found that farmer's markets were the same or less expensive than supermarkets in 74% of all cases, by an average of 12% lower cost (SCALE, Inc.). Flaccavento notes that, even with the explosive growth of farmer's markets, there isn't enough supply to meet demand for local food: "The trend on the ground is for a lot of unmet demand. If you go beyond farmers markets and look at the college and university market, the public school market and the grocery market particularly, the demand is enormous."

An increasing part of the market peg of infrastructure is, in fact, schools, hospitals, colleges and universities, and grocery stores that ask more and more for local food. The recent USDA study of local food systems (2011) noted that "farm to school programs represent an important component of the institutional market for locally grown produce," with 41 States and close to 9,000 schools having some kind of farm to school program in 2009. The same USDA study found that increasing numbers of grocers, including such large retailers as Wal-Mart and Safeway, have local food initiatives; that American Culinary Federation members ranked locally grown food as the current "hot trend" and used locally sourced products in much of their restaurant cooking; and that hospital foodservice administrators favored serving local food in cafeterias and to patients, with nearly 300 hospitals, some of them private corporate hospitals, signing the Health Care Without Harm Healthy Food Pledge in 2009 to increase their use of fresh, local food. All these impacts have been felt in the Appalachian region.

One of the leading organizations in farm to school programs is Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project in Western North Carolina. They have been so successful in connecting farmers to schools that they have become the Southeast Regional Lead Agency for the National Farm to School Network. Their model has been to build partnerships with existing distributors and make them familiar with ASAP's Appalachian Grown certification program, to build the capacity of farmers to scale up to meet the new demand, and to work with State farm to school programs. Analysis indicates that net returns for the farmers in marketing to the school districts in 2006-2007 were substantially higher than those they received from selling to other venues. ASAP plans to explore ways to work with financial institutions to see if investors may want to support these efforts. Putting fresh, local food in the hands of school children when they are outside school is another aspect of farm and school programs. Students at Washington and Lee University in Rockbridge County, Virginia, operate the Campus Kitchen to send backpacks filled with nutritious snacks and meals home with low-income school children for the weekends.

Most universities and colleges across the Appalachian region have embraced bringing local food to their campuses. Not surprisingly, since several major land-grant institutions are in the Appalachian region, the movement toward sustainable agriculture and local food has influenced these campuses and their surrounding communities. Cornell University in Appalachian Ithaca, New York conducts research (such as the work of their Ecoagricultural Working Group that focuses on the Finger Lakes region) and their extension service helped Appalachian Broome County launch a Farm Friendly website to connect farms to markets. The surrounding Ithaca community has a thriving local food movement that includes a focus on Native American food production and a Field and Fork farmer-chef collaboration. At Virginia Tech in

Blacksburg, Virginia, there is a student garden for organic and sustainable vegetable gardening and a Sustainable Food Corps, a student organization that works to bring fresh, local food to campus, invite speakers such as farmer Joel Salatin, featured in the *Omnivore's Dilemma*, and deliver bags of locally-grown fruits and vegetables to area Head Start offices. One of the student leaders said: "Food is obviously an essential issue for all of us. There is a movement sweeping not just Montgomery County but across the nation to re-localize our food production and to provide a farm-to-fork link. My student colleagues in the Sustainable Food Corps are paving the way." (*Roanoke Times*, 2009).

One example of the local food to hospital connection is the Martinsburg, West Virginia Veterans Affairs Medical Center. In the fall of 2011, to celebrate Food Day, the center chose to showcase farmers and flavors of the Eastern Panhandle of the state. They prepared a "Taste of Appalachia" menu for approximately 500 veteran inpatients, outpatients, and staff. With rainbow trout furnished by the Freshwater Institute in Shepherdstown and fresh produce from Kilmer Farms in Berkeley County, the veterans and their families enjoyed a fresh, local meal and music by the Blue Ridge Garage Pickers Band. The medical center helps support community businesses by relying on local food producers and distributors and helps aspiring culinary students at Blue Ridge Technical and Community College by offering internships with culinary staff of the center.

Because small local growers spend time off the farm, selling to consumers, they often find it difficult to scale up their farm operations to meet increasing demands for local food from the larger consumer market such as grocery chains, institutions (schools, hospitals, prisons), and restaurants. Many recent activities are addressing this challenge in Appalachia's local food system development.

Farmers who must spend most of their time attending to soil and planting seeds have little time, and often little assistance, with the tasks of aggregating, grading, and distributing what they grow to consumers, whether they are grocers, chefs, schools, or other markets for their goods. Several parts of the Appalachian region, with strong local food systems, have addressed these needs with some success.

Headquartered in Abingdon, Virginia, Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD) was founded in 1995 by Anthony Flaccavento, an organic farmer and economic development consultant, who has since become one of the nation's leading spokespersons in the local food movement. ASD is a non-profit organization, using a hands-on, entrepreneurial approach to building a place-based, ecologically sustainable food system and economy in southwest Virginia and the surrounding area. The organization is now headed by Kathlyn Terry.

One of the initiatives of ASD is Appalachian Harvest, formed in 2000, which is an integrated field-to-table network, with over 60 farmers (many of whom are former tobacco farmers) that grow and sell produce and free-range eggs to nearly 900 supermarkets within a 400-mile range. The network provides training for farmers and a 15,000 square foot facility where produce is washed, packed, and shipped to consumers. A challenge for the network has been that demand exceeds the supply. An added benefit from the network has been buying good-quality produce "seconds" from the farmers at a discount and then supplying local food to needy families in the area through ASD's Healthy Families, Family Farms program.

Flaccavento speaks enthusiastically about related efforts across the Appalachian region: “The Appalachian Staple Food Collaborative in Southeast Ohio supports regional production of healthy heirloom grains, which it then processes, markets, and ships to regional buyers. And the Monroe County Farmers Market in West Virginia aggregates and distributes produce, meat, eggs, and prepared foods from nearly 20 small farmers to customers using an online marketplace.”

A more recent success story is Pilot Mountain Pride, opened in Pilot Mountain, North Carolina in May of 2010. The facility operates within a building that is a converted old hosiery mill and which also houses a branch of Surry County Community College. Pilot Mountain Pride is an aggregation center, a produce washing and grading facility, for small to medium size farms, giving them access to retail, service, and institutional markets. About 60 small to medium size farms in the area use the center and there is an emphasis on helping farmers diversify crops and on helping younger farmers succeed without large investments of capital. Farmers are required to attend Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) training on food safety issues, paid for by Pilot Mountain Pride. Lowes Food Stores have partnered with the center to purchase and distribute some of the produce. Market research predicts the center will be sustainable and will return 80% of profits to the farmers.

When the center was dedicated, the mayor of Pilot Mountain, Earl Sheppard, said, “This is a new beginning. I’m excited because I am a farmer. This is going to be a new beginning for our young farmers.” Bryan Cave, the Extension Director for Surry County responsible for farmer education and outreach at the center, added, “This project is about more than fruits and vegetables. It is also promoting family time and education about how food is grown. It’s about the value of agriculture to the community and about preserving a way of life and rural character.”

One infrastructure project still in development in 2012 is the Northside Healthy Food Hub in Spartanburg, South Carolina. With initial funding from a federal Health and Human Services grant, additional funding is being provided from the City of Spartanburg, the Butterfly Foundation, the Mary Black Foundation, and the Hub City Farmers Market in a public-private partnership. The plan is to develop a compound that will house an urban garden, a community kitchen and café, and a permanent home for the Hub City Farmers Market. One writer called the project “almost a Cinderella story,” and a resident remarked that “no one organization, no one person, no one body has the solution or the power to save this neighborhood. But if you’re generating things in the community, then you’re going to move forward.”

One often cited problem in local food distribution is how to get fresh, local food to the most rural communities or the low-income parts of urban communities that may have little access to markets or grocery stores—the so-called “food deserts.” One solution has been mobile farmer’s markets and the growth of community gardening. Before its plans to build the Northside Healthy Food Hub, Spartanburg’s Hub City Farmers Market sponsored a Mobile Market Truck to bring fresh produce weekly to underserved Spartanburg communities. Similarly, Rural Resources in East Tennessee, operates a Mobile Farmers Market to deliver orders of fresh, locally grown food to several rural pick-up locations.

Headquartered in Berea College's Appalachian Center in Kentucky, "Grow Appalachia" is a program designed to help Appalachian families grow more of their own food. Sponsored by philanthropist John Paul DeJoria of John Paul Mitchell Systems, the organization has eight program partners in Kentucky, West Virginia, and Tennessee that assist local families with personal gardens for their own food, works with schools, day care facilities, and youth leadership groups to involve youth in food production and elders through a senior center, and helps find markets for excess produce to add to family income. Community Food Initiatives in Appalachian, Ohio, has a community garden program and offers food and gardening education.

Centers for produce aggregation and distribution are not the only infrastructure requirements for food processing in a local food system. Farmers who raise pastured animals to produce beef, lamb, pork, and poultry are largely restricted by government regulations from slaughtering and dressing animals on their own farms. Abattoirs and other meat processing facilities have been few and far between in the mountains until only recently, adding fuel costs and time to the farmer's financial outlays and higher cost to consumers of local food. Recently, this gap in the local food chain has begun to be filled by Appalachian communities and partnerships.

In Highland County, Virginia, a regional partnership has been the driving force behind development of the Alleghany Highlands Agricultural Center. A steering committee of people from Highland and Bath counties in Virginia and Pendleton and Pocahontas counties in West Virginia raised more than \$1.5 million from private investors, grants, and a federal loan to build a meat processing and educational facility. The facility is creating jobs and solving the challenge local farmers have had of the great distances to get livestock to processing facilities. One local farmer said the new facility "gives producers and individuals some options, and gets things closer. I hate going across the mountain for everything." A state official noted that the facility could serve as a model for similar efforts throughout the region.

South of Highland County, farmers and community members formed Grayson Landcare, Inc., a non-profit organization to help improve the economic circumstances of farmers and preserve land, native biodiversity, and water quality and quantity. The group assisted development of a farmer-owned business raising pastured beef and lamb for sale to upscale restaurants, nearby universities, and other regional buyers. With grants from the Virginia Tobacco Commission and other agencies, plans are underway for an abattoir that will serve not only Grayson County but several neighboring counties in the region. The abattoir has been called "a key element of a local food system."

Not just abattoirs but aggregation centers for livestock sales are also an important piece of the food system puzzle. A nonprofit in western North Carolina created the Western North Carolina Livestock Market in 2010 to have a center for livestock auctions and to increase profit margins for local producers. In its opening years, it has proven to be highly successful.

In 2012, McDowell County, North Carolina, opened the doors of the first community-administered, non-profit meat processing plant in the United States that is also USDA inspected and plans to become certified as "Animal Welfare Approved," for low-stress, humane handling of animals there. Though not in an Appalachian county, the Foothills Pilot Plant will serve primarily poultry farmers in Southern

Appalachia, processing chickens, turkeys, rabbits, and specialty fowl. Already working with about 40 farms in western North Carolina, they have received interest from growers in South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. The Foothills Pilot Plant is a collaboration of state and local governments, small-scale meat producers, and grant-making agencies.

Food processing also involves preserving food and converting it into value-added products. One of the oldest methods for preserving food throughout Appalachia has been home canning of produce and even meats and still is practiced by many of the region's residents. But, making jarred foods for others to consume now is heavily regulated with stringent requirements for commercial kitchens. The result has been the revival of community canneries that meet new standards and the development of commercial kitchens and kitchen incubators in many parts of the mountains.

Washington County, Tennessee, revived its old community cannery and nearby Greene County, through the non-profit Rural Resources organization, offers a mobile kitchen to complement its mobile farmer's market, taking foods and facilities to the most rural communities. One of the longest-running and most successful food manufacturing facilities is operated by the Appalachian Center for Economic Networks (ACEnet) in southern Ohio. For over twenty-five years, ACEnet's shared-use Food Manufacturing and Commercial Kitchen Facility has been hosting businesses (now over 150 per year) and they offer training for those wanting to start or expand specialty food businesses. For their entrepreneurs, they offer assistance with every aspect of product development and product marketing, such as their "Food We Love," marketing campaign for regional foods.

Similarly, Blue Ridge Food Ventures in Asheville, North Carolina, has an 11,000 sq. ft. shared-use food incubator and commercial kitchen that offers services for Western North Carolina and the surrounding area. They, too, offer product development, "guidance through the regulatory maze," advice on packaging and labeling, and more. Products made from herbs and plant materials receive support from their Natural Products Manufacturing Facility. They have fostered over 170 businesses with reported sales exceeding \$3.5 million. Blue Ridge Food Ventures also operates its own Winter Sun Farms, a community-supported agriculture program that offers frozen fruits and vegetables from local farms engaged in sustainable agriculture. Ricardo Fernandez, owner of Chef Ricardo's Authentic Appalachian Tomato Sauces, testified that "using Blue Ridge Food Ventures, I was able to move quickly to get my award-winning product from testing to full production in just a year." Mary Lou Surgi, executive director of Blue Ridge Food Ventures, believes the help they give with financing, packaging, marketing, product distribution, "whatever it takes to get an idea from the drawing board into consumers' hands," is essential: "If we just offered the kitchens and not that assistance, I think a lot of our clients would run away screaming."

The Shoals Entrepreneurial Center in Florence, Alabama, realized there was a need in their area for a shared commercial kitchen. In 2001 they opened the Shoals Culinary Complex, the first community kitchen in Alabama. Their clients get to share the equipment and facilities of a professional kitchen, expertise of food processing and small business professionals, and access to a website and e-commerce shopping site. The Link Centre in Appalachian Mississippi has a commercial kitchen for culinary training and for catering events at their site.

A more recent effort underway in Appalachia is the Blue Ridge Agri-Cultural Center in Blue Ridge, Georgia. Focusing on what they call the “agri-cultural arts,” this center’s mission is described as “an incubator for local food and culinary traditions connecting the community, the farmer and artisans through gardens, workshops, cooking classes, and cooperative agreements.” Still in the development stages, they plan to have a community garden, professional kitchen, honey production, smokehouse, chicken coop, and an outdoor cooking facility. Another recent effort, a commercial kitchen for Unicoi County and surrounding areas in northeast Tennessee, got funding in 2011 from a variety of sources and is part of a larger community effort to expand their farming and tourism industries.

One key part of the infrastructure puzzle is the regulatory climate within which farmers and local food product marketers have to work. There is a dizzying array of state, county, and local policies, plus federal mandates, and often a great deal of uncertainty about who is responsible for developing and enforcing regulations. However, the USDA 2011 study of local food concluded that federal, state, and local government programs increasingly support local food systems. They outline numerous federal policies that assist with the growth of local food markets: the Department of Defense “Fresh Program” (to help deliver fresh, local food to schools and hospitals); USDA’s Community Food Project Grant Program (to address food insecurity issues) and its Community Food Security Initiative (to fund farmer’s markets and CSAs for low-income communities); the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 which helps support local food for schools; USDA’s WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program and Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program that make it possible for low income families and seniors to use food coupons at farmers’ markets, roadside stands, and CSA programs (used at 72% of all farmers’ markets now). USDA also supports food marketing through the Federal State Marketing Improvement Program, the National Farmers’ Market Promotion Program, and the Specialty Crop Block Grant, which has been particularly useful to farmers in Appalachia.

The Rural Development division of USDA also supports local agricultural entrepreneurship through the Community Facilities Program (to help build and equip farmers’ markets, community kitchens, and food processing centers), the Business and Industry Guarantee Loan Program and the Value-Added Agricultural Market Development program, both of which provide funding for local food distribution and promotion. The Value-Added Producer Grant Program helps with business planning to aid farmers in boosting farm income; the Rural Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program gives priority to those involved in local food distribution; the National School Lunch Act encourages schools to use local produce; the Healthy Urban Food Enterprise Development Center aims to get local food into underserved communities, and the Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program assists start-up or maintenance of small businesses, including food related businesses, in rural areas. In 2009, USDA launched a “Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food” initiative to develop more effective ways to connect consumers with local producers.

Regulation at the state level usually takes the form of health and safety regulation and the collection of state taxes. However, many states have helped encourage local food system development by approving the use of food stamps at markets and CSAs, and sometimes offering incentives for such consumers to buy local food, approving land use policies to favor small farms and zoning for markets, creating state Food Policy Councils, and in 2009, the National Conference of State Legislatures compiled a



comprehensive, searchable database that lists all state policies and proposals related to local foods between 2004-2009 (Healthy Community Design and Access to Healthy Food Database, 2010). At the local level, most regulation revolves around farmers' markets, with issues of zoning, parking, permits, and security, but some local communities go beyond such steps to actively promote or fund their local farmers' markets.

While Appalachia's local food infrastructure continues to grow in strength, the needs are still great. More aggregation and distribution facilities are needed to move products to consumers in a more efficient and cost-effective manner, but in many parts of the region, a lack of investment capital makes starting these businesses difficult. Uncertainty and confusion in the regulatory environment also weaken the local food structure, when rules for local food production and processing are unclear and jurisdictions for enforcement overlap or conflict. On a positive note, the very weaknesses in the infrastructure for local food systems may become strengths in entrepreneurship as local businesses arise to fill the gaps.

## ENTREPRENEURS

Like “locavore,” another word spawned by the local food explosion is “agripreneur,” a term for those involved in agriculturally-based pursuits that extend beyond traditional farming. Agripreneurs are entrepreneurs in the farming and food business. They may be engaged in Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA), value-added food production, agritourism, growing specialty crops, food marketing, creating capital for food ventures, or a host of other entrepreneurial activities.

Many of these entrepreneurs in Appalachia are the farmers, farm families, and farm communities themselves. They are finding new and interesting ways to add to their farm income. Dale Hawkins, farmer and chef in Rock Cave, West Virginia, is an excellent example of the phenomenon. In his career as a chef, Hawkins helped develop what has been called a “new Appalachian cuisine,” using local ingredients and traditional cooking methods in new ways. He continues the focus of making the past part of the present in his farming enterprises. Dubbing his venture as the New Appalachian Farm and Research Center, Hawkins has brought innovation to his farm community.

Organizing a group of family farms in the area under the brand “Fish Hawk Acres,” Hawkins and his partners operate a Community Supported Agriculture program that extends beyond providing boxes of produce on a regular basis to subscribers. They also offer an extensive list of prepared foods made from their local ingredients, responding to what Hawkins calls “market demand,” and calling the business a Community Supported Kitchen (CSK). They sell breakfast items, soups, entrees, and desserts with artisan cheeses and other products, a few of which are not locally sourced but sustainably produced. Some of their items such as chicken and beef pot pies are cooked and frozen in beautiful and substantial Fiestaware bowls; Fiestaware is a West Virginia product, so even the packaging is local. This group of farmers also does catering; they use a website and regular mailings to an extensive internet list to market their products and services. Hawkins helps conduct local food dinners across West Virginia and does research and training for farmers at his own farm. Hawkins says, “You can’t think the way farmers have traditionally thought—you have to diversify to get different streams of revenue.”

Community Supported Agriculture is a growing trend in Appalachia and elsewhere. In a CSA, a group of people buy shares for a portion of the expected harvest of a farm, giving them fresh, local food and allowing the farmer to know how much to grow. The USDA reports that there were only 2 CSA operations in the United States in 1986; today, there are likely more than 2500 such businesses.

Many Appalachian farms that offer a CSA program are also involved in other types of entrepreneurial activities, such as niche farming, value-added products, and agritourism. In Appalachian North Carolina (Stokes County), there is a thriving truffle farm—Keep Your Fork Farm. The farm’s owners, Rick Smith and Jane Morgan Smith, represent, like Dale Hawkins, Appalachian agripreneurs who think creatively about diverse ways to grow their business. They not only literally grow Black Winter Périgord Truffles, called “black diamonds” for their value and rarity (they sell for \$50 per ounce or \$800 per pound), but they sell them to restaurants, make and sell truffle butter, offer tours and tastings on the farm for \$50 per person, and offer to speak about growing truffles for a fee. They were part of the 2011 National Truffle Festival in Asheville and were featured on Martha Stewart’s television program after she visited their farm. In the kind of cross-fertilization going on in local food in the region, the truffles are featured at the restaurant of an Appalachian winery, their truffle hunting dogs were trained at Glen Eagle Farms in Luray, Virginia, and the owners have a strong commitment to preserving the scenic beauty and the sustainability of small farms in their area. Other types of mushroom cultivation, especially shitake mushrooms, and the gathering of wild mushrooms such as morels is also a growing food industry in the Appalachian region.

With the growth of community kitchens and food business incubators in the region, value-added food products have become a substantial source of revenue. At the Shoals Commercial Culinary Center in Appalachian Florence, Alabama, businesses such as “A Bushel and a Peck,” that makes dipped and decorated apples, “Martha Grace Foods,” producing Mook’s Cheese Straws, Katie’s Mustard Slaw, and Two Mama’s Salsa have brought financial success to local families. In Appalachian Mississippi, the Link Centre has developed a community kitchen for training in the culinary arts and to support such programs as their “Backpack Project” that sends meals home on weekends for needy children. The Link Centre also offers catering service for events in their reception hall.

Some of the region’s large local food organizations help members market their products under a single brand, such as Appalachian Harvest (Appalachian Sustainable Development), Appalachian Grown (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project), and Foods We Love (ACEnet). Using the Appalachian name is becoming more widespread in product development—High Appalachian Trout in Sophia, West Virginia, features not only fresh trout, but also rainbow trout paté and rainbow trout jerky (often raised in waters from abandoned coal mines); Appalachian Greetings in eastern Kentucky offers gourmet foods such as jellies, granola, green tomato relish, moonshine jelly, peach preserves, and other products; and West Virginia-based Appalachian Specialty Foods produces cooking sauces and salad dressings.

Even some businesses outside the region capitalize on the name recognition; Appalachian Naturals, a large company that makes numerous value-added food items and natural botanical products, is in Massachusetts, near the Berkshire Mountains, but now also markets throughout the Appalachian region. Kraft Foods even sells Appalachian Blend, a snack mix of dehydrated fruits and processed nuts.

Growing heirloom crops and transforming them into value-added food items is another area of rapid development in the Appalachian food economy. Orchards, especially apple orchards which thrive in the Appalachian region, have capitalized on this new interest in old varieties. The Historic Orchard at Altapass on the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina, uses its 105-year-old orchard as the setting for heirloom apple sales, live music, storytelling, and dance, tours, many value-added food products such as jams, jellies, sauces, and sweets, hayrides, and beekeeping, birdwatching, and conservation of Monarch butterfly habitat. They describe their mission as “preserving the history, heritage, and culture of the southern region of the Blue Ridge, protecting the Orchard land with its apples, wetlands, butterflies, and other natural features, and participating with the public in our unique regional experience.” They offer memberships and online shopping. The Altapass orchard captures many tourists from the Blue Ridge Parkway and, while not always having the built-in tourist or the heirloom products advantages, other farms across Appalachia also lure tourists as a supplement to regular farm income.

Agritourism in the region takes many forms. The Agritourism Networking Association in North Carolina lists all the following as agritourism activities: barnyard animals, farm riding trails, farm bed and breakfasts, country cabins and retreats, historic farms, reunions, museums, pick your own farms, farm roadside stands, nurseries, school field trips, summer camps, farm vacations, camping, bird watching, fishing and hunting, hay rides, mazes, pumpkin patches, holiday farms, Christmas trees, crafts, picnics, parties, weddings and honeymoons, vineyards, wineries, and slow food dining. There are farms across the Appalachian region that offer the whole gamut of these tourist enterprises.

In Fulton, Mississippi, Holley Farm, described “as embraced by the beautiful hills of Appalachian Mississippi,” offers a corn maze, pumpkin patches, a cotton patch, a cane sorghum patch, wagon and hay rides, encounters with farm animals, and an old country store for its visitors, who pay an admission

fee. Touting their “adventures in agriculture,” they benefit from collaborative marketing with the Mississippi Hills Heritage Area. In the Appalachian counties of New York, Harvest Dinners are hosted on farms to raise money for Healthy Food for All, a fund to make it possible for the economically challenged to participate in Community Supported Agriculture programs. One visitor described the event as “a winning recipe of gorgeous location, amazing local chefs, exquisite food products, and tables filled with people who grow the food and love food of the region.” Finger Lakes wineries provide the wine pairings for each course and farmers, winemakers, and chefs tell stories of their work.

Some Appalachian farms offer tourists the experience of doing actual farmwork and enjoying the fruits of their labor at communal meals. Maverick Farms, in Valle Crucis, North Carolina, run by a trio of young farmers, gives guests the chance to stay in the old farmhouse, help harvest herbs, fruits, and vegetables, and then enjoy one of their monthly farm dinners, which also often includes live, local music. Maverick Farms also provides space for artists-in-residence. According to a *New York Times* article, one guest from Los Angeles remarked that “it definitely made me appreciate what needs to be accomplished to put food on the table.” Numerous farms in Appalachian Pennsylvania offer farmstays with an emphasis on farm activities and food for families. Weatherbury Farm in Washington County is a grass-fed cattle and sheep farm that offers children the chance to be the “right-hand helpers of Farmer Dale.” Mountain Dale Farm in Snyder County lets children help feed cattle, horses, turkeys, and peacocks and watch for foxes, deer, and bears. “The Ole Farm House” in East Tennessee bills itself as a “working agritourism farm” and invites guests to be part of tending to goats, making goat milk soap, and harvesting fresh produce.

In many parts of the region, agritourism revolves around vineyards and wineries. The Southern Tier and Finger Lakes areas of upstate New York have over 100 wineries and numerous wine trails for tourists. Southeast Ohio has an Appalachian Wine Trail that features eight wineries, many of which also provide local food and some, such as Heritage Vineyards Winery & Guest House in Warsaw, have lodging available. Virginia’s wine country is divided into regions across the state and at least three of the regions are wholly or in part in Appalachia: Heart of Appalachia region, Blue Ridge region, and the Shenandoah Valley region. Villa Appalaccia Winery near Floyd, Virginia, looking much like a Tuscan villa, focuses on Italian inspired wines and local foods infused with Italian heritage. A 2011 study found that Virginia’s wine industry nearly doubled in economic impact between 2005 and 2010, providing nearly \$750 million to the state’s economy yearly; spending just on winery tourism increased from \$57 million in 2005 to \$131 million in 2010. The North Georgia Wine Highway offers visitors vineyards, farms, orchards, mills, dairies, herbalists, and restaurants dedicated to preserving mountain foodways and to promoting fresh, local products. North Georgia has more than a dozen wineries and the rate of new vineyard plantings is among the highest in the eastern United States. With over 195,000 gallons of wine produced each year in Pennsylvania (making it the fourth largest wine growing state in the country), many of the wine trails wind their way through the mountains of Appalachian Pennsylvania. Western North Carolina has become such a wine-rich area that the Sustainable Appalachian Viticulture Institute was formed there in 2010 to promote the growing of cool-hardy and disease resistant grape cultivars in the 23 mountain counties of North Carolina and they hold an annual conference. Some have called wine production the fastest growing industry in North Carolina that provided over \$1 billion in economic impact to the state in 2011.

Distilling spirits, one of the oldest of Appalachian traditions, is making a comeback in the region because several states have revised laws to permit legal distilling. With the number of distilleries increasing quickly, this seems to be one of the growth areas in local food production, building on the region’s assets of grain and fruit production, clean and abundant water, and a heritage of distilling lore. In Appalachian North Carolina, Troy & Sons Distillery in Asheville makes legal moonshine from Crooked

Creek Corn, one of the few corns that is originally American, and free-flowing mountain water. The owner says she makes moonshine “in the tradition of the spirit makers of western North Carolina.” The distillery owners have a strong commitment to sustainability, offering a Farmers Market Tour featuring organic and local dishes. Initially operating out of an historic farmhouse and barns, the distillery as of 2011 located to the Southern Railway Warehouse in Asheville. Citing their Appalachian roots for their commitment to environmental and energy sustainability, the Mauney brothers, graduates of Appalachian State University, recently opened their Southern Artisan Spirits distillery in their great-great-grandfather’s hosiery mill on the edge of Appalachia in King’s Mountain, North Carolina. They make Cardinal Gin from organic ingredients and plan to develop a small-batch bourbon.

South Carolina’s revised micro-distillery laws led to the establishment of the Dark Corner Distillery in 2011 in Greenville. Using the name ascribed to the upstate part of South Carolina since the 1800s, the distillery makes 100-proof moonshine in a copper still. Housed in an historic building, they also have a tasting bar and a museum dedicated to the history of the Dark Corner. When Tennessee also revised its laws, the Ole Smoky Tennessee Moonshine Distillery opened in Gatlinburg, the first federally licensed distillery in the history of East Tennessee. The distillery is a family business, with the corn grown and milled locally, and transformed into such products as Ole Smoky Original Moonshine, Ole Smoky White Lightnin’, and Ole Smoky Moonshine Cherries. They also offer distillery tours. In West Virginia, Smooth Ambler Spirits in Maxwelton is an artisan, small-batch distillery making vodka, gin, whiskey, and bourbon using local and regional ingredients. They offer tours, a tasting room, and gift shop. In Morgantown, Mountain Moonshine Distillery appeals to the college crowd of the university town.

The Northern stretches of Appalachia have their own distilleries. In Pittsburgh, an artisan whiskey distillery, Wigle Whiskey, opened in 2011. Named after Philip Wigle, one of two men convicted of treason and sentenced to hang for his role in the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794, one of the owners says the venture is “an opportunity to restore this Pennsylvania industry that has been dormant for a long time.” Built to latch onto the thriving tourist trade of the Finger Lakes area in New York, the Finger Lakes Distillery was born in 2009, with owners from New York’s Southern Tier and one from Alabama. They produce whiskey and rye, vodka, gin, brandy and some other liqueurs, using grapes, rye, barley, and wheat from the Southern Tier. One of their popular brands, Glen Thunder, refers to the auto racing industry in nearby Watkins Glen.

In addition to the distilling of spirits, micro-breweries for beer have also seen exponential growth in the Appalachian region, actually much earlier than whiskey distilling because laws on brewing beer began to change in the 1970s. By 2009, according to the “Southern Appalachian Beer Guide” in *Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine*, in recent years the mountain region has become one of the fastest growing craft beer markets in the country, producing award-winning beers and ales. In Appalachian New York, the Southern Tier Brewing Company in Lakewood produces 28 different beers that they export to 29 states and 12 foreign countries. They also offer local food and brewery tours. Asheville, North Carolina, by all accounts, is the epicenter of craft brew in the Appalachian region, named in 2011 as Beer City USA for the third year in a row in a national poll. Asheville has at least eight breweries, with another four or five just on the outskirts, plus many pubs and taverns devoted to microbrews. The Highland Brewery is the largest and offers a seasonal Cold Mountain Ale. The Asheville Brewing Company offers brews, food, and movies at its site. Just outside Asheville, there is a German microbrewery in Sylva and the Appalachian Craft Brewery in Hendersonville. Capitalizing on this booming asset, Asheville hosts six beer-related festivals each year: Oktoberfest, Winter Warmer Beer Festival, Asheville Beer Week, Beer City Festival, Craft Beer Festival, and the Brewgrass Festival, featuring beer and bluegrass.

In the mountains of Virginia at Mountain Lake Hotel (site of the film “Dirty Dancing”), there is another annual Brewfest that also features Virginia microbreweries and local bluegrass. Mountain State Brewing Company in Thomas, West Virginia, produces their signature beer, Almost Heaven Amber Ale, and a seasonal blueberry beer, taking advantage of Canaan Valley tourism for marketing.

Such explosive growth in microbrewing has led to a complementary new entrepreneurial opportunity in growing hops from which to make the beer. Virginia was once known as the “hops capital of the world,” and they hope to regain that distinction in places such as the Blue Mountain Brewery and Hop Farm near the Shenandoah National Park. In North Carolina, enough farms have taken up hops growing to form the Southern Appalachian Hops Guild, Appalachian State University in 2012 offered a hops workshop, and North Carolina State University started the North Carolina Hops Project to conduct research that will make hops a valuable cash crop. In Haywood County, hops farmer Scott Grahl and partner Stephanie Willis have used Tobacco Trust Fund grants to turn an old farm into a hops farm, working with the North Carolina State Soil Science and Horticulture Departments to learn ways to improve the soil, increase yields and quality, and improve marketing opportunities. Currently, most Appalachian microbreweries have had to import hops from the Pacific Northwest, so Grahl and others in the Guild saw a market opportunity. Noting that nearby Asheville is Beer City USA, Grahl says, “Every brewery from Asheville has said, if you guys grow it, we’ll buy it.” Grahl also likes the fact that he is preserving historic farmland by using it. Other members of the Guild include Blue Ridge Hops in Madison County, a USDA certified organic farm, and the Hop’n Blueberry Farm in Buncombe County doing sustainable farming of hops, native blueberries, medicinal herbs, and milkweed, plus a butterfly flight house. In Appalachian Pennsylvania, the Flying Squirrel Organic Hops Farm began in 2009 using sustainable farming methods and Demeter’s Garden in Centre County, launched in the same year, already had a local market in a café and an aleworks.

The biggest problems for hops growers are the labor intensive production and the high costs of processing hops. In the Pacific Northwest and in Germany, hops growers form collectives to manage these challenges, but Appalachian growers have not yet been able to make that much investment up front. Hops still is emerging as one of the growth areas in Appalachian farming, with farms in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, and under serious investigation in almost every state in the region.

Like distilling and microbrewing, development of the fishing industry depends upon the pristine water in much of the mountain region. Mountain trout has long been considered one of the region’s delicacies. Restaurants in the mountains of North Georgia advertise trout any way you like it—fried, broiled, pecan-crusted, smoked, and so on. Many camps and inns in the region offer services for cleaning and cooking freshly caught fish to the legions of trout fisherman who come to the region’s rivers and streams; some farms offer trout farms that make the fishing less wild and more certain of a catch, and they usually also provide cleaning and cooking service.

West Virginia is home to the U.S. Trout Farmers Association and has become a center in the region for aquaculture. In Raleigh County, High Appalachian Trout sells trout fillets, trout paté, and smoked trout jerky to individuals and to places such as the Greenbrier, Tamarack, and Kroger stores. Trout for this company and for many others in West Virginia is raised in water from reclaimed coal mines. In 2000, the Mingo County Fish Hatchery opened using water from a Mingo mine; the manager says the water “flows from the mine by gravity to the incubator and the tanks. We hardly even use any electricity.”

West Virginia has benefited from the expertise of its Freshwater Institute, headquartered in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The Institute has helped open many fisheries, including a yellow-perch

hatchery in Pocahontas County, a tilapia farm in upstate New York for Fingerlakes Aquaculture (with Cornell University), and an aquaponics farm in West Virginia that uses water from raising the fish to grow herbs and vegetables. In 2011, the Worldwatch Institute reported that the number of fish farmers in Appalachia was growing, especially in the coal fields, and raising not only trout, but catfish and even salmon. The manager of Mountaineer Trout Farm in Princewick, West Virginia, sees huge growth ahead for the industry, saying “we see 10 years down the road between 1 and 2 million pounds of production,” and all the farms are hoping to capitalize on the buy local movement.

Another report in 2011, this time from *National Geographic*, noted that the United Nations put a temporary halt to sturgeon caviar exports from the Caspian Sea because the fish species was becoming endangered. This has provided an entrepreneurial opportunity for Appalachian fish farmers. Shuckman’s Fish and Sunburst Trout, for example, located in Louisville, Kentucky buys most of its fish from Appalachian fish farms and is now expanding into trout caviar with a facility in an abandoned coal mine in Lynch, Kentucky. The rainbow trout aquaculture center is a joint venture of Sunburst Trout and Southeast Kentucky Community College and Kentucky State University. They hope to have a year-round supply of fish and caviar and, according to the director of the program, “we’re hoping to diversify the economy around here, which has been primarily coal for steel production.” Appalachian caviar—no longer considered an oxymoron.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

For many years, training in agriculture and food production was the purview of land-grant universities in the United States. County extension agents worked with farmers, food producers, and youngsters in 4-H and Future Farmers of America to provide the latest in farming techniques, food safety regulation, and preparing young folks for a farming future. As small farming declined in America, the extension services began to shrink, land-grant universities began to concentrate on large-scale, industrialized farming with chemicals and antibiotics, and fewer and fewer young people looked to farming as a viable future.

Fortunately, the emphasis in recent years on local or community food systems has encouraged changes in agricultural education and workforce training. As small-scale farming began to increase but with a focus on new technologies, extension services have begun to see a greater demand for what they can provide, college and university agriculture programs have adapted their approaches to focus on sustainable farming methods and training farmers for the next generation, and there is more public outcry to return extension service to former levels and reinvigorate school programs such as 4-H and FFA. This has been true in the Appalachian region as well. In addition, other groups such as non-land-grant academic institutions, non-profit organizations, and private entrepreneurs are developing new technical curricula, researching issues related to food and farming, and fostering a stronger sense of regional agricultural identity.

The Appalachian region is fortunate to be home to many of the country's leading land-grant universities, including Clemson University in South Carolina, Virginia Tech, University of Tennessee, Pennsylvania State University, West Virginia University, North Georgia College and State University, Mississippi State University, and Cornell University in New York. Although on the margins of the region, Kentucky State University, University of Kentucky, and North Carolina State University also contribute to agricultural and food work in Appalachia. Much cutting edge research and teaching is being done at all these schools.

A major research project, funded by a \$2 million grant from the U. S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, began in 2011 with faculty researchers from West Virginia University, Virginia Tech, and North Carolina State University. The goal of the project is to improve individual health and the health of the regional economy by strengthening local communities. Methods include surveying where food is grown in Southern Appalachia, assessing farmland and gauging the distance between food and residents, and identifying areas of need with a view to establishing sustainable community food systems. Susan Clark, one of the faculty researchers on the project from Virginia Tech, noted in the *Rural Blog* that "the Southern Appalachian region has historically struggled with high levels of food insecurity and economic instability. We aim to enhance knowledge of barriers and opportunities for improving food security and economic viability through local and regional food system development in this region."

The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg has been reaching out beyond the campus into area high schools and communities to boost the development of local food systems. Several high schools in the region are learning how to grow and market alternative crops through an innovative grant program offered by Virginia Tech. A professor of agriculture and extension education at Tech said, "We anticipate that students who participate in the local entrepreneurial projects will become more aware of the constantly changing food production opportunities that can exist or be developed in local communities." She added that it can show students the diversity of career



opportunities in the agriculture industry and showcase business opportunities. Projects have included building high-tunnel greenhouses, producing potatoes in raised beds, and installing a fillet station next to an existing tilapia operation in a county school.

The University of Kentucky, through its Agricultural Economics department, has offered a training program called “A Common Field: A Whole Farm Management Education Program for Beginning Farmers,” designed to offer education in production, marketing, and networking skills for new farmers. Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, offers a Small Farms Program that includes an undergraduate course called Exploring the Small Farm Dream with topics such as diversified farming, grass-based farming, community-supported agriculture, farm business planning, and more. Their Beginning Farmer Project strives to enhance the likelihood of success of new agricultural enterprises by offering resources and training through a website, a guide to farming, an online class, and regional farmer trainings.

Penn State University offers a Start Farming program to help produce a new generation of farmers, and they received a grant for a project specifically for beginning women farmers that offers “pot-luck learning circles” to develop on-farm and business skills. West Virginia University has an active Small Farm Center that focuses on fruit and vegetable production, value adding, beginning farmers, farmers market management, agri-tourism, and animal production and marketing. The Small Farm Center also hosts an annual conference that combines communities in West Virginia, eastern Kentucky, and southeastern Ohio.

Land-grant schools have a mandate to work with farming and provide community service, but other non-land-grant colleges and universities in the Appalachian region have also become part of community food efforts. East Tennessee State University in Johnson City and Milligan College in Milligan, Tennessee partnered to host the first East Tennessee Local Food Summit in 2011. In addition to bringing together consumers, producers, educators, elected officials, and local “foodies,” they engaged students with a targeted reading and video list and involved them in the planning and discussions. Tuskegee University in Alabama has partnered with the Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network to provide programs for beginning farmers and ranchers and to offer organic agriculture training for extension workers.

The Ford Foundation in 2009 funded the Alliance for Sustainability, a network of community colleges to work collaboratively on new and better ways to educate, train, promote, and support sustainable rural development, particularly where associated with industry clusters. One of their areas of emphasis has been Central Appalachia and they have held meetings in Charleston, West Virginia, Knoxville, Tennessee, and Rome, Georgia. Their most recent meeting in 2011 was titled, “Growth from the Ground Up: Community Colleges and Sustainable Food Systems,” in North Carolina. Educating students for sustainable agriculture is one of their key areas of development.

Community colleges, technical institutes, and even some colleges and universities in the region train not only farmers and food producers, but those who cook the food. Culinary training prepares students in areas of cooking, food safety and sanitation, food vocabulary, and often business management. In Asheville, North Carolina, the Asheville Independent Restaurant Association, Goodwill Industries, the Asheville City Schools Foundation, and Green Opportunities partnered to offer “GO Kitchen-Ready” training at a local school. Using local food products is a key ingredient in the program. Training is offered in culinary skills, plus job preparation skills, and assistance with job placement is provided by the partner organizations.

Training in aquaponics, one of the growth food industries in the region occurs on many mountain campuses. Hocking College in Ohio has a fish hatchery facility for research and training for regional

entrepreneurs. There are aquaponics teaching facilities at the State University of New York at Cobleskill, Garrett Community College in Appalachian Maryland (that also grows produce using the nutrient rich wastewater from the fish), and at Gadsden State Community College in Alabama. Floyd County, Kentucky, has an aquaponics program in a local high school to teach students how to raise, add value, and market fish and fish products.

Community organizations often provide short courses and workshops to help educate local folks about gardening, cooking, food preservation, and other topics. The Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network (ASAN) offers Farmer to Farmer educational programs in which farmers mentor one another. An innovative feature of the program is called the “Pass On,” in which participants in the training received a pass-on gift such as supplies, honeybees, chicks, seeds or seedlings with the understanding that they must pass on their training and more gifts to another producer. Working with Alabama A & M University, Tuskegee University, Auburn University, the National Young Farmers Education Association, and the Alabama Green Industry Training Center, ASAN helped create the Consortium for Agricultural Newcomers Access to Learning (CANAL). The Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) offers sustainability schools for community members to teach them sustainable living practices.

Community Food Initiatives in Appalachian Ohio held a series of Appalachian Food Workshops in 2011 that explored organic gardening, wild foraging for nettles and using garden weeds medicinally, home brewing, canning and making jams and jellies, making compost, running a sustainable food business, and permaculture. Gaining Ground, the Sustainability Institute of Mississippi, located in Appalachian Mississippi, offers a year-long class to help people learn to grow food on one square meter of land, such as their front yards, to take the intimidation factor out of home gardening. They also offer student internships with their organization. One fascinating student project influenced by Gaining Ground is the “Farm on Wheels,” created by students at the Mississippi School for Math and Science in Columbus, also in an Appalachian county. The senior students converted a school bus to run on biodiesel fuel, installed solar panels on the hood, painted the bus with farm graphics such as chickens, corn, and watermelon, and hit the road to carry a message of sustainable living. They plan to add a greenhouse roof, learning garden, irrigation system, worm tea bin, compost tumbler, portable chicken coop, and more.

In Berea, Kentucky, the Sustainable Mountain Agriculture Center, established by one of the region’s most well-known heirloom seed savers, Bill Best, takes agricultural education and training of people of all ages very seriously. Not only does the center collect family and heirloom seeds and help heirloom growers, but they train young people during the growing season to value, grow, and market heirloom fruits and vegetables. They also train folks of all ages in traditional techniques of food preservation, train owners of woodlots in less intrusive logging practices, experiment with Appalachian medicinal herbs and mushroom production, and assist Appalachian counties in becoming more self-sufficient in food production.

The federal government, through the USDA Agricultural Research Service, operates the Appalachian Farming Systems Research Center near Beckley, West Virginia. This laboratory serves the agricultural community of the Appalachian Region by developing knowledge and technology to make small farms in the region more profitable while protecting the environment. They work to identify and target products to meet niche market demands and help farmers with problems of climate, steep terrain, and eroded soil. The laboratory’s current priorities are ways to deal with climate change, food safety research, and global food security research. In addition to helping farmers have access to cutting-edge technology, the research center also maintains an archive, available on its website, of Appalachian agricultural heritage, with photographs, video documentaries, and narratives that are available to the public.



## CULTURAL HERITAGE AND LOCAL FOOD

Barbara Kingsolver, in her award-winning bestseller, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, about living off the land and local food for a year in Appalachia, says: “A food culture is not something that gets sold to people. It arises out of a place, a soil, a climate, a history, a temperament; a collective sense of belonging. People hold on to their food customs because of the positives: comfort, nourishment, heavenly aromas. Food cultures concentrate a population’s collective wisdom about the plants and animals that grow in a place and the complex ways of rendering them tasty. These are mores of survival, good health, and control of excess. Living without such a culture would seem dangerous.” What Kingsolver describes is akin to the French notion of “terroir,” that wine or food is an embodiment of the place from which it comes—the land, the climate, the methods of growing and producing, the traditions, the culture.

The leading voices in the local food movement worldwide emphasize the importance, both economically and socially, of the centrality of culture in agriculture. Food with a place, a face, and a taste, or “storied” food is helping fuel the local food movement. Michael Pollan in his seminal work, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, puzzles, “when you think about it, it is odd that something as important to our health and general well-being as food is so often sold strictly on the basis of price. The value of relationship marketing is that it allows all kinds of information besides price to travel up and down the food chain: stories as well as numbers, qualities as well as quantities, values rather than ‘value.’”

Gary Nabhan in *Coming Home to Eat: The Pleasures and Politics of Local Foods*, creates a lengthy “Terroir-ist’s Manifesto,” from which one section is particularly significant:

Know where your food comes from  
by the richness of stories told round the table  
recalling all that was harvested nearby  
during the years that came before you,  
when your predecessors & ancestors,  
roamed the same woods & neighborhoods  
where you & yours now roam.  
Know them by the songs sung to praise them,  
by the handmade tools kept to harvest them,  
by the rites & feasts held to celebrate them,  
by the laughter let loose to show them our affection.

Many local food groups in Appalachia embrace the necessity of providing the cultural context for the food grown and eaten in the mountains. Indeed, for many people in Appalachia, food has always been inseparably and reciprocally tied to music, craft, storytelling, literature, architecture, customs and celebrations. Appalachia is one of those rare places where you can eat food and drink water/wine/beer/cider/whiskey produced on the land in front of you, seasoned with herbs from the nearby kitchen garden and mushrooms from the local woods, in a log or stone building built by hand, on tables and chairs made of beautiful highland woods and adorned with gorgeous, local wildflowers, on pottery dishes made from local clay and glassware made in the region, with locally woven napkins and tablecloths, listening to stories and music about food in the mountains.

Farmers’ markets have become one locale for bringing together food and culture. In addition to food, many markets in the mountains offer local flowers and herbs, pottery and woodcraft, handmade

textiles, and traditional and bluegrass music. One example is the Farmers and Artisans Market in Floyd County, Virginia, sponsored by the SustainFloyd organization. The market is held in a 3,000 square foot timber frame pavilion (built locally with logs harvested by a local horse logging company) and features locally grown produce and handcrafts, plus a stage for local music and community events, often the site of community festivals such as FloydFest, their nationally acclaimed music festival. The SustainFloyd group believes the market helps them advance two of their main objectives: “to help develop a local food system and to encourage the creative economy and local entrepreneurship.” They have as their vision “to develop new ideas that inform the next generation of initiatives for this rural community while preserving local traditions.”

Most of the major regional organizations that deal with local food systems incorporate elements of cultural heritage into their work. The Collaborative for the Twenty-First Century Appalachia, headquartered in Charleston, West Virginia, has published a toolkit to help communities turn their culinary heritage into economic strategies, including ways to hold community cook-offs based on local food and traditions and how to create cookbooks of local fare. The Collaborative itself sponsors the Cast Iron Cook-Off, an annual event growing in attention and acclaim, in which regional chefs use local ingredients and the heritage of cast iron cookware to transform traditional dishes into what they call “a new Appalachian cuisine.” The group also sponsors essay contests for young people who collect stories of the history of agriculture and food in their families and communities. The organization received a 2011 state humanities grant to conduct a West Virginia Foodways Heritage Inventory.

Similarly, Slow Food Asheville teamed with Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, in the Appalachian Foods Storybank project. After training interested participants in oral history techniques, the Storybank project collects and archives stories from individuals, families, and communities about Southern Appalachian foods, “how they are grown or harvested, to ways of preparing and preserving them, to anecdotes of family or community rituals surrounding food.”

In upstate New York, many food, tourism, business, and arts groups have joined in partnership to promote their Regional Flavor project. The executive director of the Concord Grape Belt Heritage Association, one of the partners, explained that “the Regional Flavor concept of community and economic development combines the uniqueness of a region’s places, geography, heritage, farm and foods, recreation, arts and crafts, lodging, culture and events into authentic experiences for local residents and visitors.” Consultants from the Appalachian Center for Economic Networks (ACEnet) in Ohio, who have a similar program, have helped the New York effort.

According to the ACEnet website, Regional Flavor Strategies is an innovative, homegrown approach to rural community and economic development that “builds on the best of a region’s places, passions, and potential. It invites people often excluded from the economic development process (mom and pop businesses, artisans, farmers, historical societies, arts councils, tourism bureaus, parks and recreations assets, educational institutions, and other non-profits) to “actively engage in seeking innovative ways to combine regional assets [its heritage and traditions, culture, arts, food, landscape, and people] to generate a unique regional *flavor*.” Their goal is to create “rooted wealth” in their communities and regions.

Another important regional group dedicated to regional flavor is the Southern Foodways Alliance (SFA), based at the University of Mississippi in Oxford. Although they study the heritage of foodways throughout the South, they have often focused on the food heritage of Appalachia. In 2003, they held a conference on *Appalachia: The Land and the Larder*. One attendee from Texas wrote on her food blog

that “there’s something so irresistibly Southern about a collegial meeting that begins each day with poetry invocations and ends each evening with Tennessee whiskey-soaked revels, that pairs scholarly papers about moonshine whiskey or beaten biscuits with a . . . comedy routine and a Pimento Cheese Invitational, and that serves fresh dairy buttermilk with chunks of savory cornbread for a morning snack and heirloom Appalachian apple varieties in the afternoon.” (Wood, *Austin Chronicle*, 2003). From this conference came the 2005 book, *Cornbread Nation 3: Foods of the Mountain South*, edited by Ronni Lundy, an esteemed food journalist from Appalachian Kentucky, author of cookbooks, and winner of the Craig Claiborne Lifetime Achievement Award in 2009.

Numerous other organizations have also started the process of documenting Appalachia’s food traditions. At North Georgia College and State University, the Appalachian Studies program calls its signature project “Saving Appalachian Gardens and Stories,” which involves an annual demonstration program for heirloom seeds and an oral history collection. Since 2006, in partnership with the Department of Biology at the university, the program has collected heirloom seeds from the mountain region and oral history interviews with the seed donors about gardening traditions and foodways of Southern Appalachia, believing the memories “are as important as the genetic diversity of the seeds.”

In 2010, Virginia Highlands Community College in Abingdon began development of an Appalachian Heritage Garden Trail. Noting that much work had been done to preserve and promote the music, arts, and crafts of the region, there were no comprehensive efforts to preserve trees, shrubs, flowers, and plants. The trail will ultimately have a series of eight “period gardens” on the campus and in Abingdon.

In Kentucky, the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development focuses mainly on building economic resources for communities, but they have recognized the economic and community value in preserving the region’s stories of sustainability and self-sufficiency. The “more stories to tell” section of their website records narratives of family farms and another section that features “Voices of Appalachia,” and their *Standing on the Mountain* literary journal provides more outlets for local folks to tell their stories of success.

Appalachia has been lucky to have numerous dedicated food documenters who write about the region’s culinary heritage. The *Foxfire* series of books began documenting the region’s food traditions and brought them to national attention as early as the 1970s, culminating in a book solely about the region’s food in 1984 (*Foxfire Book of Appalachian Cookery: The Regional Memorabilia and Recipes*). In 1998, Georgia writer Joseph Dabney published *Smokehouse Ham, Spoon Bread, and Scuppernong Wine: The Folklore and Art of Southern Appalachian Cooking*. Fellow food writer, John Egerton, said of the book that it was about “a mountain sensibility, suffused with language and lore, stories and songs, an abiding sense of place and, not least, dinner tables where families drawn by ageless tradition and an irresistible panorama of culinary gems linger to recite their history in stories—and in so doing, to nourish their social and cultural roots.”

Dabney is also known as a chronicler of *Mountain Spirits* and *More Mountain Spirits*, his two books on making moonshine and other alcoholic concoctions. A more recent offering on mountain moonshine is Charles D. Thompson, Jr.’s *Spirits of Just Men: Mountaineers, Liquor Bosses, and Lawmen in the Moonshine Capital of the World*. Thompson, a professor at Duke University, writes about his home of Franklin County, Virginia, acknowledged as the historic epicenter of the moonshine trade, and argues that making moonshine was a rational and savvy choice for struggling farmers and community members during the Great Depression. He asks “where did the corn come from? It was, we might argue, a locally

produced, value-added product made by mountain producers that any ‘locavore’ (local-food advocate) might applaud as part of the solution to our food problems today.”

Mark Sohn, who retired from Pikeville College in Kentucky, has become widely known as an authority on Appalachian food and cooking. He has written books such as *Appalachian Home Cooking: History, Culture, and Recipes* (2005) and *Mountain Country Cooking: A Gathering of the Best Recipes from the Smokies to the Blue Ridge* (1996), and he was section editor for the Food and Cooking section of the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*. He has verified recipes, examined food origins, and documented food traditions across Appalachia and he concludes, “Appalachian food may be a stereotype, but the food of Appalachia is not.”

Sohn deems apple stack cakes “a mountain icon.” The cakes have six to eight thin layers of cake filled between each layer with a sweetened, spicy apple filling. Perfecting the art of making one of the cakes was the mark of a good mountain cook. As Sohn writes, “The cake was popular because five of the essential ingredients—dried apples, lard, sorghum, buttermilk, and eggs—were grown on the farm, and the others—spices, flour, and baking soda—could be purchased in local markets. Today, mountaineers romanticize this cake because it stands out as one of the region’s special creations.”

Tanya Danckla Cobb at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville has written *Reclaiming our Food: How the Grassroots Food Movement Is Changing What We Eat* and, with her colleague, Christine Gyovai, has organized the Central Appalachia Food Heritage Project (CAHF). The CAHF is a collaborative, community-based effort to build knowledge about the foodways of Central Appalachia and use this knowledge to help build community vibrancy and thriving local economies. In the project, they hope to identify heritage foods that are endangered, map heritage food and agricultural sites (such as mills, granaries, butcheries, and cideries), identify heritage food production areas, collect personal stories about significant food and agricultural practices, and foster opportunities to celebrate the region’s food heritage. Another Virginian, Jim Minick at Radford University, has won widespread acclaim for his book, *The Blueberry Years: A Memoir of Farm and Family*, that recounts his family’s experiences in creating and operating an organic, pick-your-own blueberry farm in southwest Virginia.

Elizabeth Engelhardt, a professor at University of Texas, grew up in the mountains of North Carolina and draws on that history for her *A Mess of Greens: Southern Gender and Southern Food*, a feminist look at how food choices conceal stories of race, class, gender, and social power. She writes that, if you asked her family members where they are from, they likely would say “the mountains of North Carolina,” noting that “putting ‘mountains’ first emphasizes how important they are in terms of loyalty and love of place. At the same time, making mountains the most important part of the phrase recognizes the marginalization of Appalachia and its foodways from the rest of the state and the region.”

Wendell Berry, who lives and farms on the margins of Appalachia, writes perhaps more eloquently than anyone about local food and sustainable agriculture in Appalachia and elsewhere. From his groundbreaking book, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture* in 1977, to his most recent *Bringing It to the Table: On Farming and Food* in 2009, Berry argues that for farming to be sustainable and successful, it must “consult the genius of the place,” asking what nature would do if no one was farming in a particular place, what will nature permit them to do there and will help them do there, and what can they do there that will cause the least harm to the place and their natural and human neighbors.”

In some parts of the Appalachian region, certain food traditions are so distinctive that they become famous far beyond the point of origin and are longed for by natives who live outside of the area. The spiedie (pronounced SPEE-dee), a sandwich that originated in New York's Appalachian Southern Tier, has thousands of devotees who crave its smell and distinctive taste. The name comes from the Italian *spiedo* meaning cooking spit. Originally made from lamb, they now are often chunks of either lamb, pork, chicken, beef, or venison that is marinated in a tart, piquant sauce and then grilled on a skewer. To serve it, sliced Italian bread with extra sauce is wrapped around the meat, still on the skewer, which is then pulled out, making the bread a kind of mitt for the meat. The sauce usually has wine vinegar, water, lemon juice, garlic, and fresh mint and many "secrets" to the sauce are passed down through families. Each year, the town of Binghamton, New York, holds the Spiedie Fest and Balloon Rally, which has vendors selling all manner of spiedies and a cooking contest to find the best spiedie. A company in Binghamton produces the sauce commercially and sells over 2 million bottles annually, especially to former residents now spread across the country. In 1999, the Library of Congress memorialized the Spiedie Fest in its Local Legacies project with text, photographs, videotape, posters, programs, and even three bottles of marinade. One former resident of the Southern Tier says "spiedies are God's gift to barbecue, truly one of the culinary delights of the world."

Similarly, in West Virginia, the pepperoni roll is a special regional food. Using his Italian food heritage, Guisepe "Joseph" Argiro is credited with "inventing" the pepperoni roll in 1927 at his Country Club Bakery in Fairmont to serve Italian-American coal miners. Many versions of the traditional roll now exist with home cooks, and they can still be purchased commercially at the original Country Club Bakery and a more modern version at Colasessano's, also in Fairmont. Another fascinating West Virginia food tradition is the bear meat picnic held annually for many decades at the historic Forks of Cheat Baptist Church, established in 1775, to honor the importance of bears in the lives of early pioneers. The late pastor, Joseph C. Gluck served as Bear Master and inducted hundreds of individuals into the World Bear Eaters Club. The church has also had a tradition of an annual opening of the "whiskey tombstone," a hollow grave marker once used to buy and sell spirits, unbeknownst to church members. After Gluck's death in 2004, the bear meat picnic dwindled away, but there is now interest in reviving the tradition.

Mountain food traditions incorporate strands from many groups—Native Americans, African-Americans, Italians, Hungarians, Swiss, Jews, Poles, Scots-Irish, German, English, and more who have lived and worked on farms, in coal fields, and in mill towns. They adapted their heritage recipes to local ingredients and to the needs of their families and occupations to produce a blended yet distinct Appalachian food heritage that is being documented more fully all the time. And such local food culture has economic value. As the 2010 USDA study of local food systems concludes, the concept of local food is intimately tied to the "story behind the food" or its "provenance," that points to the reputation of the place from which the food comes in signals of quality, culture, and history.



## BUILDING REGIONAL CAPACITY

*“Community growth begins with individual growth; local people must address local problems; successful development begins with small tangible goals—pick the low-hanging fruit first; team-building (and its accompanying personal commitment) are essential; and the real task for leaders is to be social architects who build human infrastructure.”* Dr. Vaughn Grisham, Director of the McLean Institute for Community Development, University of Mississippi.

The Center for Rural Entrepreneurship defines community capacity as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to improve and sustain your community. They identify several principles important to sustainable community development: (1) People in the community must be responsible for addressing local problems; (2) Leadership is important, but you also have to develop organizations and institutions that will implement the development strategy; (3) The development process must be both local and regional to achieve its fullest impact; (4) Any development process must have broad-based participation by all members of the community, starting with the poorest members; and (5) Communities must build on their assets, the most important of which are people.

Explosive growth in the development of community food systems in Appalachia has occurred because the region has been engaged in just this kind of capacity building. Individuals who are passionate about the idea of local food have also had the foresight and persistence to team with others in a common vision.

In addition to these leaders in the Region who can articulate the vision of successful community food systems and what it means for Appalachia, numerous organizations have been created to link community members and, increasingly, to link communities to one another across the mountains. People in the Appalachian Region—extension agents, university researchers, planners, policymakers, farmers and food producers, economic developers, community activists, school children to sophisticated “foodies,” corporations and philanthropists, are all playing a critical role in local food system development.

Many of the region’s successful non-profit local food organizations have brought together stakeholders from many parts of their communities and gotten them to work in concert with one another on sustainable, healthy, local food. With members in Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia, the Central Appalachian Network (CAN) has done much to strengthen local food value chains in the center of the region and to offer models for other parts of the region. CAN, organized in 1993, works on many fronts to advance the region’s economic transition to a more sustainable future.

In 2009, CAN hosted a regional convening, “Growing Healthy Food Systems from the Ground Up,” and awarded \$100,000 to eight local food projects. In 2011, CAN hosted a ground-breaking meeting in West Virginia with the Appalachia Funders Network to address the most critical issues facing local food systems in Central Appalachia. They held in-depth conversations on four critical topics: growing season extension; aggregation, distribution and rural/urban connections; institutional buying; and statewide organizing and policy work. In their final report, “Local Food Value Chains: A Collaborative Conversation,” they concluded that education and outreach are critical to the success of food value chains, that intermediary organizations are key to enabling local food work to move forward at a regional scale and to crossing political boundaries to give local foods a voice and impact nationwide, and that it is crucial to foster serious and productive collaboration among all parts of the local food value chain.

The Central Appalachian Network is one of the key collaboratives working with the Wealth Creation in Rural Communities initiative of the Ford Foundation. The mission of the initiative is to improve rural livelihoods with a systems approach that creates multiple forms of wealth that are owned and controlled locally. The approach focuses on place, provides incentives for collaboration, creates multiple forms of community wealth (financial, natural, social, individual, build, intellectual, and political capital), and emphasizes local ownership. CAN is using this approach successfully to work on building a healthy local food system value chain. According to the Ford Foundation, groups in Appalachia work more effectively in collaborations than they have observed in other parts of the country, giving them better chances for creating thriving local economies.

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) in Asheville, North Carolina, a model in capacity building, has prepared a toolkit, "Farm Promotion and Support," for authorities in economic development and tourism to help them work more effectively with the farm and food aspects of their local economies. The organization also has a Local Food Research Center that examines the social, economic, and environmental impacts of localizing food systems. ASAP Farm to School and Farm to Institution programs bring together educators, extension agents, health care professionals, and others to learn about the values of local food and how to support the local food system. ASAP rightly boasts that "as a result of our work, Western North Carolina and the Southern Appalachian region lead the country in developing local food systems that build local economies, sustain farms, and insure that everyone has access to the freshest and healthiest locally-grown foods."

The Appalachian Foodshed Project, a grant-funded collaboration among North Carolina State University, Virginia Tech, and West Virginia University, is using a foodshed concept to address issues of community food security in West Virginia and the Appalachian portions of North Carolina and Virginia. Their objectives are to create a place-based foodshed model with emphasis on food accessibility and affordability; design and implement participatory community food security assessments; expand food system/security programs and curriculum; and implement a comprehensive, community-based evaluation of foodshed security. In 2011, the group held a Capacity Building Forum in Blacksburg, Virginia, and in 2012 hosted a conference on "Cultivating Appalachian Food Security."

The Eastern Kentucky Food Systems Collaborative brings together several organizations, institutions, and individuals who include farmers, health professionals, academics, extension agents, and local food advocates to support, strengthen and connect the local food system in Eastern Kentucky. Their projects have included a local food system inventory of Eastern Kentucky and a sustainable farmer training program. The Brushy Fork Institute, also in Kentucky, works with the Appalachian Rural Development Philanthropy Initiative to offer mini-grants to build capacity of the region "through prudent stewardship of resources, thus supporting the growth of local wealth through permanent community endowments."

An even more multi-faceted capacity building program comes from the Mountain Association for Community Development (MACED). MACED works to create economic options in eastern Kentucky and Central Appalachia that offer meaningful work, stronger communities, respected natural resources, and a higher quality of life. As they say, "Welcome to our vision of Appalachia." The group's work helps provide financial investment and technical assistance to communities, conducts research and supports good public policy, and crafts development tools that make a difference.

MACED's Agricultural Diversification Lending Program helps family farmers diversify their agricultural income. One family assisted by MACED, for example, began cultivating shitake and oyster mushrooms on their 200 acre Sheltoewe Farm in Salt Lick, Kentucky, and harvesting wild mushrooms growing in their forest. When demand rose beyond supply, the family needed to construct a building to have year-

round production and MACED helped with funding and technical assistance. In partnership with Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, MACED also is involved in the Appalachian Transition Initiative, which promotes active, participatory, and action-oriented conversation about economic transition in Central Appalachia to move toward a more just, sustainable, and prosperous future for the region.

MACED is one member of another capacity-building group in the region, the Appalachian Development Alliance (ADA). The Alliance is a collaboration of Kentucky-based community development financial institutions working to provide business development capital and technical assistance to small businesses and distressed communities in eastern Kentucky. While MACED and the Alliance do not focus solely on sustainable agriculture and local food development, they are organizations which provide many kinds of support for such endeavors.

In Virginia, the Blue Ridge Plateau Project is a collaboration among Grayson LandCare, Sustain Floyd, Virginia Tech, the Virginia Farm Bureau, Virginia Departments of Agriculture and Consumer Services and Recreation and Forestry; USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, several county governments, civic organizations, and concerned individuals. Jerry Moles, one of the leaders of the collaboration, says, "We need not be in an age of heavy equipment and massive investments. Instead, we can choose to be in an information/collaboration arena. If people decide to work together to achieve shared goals, their degree of involvement and the capital accumulated to create new relationships among themselves and the Earth are bound only by a lack of imagination." He adds, "as a consequence, the people's capacities to change the economy and practices of agriculture are enhanced."

In Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Sustainable Agriculture Association (PASA) believes "success is defined as achieving our mission now while also building capacity to impact the future for many generations to come." They offer sustainable agriculture education, regional marketing and business support, consumer outreach, advocacy for local food systems, and community building. As David Eason, PASA's director of Western Pennsylvania programs says, "local seems to be the old idea that's new again."

Gaining Ground, an initiative of the Benwood Foundation in Chattanooga, Tennessee, is focused on building regional capacity through local food as an economic driver. With a commitment of \$1.65 million from the Benwood Foundation for three years, Gaining Ground hopes to raise the level of local food spending (and thereby increase the local economy by more than \$100 million annually), tackle the problem of food deserts in the area, and help people in their community become more aware of the politics of local food using their message, "with every bite you make a choice." Neil Peirce, chair of the area's Citistates group, quotes the argument of the director of Chattanooga's Office of Sustainability: "The strategic value of this initiative means it should be treated as a major economic issue. It links all parts of our community. It responds to the threat of our national security posed by long supply lines. It protects farmland from subdivisions. And it poses a real intergovernmental challenge, spanning a three-state area." Peirce finds the point intriguing and asks: "If a human and economic need as basic as food can't reconnect city and county, making allies of longtime competitors, then what can? And if not Chattanooga, with its track record as a successful risk taker, then what other American city?"

The West Virginia Farm and Food Coalition, an initiative of the West Virginia Community Development HUB, encourages a state-wide and region-wide dialogue about local food systems with the goal of providing healthy, locally-produced food to all citizens, especially low income families and other vulnerable groups. Their concerns are for health and food justice, food security, cultural heritage, and ways to build community capacity.

Some of the funding for the West Virginia Farm and Food Coalition comes from the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, which, like several other philanthropic organizations, are also helping enhance regional capacity in community food systems both individually and through their Appalachia Funders Network. The 2009 Annual Report of the Benedum Foundation focused on local food system efforts in their service areas of West Virginia and Southwestern Pennsylvania. Titled "From Farm to Table: Growing the Local Food Economy," the report noted that "the local foods movement is not just about economic development, but also, and increasingly, about *community* development."

The Benedum Foundation is one of several philanthropic groups in the Appalachia Funders Network, an organization of public and private grant-makers "who envision an entrepreneurial-based Appalachian economy that provides opportunity for all while sustaining the environmental and cultural assets of our region." One of the focus groups for the organization centers on local food systems in Appalachia, examining local food systems and how to strengthen them.

At the 2011 gathering of the group, which had representatives of 52 organizations working in Appalachia, ARC Federal Co-chair, Earl Gohl, concluded that "the more we collaborate, the stronger we make our networks, the greater we will see a return on the capital investments that we make in the region."

## CONCLUSION

*“A significant part of the pleasure of eating is in one’s accurate consciousness of the lives and the world from which food comes.”* (Wendell Berry, “The Pleasures of Eating,” 1989)

The time is ripe for local food system development in Appalachia. But, as local food advocate Anthony Flaccavento, warns, “it is a very exciting and promising time, but also critical, because if we don’t enable farmers to plug into good markets and follow the sustainability approach very soon and very quickly, then this will pass. The desire for local food will become a fad.”

What needs to happen to strengthen local food systems was outlined clearly in findings from a study by Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project: (1) Develop trusted local food labels; (2) Target larger-scale markets; (3) Support farmer efforts to satisfy local demands; (3) Create more favorable state and local policies; (4) Improve public education about local food; (5) Expand direct marketing channels; (6) Expand local food activities across the region; (7) Foster collaboration; (8) Adapt infrastructure for distribution and processing; (9) Develop and support farmland preservation; (10) Align tourism and agriculture.

In Appalachia, growing the local food economy is a major opportunity to create positive, lasting community and economic change based on already existing assets. Appalachia’s agricultural and food related assets provide a foundation on which local communities can build sustainable economic development. Reflecting regional and national trends, sustainable food system development matches many of Appalachia’s strengths with the growing demand for local, healthful, safe food that also supports the economies of those who produce it.

Many communities in the Appalachian Region are already utilizing local food and sustainable agriculture as a strategic resource to increase job opportunities, revitalize local economies, spark entrepreneurial ventures, and strengthen local capacity. Local leaders can continue these efforts by supporting and maximizing local food and farm assets, helping provide self-sustaining economic opportunities for Appalachia.

In Appalachia, growing the local food economy feels like a homecoming, like we’ve come full circle, back to our roots. Back to land well-tended, good work that makes a good living, sufficient food and self-sufficient communities, mouth-watering tastes of the homegrown, sharing food with neighbors in comforting rituals and offering local food to strangers with mountain hospitality.

There’s lots yet to do. Seeds need to be saved and soil enriched; kitchens and slaughter-houses need to be built; more food needs to find more ways to get to more markets; laws need to adapt and more dollars found; more kids need to eat better food and more songs about food need to be sung; more hands need to be clasped and more voices raised across the mountains in collaboration. But, as we are realizing, Appalachia is the value-added.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abramson, Rudy and Jean Haskell, eds. *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006. Section on "Agriculture," edited by Curtis Wood and Michael Best; "Food and Cooking," edited by Mark Sohn.

Aller, Joan E. *Cider Beans, Wild Greens, and Dandelion Jelly: Recipes from Southern Appalachia*. Kansas City: Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2010.

American Folklife Center. *Tending the Commons: Folklife and Landscape in Southern West Virginia*. An online resource of the Coal River Folklife Project with sound recordings, photographs, manuscripts and maps. Available at [www.loc.gov/folklife](http://www.loc.gov/folklife).

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project. *Farm Promotion and Support: Ideas and Tools for Economic Development and Tourism Development Authorities*. Asheville: ASAP, 2009.

Benedum Foundation. *From Farm to Table: Growing the Local Food Economy*. Pittsburgh: Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, 2009.

Berry, Wendell. *Bringing It to the Table: On Farming and Food*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2009. See also his "7 Steps Toward Rescuing Earth From Human Destructiveness" ([www.kentucky.com/2011/05/15/1741181/7-steps-toward-rescuing-earth.html](http://www.kentucky.com/2011/05/15/1741181/7-steps-toward-rescuing-earth.html))

Berry, Wendell. *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1977.

Brown, Linda Keller and Kay Mussell. *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984.

Central Appalachian Network. *Growing Healthy Food Systems from the Ground Up*. Cannetwork, 2010.

Cobb, Tanya Denckla. *Reclaiming Our Food: How the Grassroots Food Movement Is Changing the Way We Eat*. North Adams, MA: Storey Publishing, 2011.

Conner, D.S., and R. Levine. "Circles of Association: The Connections of Community-Based Food Systems," *Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition*, 1 (2007), 5-25.

Dabney, Joseph E. *Smokehouse Ham, Spoon Bread, and Scuppernong Wine: The Folklore and Art of Southern Appalachian Cooking*. Nashville: Cumberland House, 1998.

Ecotrust. *Building Local Food Networks: A Toolkit for Organizers*. Ecotrust, 2009.

Egerton, John. *Southern Food: At Home, on the Road, in History*. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1987.

Engelhardt, Elizabeth S. D. *A Mess of Greens: Southern Gender and Southern Food*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011.

- Farm2U Collaborative. *Cultural Heritage and Community Development: A Toolkit of Resources*. Charleston, WV: Collaborative for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Appalachia, 2011.
- Farr, Sidney Saylor. *More Than Moonshine: Appalachian Recipes and Recollections*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1983.
- Farr, Sidney Saylor. *Table Talk: Appalachian Meals and Memories*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995.
- Flaccavento, Anthony. *Healthy Food Systems: A Toolkit for Building Value Chains*. Abingdon: Appalachian Sustainable Development, 2010.
- Flaccavento, Anthony. "Is Local Food Affordable for Ordinary Folks? A Comparison of Farmers Markets and Supermarkets in Nineteen Communities in the Southeast." Abingdon, VA: SCALE, Inc., 2011.
- "Food in Appalachia." *Now & Then: The Appalachian Magazine* 15, no. 1(Spring 1998).
- "Foodways." Special issue, *Now & Then: The Appalachian Magazine* 25, no. 1 (Spring-Summer, 2009): 1-88.
- Fritsch, Al and Kristin Johannsen. *Ecotourism in Appalachia: Marketing the Mountains*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004.
- Hartz, Laura, Fritz Boettner, and Jason Clingerman. *Greenbrier Valley Local Food: The Possibilities and Potential*. Morgantown, WV: Downstream Strategies, 2011. Available online at [www.downstreamstrategies.com](http://www.downstreamstrategies.com).
- Haskell, Jean. "Planting by Signs." *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 17 (Spring/Fall 2011): 203-206.
- Hewitt, Ben. *The Town That Food Saved: How One Community Found Vitality in Local Food*. Rodale, 2009.
- Hughes, D.W., et al. *What Is the Deal with Local Food Systems: Or, Local Food Systems from a Regional Perspective*. Working Paper 11-2007-01, Clemson University, Clemson, SC, 2007.
- Jones, Evan. *American Food: The Gastronomic Story*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1975, 1981.
- Jones, Michael Owen, Bruce Guiliano, and Roberta Krell, eds. *Foodways and Eating Habits: Directions for Research*. Los Angeles: California Folklore Society, 1983.
- Kingsolver, Barbara. *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2007.
- Kirby, Laura D., Charlie Jackson, and Allison Perrett. *Growing Local: Expanding the Western North Carolina Food and Farm Economy*. Asheville: Appalachian Sustainable Agricultural Project, 2007.
- Lambert, Walter N. *Kin Folks and Custard Pie: Recollections and Recipes from an East Tennessean*.

Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988.

Lappé, Frances Moore. "The Food Movement: Its Power and Possibilities," *The Nation* (2011), online at [www.thenation.com](http://www.thenation.com), with replies by Raj Patel, Vandana Shiva, Eric Schlosser, and Michael Pollan.

Lundy, Ronni, ed. *Cornbread Nation 3: Foods of the Mountain South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

Markley, Kristen, Marion Kalb, and Loran Gustafson. *Delivering More: Scaling Up Farm to School Programs*. Community Food Security Coalition, 2010. Available online at [www.foodsecurity.org/pub/Delivering\\_More\\_Scaling\\_up\\_Farm\\_to\\_School.pdf](http://www.foodsecurity.org/pub/Delivering_More_Scaling_up_Farm_to_School.pdf).

Martinez, Steve, et al. *Local Food Systems: Concepts, Impacts, and Issues*, EER 97, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, 2010.

Meter, Ken. "West Virginia Farm & Food Economy: Highlights of a Data Compilation." Minneapolis: Crossroads Resource Center, 2010. Online at [www.crcworks.org](http://www.crcworks.org).

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission. *Central Ohio Local Food Assessment and Plan*. Columbus: MORPC Agriculture and Food Systems Working Group, 2010.

Minick, Jim. *The Blueberry Years: A Memoir of Farm and Family*. New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2010.

Nabhan, Gary Paul. *Coming Home to Eat: The Pleasures and Politics of Local Food*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2002.

Nabhan, Gary Paul, ed. *Renewing America's Food Traditions: Saving and Savoring the Continent's Most Endangered Foods*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2008.

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. *Guide to Federal Funding for Local and Regional Food Systems*. NSAC, 2010.

Neuner, Kailee, Sylvia Kelly, and Samina Raja. *Planning to Eat? Innovative Local Government Plans and Policies to Build Healthy Food Systems in the United States*. Buffalo: Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab, University at Buffalo, State University of New York, 2011.

O'Hara, Jeffrey K. *Market Forces: Creating Jobs Through Public Investment in Local and Regional Food Systems*. Cambridge, MA: Union of Concerned Scientists, 2011. (Available in PDF format at [www.ucsusa.org/publications](http://www.ucsusa.org/publications).)

Ostrom, M. "Everyday Meanings of 'Local Food': Views from Home and Field." *Journal of the Community Development Society*, Spring 2006.

Page, Linda Garland and Eliot Wigginton, eds. *The Foxfire Book of Appalachian Cookery*. New York: Foxfire Press/E.P. Dutton, 1984.

Plemmons, Nancy and Tony. *Cherokee Cooking: From the Mountains and Gardens to the Table*. Doc Bill



Thomas, ed. Gainesville, GA: Bill Thomas, 2001.

Pollan, Michael. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. New York: Penguin Books, 2006.

Roush, Lili M. and Gallia-Jackson-Vinton JVSD. *Southern Ohio Appalachian Cookbook*. Kearney, NJ: Morris Press, 1994.

Salatin, Joel. *Everything I Want To Do Is Illegal: War Stories from the Local Food Front*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2007.

Salatin, Joel. *Folks, This Ain't Normal: A Farmer's Advice for Happier Hens, Healthier People, and a Better World*. New York: Center Street, 2011.

Santino, Jack. *All Around the Year: Holidays and Celebrations in American Life*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994.

Sauceman, Fred W. *The Place Setting: Timeless Tastes of the Mountain South, from Bright Hope to Frog Level*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2006.

Schlosser, Eric. *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*. New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 2001.

Sibley, Celestine. *A Place Called Sweet Apple*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967.

Sohn, Mark F. *Appalachian Home Cooking: History, Culture, & Recipes*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2005.

Sohn, Mark F. *Mountain Country Cooking: A Gathering of the Best Recipes from the Smokies to the Blue Ridge*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.

Steel, Carolyn. *Hungry City: How Food Shapes Our Lives*. London: Random House, 2009.

Thompson, Charles D., Jr. *Spirits of Just Men: Mountaineers, Liquor Bosses, and Lawmen in the Moonshine Capital of the World*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011.

Tribe, Deanna L. *Appalachian Cultural Awareness in Ohio: Implications for Educators and Service Providers*. Jackson and Rio Grande, OH: Ohio State University Extension, 1993.

Veteto, James R., Gary Paul Nabhan, Regina Fitzsimmons, Kanin Routson, DeJa Walker, eds. *Place-based Foods of Appalachia: From Rarity to Community Restoration and Market Recovery*. Renewing America's Food Traditions Alliance ([www.raftalliance.org](http://www.raftalliance.org)), 2011.

Winne, Mark. *Food Rebels, Guerilla Gardeners and Smart Cookie Mamas: Fighting Back in An Age of Industrial Agriculture*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2010.

Wirzba, Norman, ed. *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2002.

Wulf, Andrea. *Founding Gardeners: The Revolutionary Generation, Nature, and the Shaping of the American Nation*. New York: Alfred Knopf: 2011.

## RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Agritourism Networking Association ([www.ncagr.gov/markets/agritourism](http://www.ncagr.gov/markets/agritourism))

American Folklife Center ([www.loc.gov/folklife](http://www.loc.gov/folklife))

Appalachian Foodshed Project ([www.appalachianfoodshedproject.org](http://www.appalachianfoodshedproject.org))

Appalachian Center for Economic Networks ([www.acenetworks.org](http://www.acenetworks.org))

Appalachian Center for Ethnobotanical Studies ([www.frostburg.edu/aces/](http://www.frostburg.edu/aces/))

Appalachia Funders Network ([www.appalachiafunders.org](http://www.appalachiafunders.org))

Appalachian Farmers Market Association ([www.appfma.org](http://www.appfma.org))

Appalachian Foods Storybank ([www.slowfoodasheville.org/heritage-foods-committee/](http://www.slowfoodasheville.org/heritage-foods-committee/))

Appalachian Grown ([www.AppalachianGrown.org](http://www.AppalachianGrown.org))

Appalachian Regional Commission ([www.arc.gov](http://www.arc.gov))

Appalachian State University Sustainable Development Program ([www.susdev.appstate.edu](http://www.susdev.appstate.edu))

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project ([www.asapconnections.org](http://www.asapconnections.org))

Appalachian Sustainable Development ([www.asdevelop.org](http://www.asdevelop.org))

Biscuit Power Food Blog ([www.biscuitpower.com](http://www.biscuitpower.com))

Blue Ridge Food Ventures ([www.blueridgefoodventures.org](http://www.blueridgefoodventures.org))

Blue Ridge National Heritage Area/Agricultural Heritage  
([www.blueridgeheritage.com/heritage/agriculture](http://www.blueridgeheritage.com/heritage/agriculture))

Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture ([www.wrwia.org](http://www.wrwia.org))

Buy Fresh, Buy Local (WV) ([www.wvfarmers.org/buylocalwv](http://www.wvfarmers.org/buylocalwv))

CAN (Central Appalachian Network) ([www.cannetwork.org](http://www.cannetwork.org))

Carolina Farm Stewardship Association ([www.carolinafarmstewards.org](http://www.carolinafarmstewards.org))

Center for Economic Options ([www.centerforeconomicoptions.org](http://www.centerforeconomicoptions.org))

Central Appalachian Food Heritage Project ([www.vafoodheritage.wordpress.com](http://www.vafoodheritage.wordpress.com))

Chef's Collaborative ([www.chefscollaborative.org](http://www.chefscollaborative.org))

Collaborative for the 21st Century Appalachia ([www.wvfarm2u.org](http://www.wvfarm2u.org))

Community Farm Alliance ([www.communityfarmalliance.org](http://www.communityfarmalliance.org))

Community Food Initiatives ([www.communityfoodinitiatives.org](http://www.communityfoodinitiatives.org))

Eastern Kentucky Food Systems Collaborative ([www.appalfoods.org](http://www.appalfoods.org))

Eating Appalachia Blog ([www.eatingappalachia.com](http://www.eatingappalachia.com))

Edible Finger Lakes ([www.ediblefingerlakes.com](http://www.ediblefingerlakes.com))

Finger Lakes Distilling ([www.fingerlakesdistilling.com](http://www.fingerlakesdistilling.com))

Fish Hawk Acres ([www.fishhawkacres.com](http://www.fishhawkacres.com))

Forum for Rural Innovation (VA, WV) ([www.rural-innovation.pbworks.com](http://www.rural-innovation.pbworks.com))

Future Harvest ([www.futureharvestcasa.org](http://www.futureharvestcasa.org))

Gaining Ground ([www.gainingground.org](http://www.gainingground.org))

Gaining Ground, Benwood Foundation ([www.growchattanooga.org](http://www.growchattanooga.org))

Gaining Ground Sustainability Institute of Mississippi ([www.ggsim.org](http://www.ggsim.org))

Georgia Mountains Foodways Alliance ([www.georgiafoodways.org](http://www.georgiafoodways.org))

Georgia Organics ([www.georgiaorganics.org](http://www.georgiaorganics.org))

Grow Appalachia ([www.berea.edu/appalachiancenter/growappalachia](http://www.berea.edu/appalachiancenter/growappalachia))

Grayson LandCare ([www.graysonlandcare.org](http://www.graysonlandcare.org))

Jubilee Project ([www.jubileeproject.holston.org](http://www.jubileeproject.holston.org))

Local Harvest ([www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org))

Mountain Association for Community Economic Development ([www.maced.org](http://www.maced.org))

National Capital Investment Fund, Inc. ([www.ncifund.org](http://www.ncifund.org))

New Appalachian Farm and Research Center ([www.newappalachian.org](http://www.newappalachian.org))

Oldways Preservation and Exchange Trust ([www.oldwayspt.org](http://www.oldwayspt.org))

Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture ([www.pasafarming.org](http://www.pasafarming.org))

Renewing America's Food Traditions Alliance/ RAFT ([www.raftalliance.org](http://www.raftalliance.org))

Rural Action ([www.ruralaction.org](http://www.ruralaction.org))

Rural Resources ([www.ruralresources.net](http://www.ruralresources.net))

Saving Appalachian Gardens and Stories ([www.northgeorgia.edu/GASC](http://www.northgeorgia.edu/GASC))

Schoharie Farmer ([www.schohariefarmer.com](http://www.schohariefarmer.com))

Seasonal School of Culinary Arts ([www.schoolofculinaryarts.org](http://www.schoolofculinaryarts.org))

Shi Center for Sustainability ([www.furman.edu/sustain](http://www.furman.edu/sustain))

Shoals Entrepreneurial Center ([www.shoalssec.com](http://www.shoalssec.com))

Slow Food USA National Office ([www.slowfoodusa.org](http://www.slowfoodusa.org))

Slow Food Upstate ([www.slowfoodupstate.com](http://www.slowfoodupstate.com))

Small Farm Success Project ([www.smallfarmssuccess.info](http://www.smallfarmssuccess.info))

Southern Foodways Alliance ([www.southernfoodways.com](http://www.southernfoodways.com))

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education ([www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org))

Sustainable Mountain Agriculture Center ([www.heirlooms.org](http://www.heirlooms.org))

Sustain Floyd ([www.sustainfloyd.org](http://www.sustainfloyd.org))

Union of Concerned Scientists Food and Environment Program ([www.ucsusa.org/food\\_and\\_agriculture](http://www.ucsusa.org/food_and_agriculture))

West Virginia Farmers Market Association ([www.wvfarmers.org](http://www.wvfarmers.org))

West Virginia Food & Farm Coalition ([www.wvhub.org/foodandfarmcoalition](http://www.wvhub.org/foodandfarmcoalition))

West Virginia Small Farm Center ([www.smallfarmcenter.ext.wvu.edu](http://www.smallfarmcenter.ext.wvu.edu))

## **STATE SYNOPSES OF LOCAL FOOD ACTIVITY IN THE APPALACHIAN REGION**

The following summary of local food activity in each of the thirteen Appalachian states is intended to provide a snapshot of these efforts instead of a comprehensive overview. The local food landscape in each State is complex and dynamic, changing almost daily. Each synopsis gives a sense of the priorities and the major organizations in a given State related to the local food economy.

## ALABAMA SYNOPSIS

**Appalachian Counties:** Bibb, Blount, Calhoun, Chambers, Cherokee, Chilton, Clay, Cleburne, Colbert, Coosa, Cullman, De Kalb, Etowah, Fayette, Franklin, Hales, Jackson, Jefferson, Lamar, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Macon, Madison, Marion, Marshall, Morgan, Pickens, Randolph, St. Clair, Shelby, Talladega, Tallapoosa, Tuscaloosa, Walker, and Winston.

While Appalachian Alabama has always been a place of small farms and long a place for fine dining in cities such as Birmingham, it has only recently fully embraced the local food movement. The Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network (ASAN) only came into being in 2001 at the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee. In the Fall 2011 ASAN newsletter, the group's president noted that Alabama ranked last in the country in organic farms, ranked near the top of the country in obesity, and had six Alabama counties in the top ten nationally in food insecurity. For all those reasons, plus the millions of food dollars flowing out of Alabama communities, ASAN has adopted an aggressive agenda to meet their motto of "Healthy Farms, Healthy Food, Healthy Communities."

As a network of over 800 farmers, consumers, and agriculture-related organizations, the group has goals of increased awareness of sustainably produced food and fiber, expanding sustainable agriculture practices by education and training for farmers, promoting methods to raise farm prices and increase access to markets, be an advocate for sustainable agriculture with policy makers, helping train the next generation of farmers, increasing food security, and building a culturally diverse network of sustainable farmers and consumers. The group hosts sustainable agriculture field days, holds an annual food forum and other events, provides resources such as the Alabama Farms Resource Guide, and operates a mentoring program for beginning and expanding farmers and ranchers. In 2011, the group organized the first ever Alabama workshop on organic farming and, in 2012, will partner with Georgia Organics for a conference in Columbus, Georgia. They also promote and support local food policy councils and may help form a statewide food policy council.

ASAN's training programs include a Farmer to Farmer program based on mentoring between experienced and beginning farmers and demonstration farms on which farmers can learn sustainable agriculture techniques. An innovative feature of this program is called "The Pass On," in which participants in the training receive a pass-on gift such as supplies, honeybees, chicks, seeds or seedlings with the proviso that the participant must pass on their training and more gifts to another producer within two years. Working with Alabama A & M University, Tuskegee University, Auburn University, the National Young Farmers Education Association, and the Alabama Green Industry Training Center, ASAN has helped create the Consortium for Agricultural Newcomers Access to Learning (CANAL).

A 2012 study, "Race, Space, Habitus: Segregation and Local Food in Birmingham, Alabama," critiqued the local food movement as being "almost wholly a white affair with, until recently, very little participation by people of color," even though many of the proponents of local food in Birmingham were white progressives who believe in diversity and equality. The study concludes that there must be a stated and conscious anti-racist ethic for the local food movement to move forward in the region. Some organizations in the area already address the issue head-on. ASAN has a partnership grant with Tuskegee University to provide organic agriculture training for extension professionals and a second partnership with the university to provide outreach and assistance to beginning farmers and ranchers. With Alabama A & M University, they also have a program for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

The Clean Food Network is a partnership of 15 small farms in Northern Alabama who are committed to sustainable agricultural practices with goals of supporting family farms and offering local, fresh food that is pesticide and hormone free. Their products are sold through an online market and then delivered to drop sites in Huntsville and Madison. To help build a healthy local economy, the members pledge to spend their dollars with local merchants and support local charities. Farms in at least a dozen of the Appalachian counties of Alabama offer many types of agritourism activities, ranging from pumpkin patches to corn mazes, hayrides, school tours, petting zoos, storytimes, and even helicopter rides.

Appalachian Birmingham and Jefferson County have a reputation for fine dining that features local food that began with Frank Stitt, a native of Cullman, Alabama, who has birthed four restaurants in Birmingham, won many awards including the James Beard Foundation's Best Chef in the Southeast and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Southern Foodways Alliance, and written a book about southern recipes and traditions. While studying cooking in France as a young man, Stitt had what he terms "an Alabama epiphany," realizing that food in the hills of Alabama could be as good as local food in France. At his famous restaurant, Highlands Bar and Grill, he serves up white bean and collard green gratin, pork with corn pudding, and squab with redeye gravy, with what has been described as "a deep and profound commitment to the place" he calls home, a place to "butter cornbread and pass around the bounty of our region's farmers, artisans, and chefs."

The emphasis on good local food in the Birmingham area has also led to formation of the Birmingham Originals, a group of chefs who have locally owned and operated restaurants. They are committed to increasing awareness of unique regional flavors and locally produced food, strengthening the city's reputation as a regional culinary hub known for food and hospitality, creating "buying power" for chefs to purchase local food and other services, and to increase their philanthropic endeavors through their "Break'n Bread" charity event. In 2011, another organization, the Birmingham-Jefferson Food Policy Council came into being to look at the area's food system, educate community members about access to healthy food and ways to combat "food deserts" in the area, and to make recommendations to policymakers. Their food summit in 2010 focused on food security, with sessions on community gardens, local food advocacy, school lunches, the grocery gap, public markets, faith-based security initiatives, and creating more walkable communities around food. The Jefferson County Food Charter, which guides the group, states that "farming, food production, distribution and sales represent a \$1.4 billion economic impact in Jefferson County. Our community's economic and land-use policies should align with a food policy system that encourages job creation, entrepreneurship, and robust local food resources." One entrepreneurial venture in Birmingham is the Shindigs Catering trucks, whose "local food fast," means taking healthy food for lunch out into various areas of the community.

Culinary training in Appalachian Alabama is available at the University of North Alabama, which offers a four-year degree in culinary arts, at Tuskegee University, Jefferson State Community College, Samford University, and several other sites. The Shoals Culinary Complex in the Shoals Entrepreneurial Center serving the Florence-Sheffield area houses a shared commercial kitchen and is a business incubator for food products. Clients have use of the facility and access to training in business planning and operation.

One possible place for growth in Appalachian Alabama is with the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area. The heritage area covers ten types of heritage, including music heritage, Civil War heritage, transportation heritage, and so on, but seem to have little focus on food heritage, which has been successfully included in other heritage sites in Appalachia such as the Blue Ridge Heritage Area.



## GEORGIA SYNOPSIS

**Appalachian Counties:** Banks, Barrow, Bartow, Carroll, Catoosa, Chattooga, Cherokee, Dade, Dawson, Douglas, Elbert, Fannin, Floyd, Forsyth, Franklin, Gilmer, Gordon, Gwinnett, Habersham, Hall, Haralson, Hart, Heard, Jackson, Lumpkin, Madison, Murray, Paulding, Pickens, Polk, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union, Walker, White, and Whitfield.

The mountains of North Georgia have become a destination for good food and wine, drawing on the bounty of local farmers. As one local restaurateur noted, “The notion of using local fresh and local ingredients is not new to the Georgia mountain people who planted gardens and orchards, raised farm animals and foraged or hunted in the wild to supplement what they might purchase at the market. However, the unique development is the birth and growth of North Georgia's Wine Highway.”

North Georgia has more than a dozen wineries and, according to one food blog, the rate of new vineyard planting is among the highest in the eastern United States. In 2001, the Georgia legislature saw the importance of the industry and authorized designation of roadways and signage to create the Georgia Wine Highway. More recently, owners of many of the vineyards, farms, orchards, mills, herbalists, dairies, and restaurants formed the collaborative group, the Georgia Mountain Foodways Alliance, dedicated to the preservation of mountain foodways and heritage and to promoting fresh and local products. Each year the group holds the “Grow, Cook, Eat: A Mountain Harvest Celebration” in Clayton, Georgia.

Among the vineyards, inns, and restaurants are Wolf Mountain Vineyards near Dahlonega, Frogtown Cellars nearby, Monteluca, also near Dahlonega, a Napa Valley-Tuscan-themed destination that features a fine restaurant and residential living, and there are smaller vineyards such as Tiger Mountain Vineyards in Rabun County, Crane Creek Vineyards in Young Harris, Blackstock Vineyards near Dahlonega, and Persimmon Creek Vineyards in Rabun County. All of the vineyards do much more than make and serve food and wines. At Tiger Mountain, the owners host a “Fiddle and Author Festival” and, in May, an “Awakening of the Vines,” with music provided by the Atlanta Chamber Orchestra. Crane Creek has annual art and tomato festivals, and Persimmon Creek offers wine tastings and high-end food products in a tasting room in the nearby town of Clayton. One of the owners of Persimmon Creek, Mary Ann Hardman, sums up her culinary philosophy by saying, “what grows together goes together” and “farmers are our local heroes.”

North Georgia Technical College in Blairsville offers a culinary program and prepared an outstanding locally-sourced meal for an ARC local food workshop held there. The college also partnered with Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project in Asheville, North Carolina, to produce the Northeast Georgia edition of the *Local Food Guide*. The project director at the college said, “healthy local markets for our regional farms mean that farms are preserved as part of our landscape. Rural economies and cultures can thrive when local economic activity remains in the communities. As they say, local food is thousands of miles fresher, and that's why it makes more sense to buy local.”

At North Georgia College and State University in Dahlonega, the Appalachian Studies Center launched a food heritage project called, “Saving Appalachian Gardens and Stories.” The project includes an annual demonstration garden for heirloom seeds and an oral history collection. They not only save and share seeds, but they preserve cultural history by interviewing seed donors about gardening traditions and foodways of Southern Appalachia. The project's director says, “Such memories are as important as the

genetic diversity of the seeds.”

North Georgia was the site of some of the earliest efforts to preserve agricultural and culinary heritage. The Foxfire series of books grew from student oral history work in Rabun Gap and became world famous. In the books, and later in other forms of media, all types of farming, food preparation and preservation, hunting and wildcrafting, farm architecture and tools, and a host of other topics have been documented, photographed, and filmed. Rabun Gap remains an important center for work in local food, with active members of the Georgia Mountains Foodways Alliance and Sustainable Mountain Living Communities.

Georgia Organics, headquartered in Atlanta, works with farmers across the state to provide information and training in organic farming, where to find organic food restaurants, farmers’ markets, grocers and other retailers who carry local and organic food, CSAs, and places for community gardens. They offer tips for schools interested in organic foods, information for consumers, and help for home gardeners.

Northeast Georgia recently developed an internet based market called “Locally Grown.” Serving Rabun, Habersham, and adjacent counties, the growers who are represented in the market are committed to chemically free farming and all produce and products are sustainably grown. The creators of the market say they were motivated by beliefs that locally grown food builds the local economy, conserves natural resources, and helps the community learn sustainability.

In Blue Ridge, Georgia, the Blue Ridge Agri-Cultural Center is an incubator for local food and culinary traditions that connects the community, farmer, and artisans through gardens, workshops, cooking classes, and cooperative agreements. Still in the development stages, the learning center will feature a community garden, honey production, a smokehouse, professional kitchen, chicken coop, outdoor cooking facility, and a classroom. They also provide locally grown food for Harvest on Main, a chef-owned restaurant in Blue Ridge that features regional flavors.

In Northwest Georgia, students at Berry College run Berry Farms, where they produce angus beef, Jersey beef, Jersey milk, herbs, and fresh produce for sale as part of the Student Enterprises program. They take animals for processing to nearby Sheriffs Meat Processing Plant in Calhoun, Georgia. The farms are part of the WinShape Retreat Center, created from the Normandy Dairy Farm that has always been part of the campus. The Normandy French architecture of the barns and other buildings received a National Historic Preservation Honor Award in 2007.

## KENTUCKY SYNOPSIS

**Appalachian Counties:** Adair, Bath, Bell, Boyd, Breathitt, Carter, Casey, Clark, Clay, Clinton, Cumberland, Edmonson, Elliott, Estill, Fleming, Floyd, Garrard, Green, Greenup, Harlan, Hart, Jackson, Johnson, Knott, Knox, Laurel, Lawrence, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Metcalfe, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Nicholas, Owsley, Perry, Pike, Powell, Pulaski, Robertson, Rockcastle, Rowan, Russell, Wayne, Whitley, and Wolfe.

Appalachian Kentucky has several important local food initiatives. One of the leading organizations is the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development (MACED). They work to create economic alternatives for communities in eastern Kentucky and Central Appalachia (they are members of the Central Appalachian Network or CAN and the Appalachian Development Alliance). MACED provides financial investments and technical assistance to communities, conducts research to support good public policy, and crafts effective development tools to help communities retain natural resources and wealth that they now lose. The organization has an Agricultural Diversification Lending Program to help farmers expand their businesses. For example, they assisted one family mushroom farm in Salt Lick, Kentucky in constructing a building that allowed them to grow year-round. MACED says it is committed to “investing in small farms to help them survive and prosper.”

The Community Farm Alliance, headquartered in Frankfort, works in Appalachia and across Kentucky to encourage cooperation among farmers, rural, and urban citizens through leadership and grassroots democratic processes to ensure an essential and prosperous place for family-scale agriculture in local economies and communities. They call their approach L.I.F.E., or local innovative food economies. They believe that local food systems benefit citizens with better food and allow farmers to make a living from their land, opening the door for new generations of farmers. Much of the funding for diversification in farming comes from the Kentucky Tobacco Settlement. Among their farm to community programs are a Farm-to-School program that teams Bath County farmers with the Bath County School System to help provide meals for over 2,000 students. The regional Agricultural Education and Marketing Center that is located in Bath County made the program possible, serving as a collection site and using the certified community kitchen to make value-added foods for the schools. One local farmer says the food “is produced local and consumed local. Keeps the cycle closer to home.” Other community programs are helping connect farmers with the Kentucky State Parks, which now have a state mandate to use locally sourced food and helping colleges such as Centre College make organic and farm-fresh food available on-campus.

A recently formed group in Kentucky is the Eastern Kentucky Food Systems Collaborative, a group that involves farmers, health professionals, academics, policy advocates, Extension agents, and community members. They have developed an on-going eastern Kentucky Local Food System Inventory and work to support, strengthen, and connect the local food system throughout Eastern Kentucky. They have also offered a sustainable farmer training workshop in Annville.

Pine Mountain Settlement School in Harlan County, operating since 1913, launched a sustainability initiative in 2008 to increase and diversify their school’s food production, promote backyard gardening and food production in the community, conserve energy, and create educational programs related to food and energy. They began the Pine Mountain Community Garden (one of the sites for Berea’s Grow Appalachia program) and harvested over 28,000 pounds of food in 2011 used in the school and the

community. They also host potluck meals, a sustainable agriculture series, seed swaps, and work to create markets for local growers. The 2012 seed swap was well-attended and elicited these comments from an Appalachian Kentucky food blogger: “Experts and amateurs alike gathered for an ancient ritual that has taken on modern importance, seed saving. Due to our geographic mountain fortresses, seeds grown in Appalachia remain largely untainted by commercial agriculture and genetic engineering (GE or GMO). We hillbillies take such things for granted. We know that there is a stash of White Hastings bean seed hidden in Grandma’s freezer. We know that Johns Creek Bevin’s Tomato is perhaps the lip smackenest summer pleasure in the garden. . . .In those tiny little seeds there is our history.”

One Kentucky program garnering national attention is the Grow Appalachia initiative based at Berea College in Berea. Funded by philanthropist John Paul DeJoria, CEO of John Paul Mitchell Systems and headed by David Cooke, the program is devoted to teaching and supporting the people of Appalachia in addressing the problem of hunger in the region by learning to grow their own food. With program partners throughout eastern Kentucky, Appalachian Tennessee, southwest Virginia, and West Virginia, Grow Appalachia works to provide mountain families with resources and support to produce more of their own food, develop systems to share surplus with the elderly and disabled, create systems to market other surplus, develop family to family training programs, preserve heirloom varieties of produce, and enhance the resiliency of communities through rediscovery of Appalachian heritage and knowledge. Among their partner sites is the Laurel County African American Heritage Center where 30 families and 10 youths work a common garden space and market their produce at a local farmers’ market.

Kentucky’s land-grant institution, the University of Kentucky, also has programs to address local food issues. The Cooperative Extension program offers a course called “A Common Field: A Whole Farm Management Education Program for Beginning Farmers” to focus on farmers completely new to farming to learn whole farm planning, business management, production skills, marketing skills, and hands-on training. The Appalachian Center at University of Kentucky has an interdisciplinary local food system team that works to help the university and non-university groups collaborate and share research around issues of local food.

Appalachian Kentucky has also produced its share of food “stars.” Dean Fearing, nationally known executive chef at the Mansion on Turtle Creek in Texas, grew up in Ashland. Ronni Lundy, reared in Corbin, won the 2009 Craig Claiborne Lifetime Achievement Award for her body of writing about Appalachian food traditions, including *Cornbread Nation 3: Foods of the Mountain South* and *Shuck Beans, Stack Cakes, and Honest Fried Chicken*. Bill Best, who directs the Sustainable Mountain Agriculture Center near Berea, has become nationally known for his work in protecting heirloom seeds and vegetable varieties.

## MARYLAND SYNOPSIS

### **Appalachian Counties:** Allegany, Garrett, Washington

With only three counties in the Appalachian region, the mountain portion of the state provides a great deal of agricultural and local food activity. The state values its western section so much that it regularly sets aside farmland in the region for preservation. In 2006, the Governor of the state announced the purchase of easements to protect 543 acres of prime farmland in the Appalachian counties of Garrett, Alleghany, Washington, and adjacent Frederick County. This brought the total farmland protected in perpetuity in the four counties to more than 33,000 acres. The Governor at the time said, "Today's agricultural land preservation approvals are part of an historic commitment to maintaining productive farmland and a local food supply in the face of some of the greatest development pressure and highest land prices in the nation." The Secretary of Agriculture added that "farmland preservation is a strong investment in our economy, our environment, and our quality of life. [These] approvals help further producers' efforts in Western Maryland to continue farming, keep the farm in the family, or expand the business."

Appalachian Maryland is particularly strong in the production of cheeses. Particularly notable is Firefly Farms in Garrett County that has won both national and international awards for its artisan cheese. Many restaurants that feature sustainable, local foods in Maryland and in neighboring Appalachian states such as West Virginia and Virginia use the products from Firefly Farms. Another Garrett County farm, Backbone Food Farm, is a diversified family farm that raises chickens, draft horses, cows, ducks, and vegetables and herbs, using only sustainable and organic methods. Plus, they offer on-the-farm educational programs for children.

The Amish and Mennonite communities of Garrett County preserve traditional foods for this part of Appalachia. They cook whoopie pies, moon pies, and pepperoni rolls in their own communities and often share them with outsiders. At the Swan Meadow School of Oakland, students helped document the region's culinary traditions in 2009. German food traditions are particularly strong in Western Maryland.

The Washington County Rural Heritage Museum also focuses on the agrarian heritage of Appalachian Maryland and was host of the Smithsonian traveling exhibition on American food in 2007. In 2009, the Garrett County Economic Development Corporation received an \$80,000 grant to develop capacity to serve Maryland grocery chain markets with Maryland-produced berries year round and allow Maryland growers to enter the grocery chain market at premium prices as "locally grown" produce.

At Frostburg State University in Appalachian Maryland, two programs focus on the region's bounty. Frostburg Grows is a greenhouse project to provide local food year-round. The Appalachian Center for Ethnobotanical Studies, which also partners with West Virginia University, is a collaborative, multidisciplinary effort to study and conserve native plants of Appalachia. Their objectives are to identify Appalachian plants with medicinal or other economic potential, encourage conservation of wild plants, preserve Appalachian culture related to traditional harvesting and use of botanicals, and use the research in K-12 and higher education, medical education and treatment, the pharmaceutical industry, and other educational and economic ventures.

## MISSISSIPPI SYNOPSIS

**Appalachian Counties:** Alcorn, Benton, Calhoun, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Clay, Itawamba, Kemper, Lee, Lowndes, Marshall, Monroe, Montgomery, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Panola, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Tippah, Tishomingo, Union, Webster, Winston, and Yalobusha.

Appalachian Mississippi, like the rest of the state, has come late into the sustainable agriculture and local food movement, but in recent times, people in the state agree that the movement is “spreading like wildfire” across Mississippi. Much of the leadership is coming from the Appalachian foothills part of Mississippi, in large part because the land-grant university, Mississippi State University, with many agricultural resources is located there in Starkville. Mississippi State, like other land-grant universities in the Appalachian region, is making the transition from an agribusiness model to more sustainable methods of farming and influencing the local area. One interesting university activity is the Sweet Potato Drop, now several years old. Over 20,000 pounds of sweet potatoes are brought to Starkville from Vardaman in Appalachian Mississippi, which bills itself as the “sweet potato capital of the world.” With student volunteers, the potatoes are dumped and bagged for soup kitchens, churches, and charities that get about 2,000 pounds each. One of the faculty members involved noted that “Mississippi is No. 3 in the nation as far as food insecurity. So it’s really exciting for us. . .to make sure people have fresh produce.”

The Starkville area has seen Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms sprouting up all around them, three started just in 2010. One excellent example is Bountiful Harvest Farms, owned and operated by Mississippi State University graduate, Sam McLemore. After hiking the entire Appalachian Trail, he decided to focus on growing food in the Starkville area. His farm is a CSA and an organic farm. McLemore says the CSA concept “creates a community among members, and between members and farmers,” because of the shared risk: “If a hailstorm takes out all the peppers, everyone is disappointed together, and together cheer on the winter squash and broccoli.” McLemore also sponsors student apprenticeships in sustainable farming.

Organic farming has been slow in coming to Mississippi but is spreading quickly. The Mississippi Department of Agriculture’s organic coordinator called Mississippi “the last frontier in organics.” He noted that more than 11 million acres, or 37 percent of the state land is used for farming, but in 2009 there were only 23 certified organic growers, which he compared with New York, a state in which only 7 million acres are used for farming but which boasts over 500 organic farms. He also pointed out, however, that organic farming is the fastest-growing sector of Mississippi’s agricultural industry and Mississippi organic farmers recently cornered the national market in blueberry production.

Some of the most effective work in sustainable farming is being done by Gaining Ground, the Sustainability Institute of Mississippi. Started in 2010 as a non-profit organization devoted to helping people make sustainable choices to improve their lives, the group is a collaboration among Mississippi State University, private businesses, and local volunteers. Their work focuses on showcasing advances in ecological design, environmentally sound farming and forestry practices, and advances in sustainable living through research, scientific inquiry, community service, regional outreach, and tourism. The founders of the organization, Alison and Mike Buehler, came to Mississippi from Knoxville, Tennessee, which has its own Gaining Ground organization, transplanting best practices across the Appalachian region. The Mississippi group has numerous projects that include a farm to school pilot project, a program called “O Gardens!” in which they teach participants how to grow one square meter of food in a year to make home gardening less intimidating, an annual conference since 2009 which draws more and more participants each year, and an internship program for students.

One of the most fascinating student initiated projects in Appalachian Mississippi is the “Farm on Wheels,” a senior project for students enrolled in the Mississippi School for Math and Science in Columbus (Lowndes County). After reading about a bus converted to biodiesel fuel by students at Mississippi State University, the high school students decided to obtain a bus, convert it to biodiesel and then they added solar panels on the hood and painted the bus with a mural of lush farmland, with corn, cotton, watermelons, and chickens. They decided to use the bus to promote sustainable living, especially in agriculture and local food, taking the bus to various sites in the state during the summer of 2011. They plan to raise additional funds to put a greenhouse on the roof of the bus, install a rain catchment system, a learning garden, a portable chicken coop, worm tea bin, compost tumbler and other innovative systems. They have used social media such as a blog, Facebook, and Twitter to promote their efforts and raise funds, and they work with the Gaining Ground organization to advance their efforts.

Several farms in the hilly part of the state are involved with agritourism and promote their farms as Appalachian. Holley Farm in Fulton, identifies itself as “in the heart of scenic Appalachian Mississippi,” or sometimes, “embraced by the beautiful hills of Appalachian Mississippi,” and has a corn maze, pumpkin patch, cotton patch, cane sorghum patch, tours and much more. Other farms in the area with similar activities are the Wise Family Farm, Burton’s Sugar Farm, Adkins Farm, and Pumpkin Patch Farms. The Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area also promotes tourism in the area and does point visitors to regional food locations.

Although not located in an Appalachian Mississippi county, the Southern Foodways Alliance in Oxford at the University of Mississippi had done much to help preserve and promote Appalachian foodways. They frequently meet at Appalachian sites to celebrate Appalachian food traditions and one of their publications, *Cornbread Nation 3*, focused entirely on “Foods of the Mountain South,” edited by Kentuckian Ronni Lundy.

## NEW YORK SYNOPSIS

**Appalachian Counties:** Allegany, Broome, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Otsego, Schoharie, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, and Tompkins.

Sustainable agriculture and local food efforts in Appalachian New York benefit from having a land-grant university (Cornell University at Ithaca) in the area, an important culinary tourism area in the Finger Lakes, and access to major urban markets for local food. All these factors contribute to a thriving local food center in this part of Appalachia. A study of the area done in 2005, "Southern Tier Agriculture: A Regional Resource and a Landscape in Transition," asserted that "farm and food production is a mainstay in the Southern Tier economy and a dominant feature of the rural landscape." The study found that dairy farm products and forage crops led the economy, with cattle and other livestock, feed grains, vegetables, nursery products, fishery services, and forest products added to the overall farm and food picture. The study concluded that investments in farm businesses had many positive benefits for the farms, the environment, the working landscape, local consumers and the community and suggested strategies to position farms for survival. Statewide, the New York Sustainable Agriculture Working Group assists in efforts to ensure equitable, affordable access to fresh, nutritious foods.

Ithaca, in New York's Appalachian Southern Tier, has long been a leader in the local food movement. In 1973, its famous Moosewood Restaurant was established to bring healthful, natural vegetarian cuisine to the area. Moosewood became nationally and internationally famous through publication of its twelve cookbooks, the latest in 2009. *Bon Appétit* magazine named Moosewood one of the "thirteen most influential restaurants of the 20<sup>th</sup> century." Still in operation as a collectively owned business, they now also do much community outreach. One of the chefs is involved with a group of women dedicated to improving food in the Ithaca school district, a group called Cool School Food. They work on recipes, have tasting days at schools where children can vote, and then some recipes are incorporated into the school menu. One of their recipes was chosen for a USDA cookbook developed from a competition sponsored by Michelle Obama. Moosewood has also been involved with activists in the food security/food justice area to combat racism in providing access to healthy food.

In 2006, the local paper in Ithaca pointed out that Ithaca had more restaurants per capita than New York City, adding that "Ithaca is one of few communities that can credit its fine cuisine not only to the gourmet chefs who prepare it, but also to the farmers who provide them with the freshest locally grown ingredients." The article pointed to farms, such as Ludgate Farms, a family farm in the area for more than 30 years and to GreenStar Cooperative Market, also in Ithaca for more than 30 years. One of the managers of the market says, "not only are local foods the freshest food items available, but supplying local products enables people to keep their money within the city of Ithaca, and supporting our neighbors and community is an important part of our co-op."

Cornell University in Ithaca has long been involved in agriculture and food production because it serves as New York's land-grant university. Cornell and the Cornell Cooperative Extension Service have joined in supporting the transition for many of the state's farmers from conventional agricultural methods to organic production. Noting that organic farming is one of the fastest growing agricultural sectors in the country, in 2011 they could point to a growth in the number of organic farms in New York from 225 to 820 in just a decade. In addition to academic and research programs in agriculture and nutrition, Cornell offers such innovative programs as their Garden-Based Learning initiative. One part of the program is geared to school gardening, helping teachers develop curricula around gardening that teaches a whole



host of other knowledge and skills. Another piece of the program focuses on helping military family members develop a gardening program.

The Cornell Extension program provides a local food guide so that all the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes Region farms have a place to list their location and products. The Extension Service also offers the New York Beginning Farmers Project that includes a website for resources, an online beginning farmer class, regional field training classes, and services available through the Extension Service. In 2007, the Extension Service in partnership with numerous other organizations helped launch a Farm Friendly website in Appalachian Broome County, whose economy is largely agricultural, to help promote local agriculture and products, agritourism, and valuable information for farmers.

Ithaca is home to the EcoVillage, one of the nation's first ecological co-housing communities and a pioneer in sustainability education. West Haven Farm, a CSA farm in the EcoVillage, is home to the Groundswell Center for Local Food and Farming, an initiative that helps diverse learners develop the skills, knowledge, and access to resources they need to build sustainable land-based livelihoods and more equitable and sustainable local food systems. Their goal is to nurture the next generation of farmers and cultivate knowledgeable "food citizens." Groundswell offers a summer practicum in sustainable farming and food justice through Tompkins Cortland Community College; a sustainable farming certificate program; the Finger Lakes Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training (CRAFT) which uses mentor farms to train others; a Farm Business Planning course; and they hope to launch a farm business incubator in 2013. One of their most innovative programs is the Crop Mob, an event held once a month on a different farm each time, in which members of the "mob" show up to help with farm tasks (harvesting crops, weeding, rock picking, setting up fences or hoop houses). At the end of the work, a meal is provided and farmers and mobbers work together.

In Appalachian Allegany County, a private university and a state technological school contribute to the local food efforts. Alfred University in Alfred, New York, has a GreenAlfred program to make the entire campus more sustainable, including reducing carbon footprints of buildings, building new LEED buildings, recycling, and many efforts in sustainable dining. They have removed trays in the dining halls to reduce food waste, provide students with reusable drinking cups, have weekly "no fryer" days in the dining halls, have a student garden, and have a commitment from their food service provider to substantially increase the amount of locally grown food for use on campus. Working with Cornell Cooperative Extension, they are finding potential local farm suppliers and learning how to work within a local, sustainable food system. Alfred State College in the same town offers degrees in agricultural technology and agricultural business with an emphasis on organic and sustainable agriculture, programs in culinary arts, and they promote degrees that lead to green careers.

Many other organizations add to the vibrant local food picture in the Southern Tier. The local Slow Food chapter concentrates on supporting school gardens. Their "ultimate dream" would be a garden in each school in the region, supplying food for families that tend the garden and for local food banks, and having teachers incorporate gardening into the school curriculum. East Local Southern Tier is a group that hosts a weekly food and cooking program online that features a seasonal ingredient, often organic, heritage, or heirloom, and asks participants to buy the ingredient locally and use it in a recipe. The goal is to connect the community, food professionals, local farms and markets. The New York Venison Donation Coalition collects nearly 10,000 pounds of venison for the Food Bank of the Southern Tier each year and in 2011 received a \$10,000 gift from the Cargill Salt Company in Watkins Glen.

Western New York also has an active Field and Fork Network that connects farmers and chefs. Ticklestown, in what is called “the enchanted mountains” of Cattaraugus County, hosts an annual seed swap. Appalachian New York has many active farm to school programs and provides local food for senior citizen centers.

On a government level, the Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board received a grant in 2011 to jumpstart their local foods project. They plan to promote local food with restaurants and schools, enhance and educate people about the benefits of eating locally grown food, and strengthen the local food system. The Executive Director said, “I think we will just grow our region from within itself.” The Elmira community in Appalachian Chemung County received an \$875,000 grant from the New York State Department of Health in 2011 for a five-year initiative to make Elmira a healthier place to live. One part of the grant is to establish community gardens and work with local restaurants to provide healthy, local food in an effort to reduce the area’s high rates of obesity and diabetes.

Agritourism is an important part of the economy in Appalachian New York. *Edible Finger Lakes* magazine promotes local foods and festivities, “celebrating and promoting the regional food scene with a focus on the many farms, vineyards, culinary artisans, chefs and home cooks, farmers’ markets, food shops, country inns, restaurants, and cafes.” They sponsor harvest dinners in the fall and give Local Hero awards to honor individuals and businesses that make contributions to the Finger Lakes local food movement. One attendee at a harvest dinner, which raises funds for the Healthy Food for All Program, said “these events are a winning recipe of gorgeous location, amazing chefs, exquisite local food products, and tables filled with people who grow the food and love the food of our region.” One of the foods well-loved in the region is the spiedie (pronounced SPEE-dee), brought to the region in early days by Italian immigrants, especially in the Binghamton area. A spiedee is chunks of barbecued meat (either lamb, pork, beef, chicken, or venison) that has been marinated in a special tart sauce, cooked on skewer. Slices of Italian bread are then used as a mitt into which the meat on the skewer is placed and then the skewer removed. Its popularity has led to an annual Spiedie Fest and Balloon Rally that includes a spiedie cook-off and to successful commercial businesses that sell the sandwiches, the bread, or the sauce.

Vineyards and wine tours are highly popular in upstate New York, an area that is home to over 100 wineries. Additionally, the Southern Tier Brewing Company has developed a reputation for fine beers, brewing over 28 different beers and exporting them to 29 states and 12 countries around the world. They also offer tours and local food along with beer samples. Recent changes in distilling laws helped lead to the establishment of the Finger Lakes Distillery in Watkins Glen that makes a wide range of small-batch spirits.

Many farms in the Appalachian New York area offer farm tours, fall festivals, farmstays, pumpkin patches, corn mazes, and other activities. Two examples are of particular interest. The Tan Child’s Farm and Winery in Cattaraugus County is a small, boutique winery specializing in blueberry wine made from blueberries grown on the adjacent Child’s Blueberry Farm. Another farm, Canticle Farm in the same county, is a non-profit CSA run by the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany. They grow grapes and have produced heritage pigs. They offer visitors “a special space for contemplation.” Throughout Appalachian New York, there are events that feature Native American food and culture.

## NORTH CAROLINA SYNOPSIS

**Appalachian Counties:** Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Davie, Forsyth, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, McDowell, Macon, Madison, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Stokes, Surry, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes, Yadkin, and Yancey.

The Appalachian portion of North Carolina has emerged as one of the places in Appalachia and in the whole country that is in the very forefront of the local food movement. The transition from tobacco farming to other types of farming helped spur on development of specialty crops, the growth of farmer's markets, creation of infrastructure to support farmers, a strong farm to table, farm to school, and farm to other institutions component, and nationally acclaimed leadership in food system development. Strong tourism in western North Carolina, partnered with sustainable agriculture and local food, makes for strong local economies. Changes in state laws boosted the growth of microbrewing and craft distilling. All these components have created strong local food economies in the western North Carolina mountains.

One of the premiere non-profits working in western North Carolina is Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP), based in Asheville but working in Tennessee, Georgia, Virginia, and South Carolina as well. They offer extensive programs and support services for farmers and others in the local food arena. They produce an annual Local Food Guide that gives information on tailgate markets, farms, restaurants, grocers who carry local food, apple farms, caterers and bakers using local food, artisan food products, farm stores and stands, u-pick farms, bed and breakfasts and farm lodging, farm subscription programs (CSAs), agritourism travel destinations, and distributors for local food. Their certification program, Appalachian Grown, Local Food Fresher, assures consumers that the products they get are grown on local, family farms. A national leader in farm to school programs, ASAP's Growing Minds initiative works to cultivate beneficial relationships between farms and schools, including serving local food in schools, assisting with farm field trips, experiential nutrition education, and school gardens. ASAP also has a Farm to Hospital program in which they connect farmers and hospital food services and teach courses on local food, health, and wellness. The organization produces many excellent resources for those interested in local food, including a thorough Farm Promotion and Support booklet with ideas and tools for economic development and tourism development authorities. They have a partnership with Slow Food Asheville in the Appalachian Storybank Project to collect stories about traditional farming and foodways in the region.

Another program in Asheville is the Go! Kitchen Ready training program that prepares graduates for employment in food service. They use local food in the training and they work with other area organizations to provide job placement support.

Asheville has become the epicenter for craft brewing in the country, being voted the top beer city in the United States for three years in a row. The growth of the microbrewing industry has also created a market for hops, and enough farms in western North Carolina grow hops that they formed the Southern Appalachian Hops Guild. Likewise, the explosion in vineyards and wine production in Appalachian North Carolina led to formation of the Sustainable Appalachian Viticulture Institute to promote cold-hardy and disease resistant cultivars in the Appalachian mountains. Craft distilling, such as the Troy and Sons Distillery located just outside Asheville, is also a rapidly expanding part of the local food economy. Asheville hosts the annual truffle festival, as well as at least eleven other food festivals (including the Ramps and Rainbow Trout festival, the Livermush Festival, and the Sourwood Honey Festival), and

abounds with restaurants featuring local food. It's no wonder Asheville now bills itself as a Foodtopian Society, "taking the farm to table movement . . . to an all-out way of life." They promote "Appalachian Mountain Made Food and Cuisine."

Just outside Asheville, Warren Wilson College maintains a college farm on which students work to learn sustainable farming practices, supply the campus food service, and offer a public market for their crops. Because of their commitment to local food and the proximity to Asheville, Warren Wilson alum, Susi Gott Séguret, a Cordon-Bleu trained chef and traditional musician, began offering her Seasonal School of Culinary Arts program there several years ago, which now also includes weeks in Ithaca, New York, Sonoma, and Paris. Organic compost facilities are located in Waynesville, North Carolina (Frog Holler Organiks) and between Asheville and Hendersonville (French Broad Organics Recycling and reflect the kinds of entrepreneurial opportunities that arise in a healthy local food system.

Not far to the east of Asheville, the area around Pilot Mountain, North Carolina, has also experienced new strength in its local food economy. Pilot Mountain Pride, an aggregation and distribution facility for the produce of local farmers, opened in 2010 in a converted hosiery mill to serve about 60 small to medium sized farms in the area by helping them get access to markets, diversify crops, and get training in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and food safety issues. The director of the center says, "This project is about more than fruits and vegetables. It is also promoting family time and education about how food is grown. It's about the value of agriculture to the community and about preserving a way of life and rural character."

At Keep Your Fork Farm near Pilot Mountain, Black Winter Périgord Truffles are grown sustainably and hunted out by a truffle-sniffing Border Collie. Native to France, the truffles are being cultivated in North Carolina (and in Tennessee) in hopes of making this part of North Carolina "the Périgord Region" of the United States. The dogs are trained in Appalachian Virginia at Luray. Martha Stewart brought her television program to the farm in 2007.

In Marion, North Carolina, the Foothills Pilot Plant, the first community-administered, non-profit meat processing facility in the country, opened in 2012. The Foothills Pilot Plant is the only USDA-inspected facility serving independent poultry growers in the Southern Appalachian region. They hope to become certified as "Animal Welfare Approved" for the humane handling of food animals.

One organization that has worked for more than 30 years to help small farmers in North and South Carolina is the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association. The Association works to advocate, educate, and build connections to create sustainable food systems centered on local and organic agriculture. They work for fair farm and food policies, build market development programs such as the Carolina Ground Organic Bread Flour Project, and they train farmers in their various conferences and workshops around the region. The Association created Mountain Partners in Agriculture which then led to formation of Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project. Another organization, Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture, based in Boone, works to empower women and their families with resources, education, and skills related to production and consumption of sustainably-grown food from the community.

Two North Carolina mountain women who have acted on such empowerment own and operate Maverick Farms in Valle Crucis, just outside Boone. Armed with academic degrees and a family farm, sisters Alice Brooke Wilson and Hilary Wilson, with partner Tom Philpott, food editor for Grist.org, operate their farm as an open laboratory, experimenting with human-scale farming techniques and traditional food preparation. They welcome guests to the farmhouse, who can help with farm chores, serve monthly farm dinners, and provide for artists-in-residence. They operate a CSA, have a summer

camp for at-risk youth, and recently launched a new initiative dubbed FIG, Farm Incubator and Grower Program, to mentor young farmers and increase local food capacity.

The level of local food activity in Appalachian North Carolina is growing so fast and is so multi-layered that it is not possible to document all of it in a regional report. Suffice it to say that Appalachian North Carolina is one of the leaders in the region, even the country, in development of local food systems.

## OHIO SYNOPSIS

**Appalachian Counties:** Adams, Ashtabula, Athens, Belmont, Brown, Carroll, Clermont, Columbiana, Coshocton, Gallia, Guernsey, Harrison, Highland, Hocking, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Lawrence, Mahoning, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Pike, Ross, Scioto, Trumbull, Tuscarawas, Vinton, and Washington.

Farms in Appalachian Ohio are diverse with numerous organic farms, certified naturally grown farms, grass-fed livestock farms, including Scottish highland cattle and bison, many farms growing heirloom varieties of produce, Amish farms, and agri-tourism farms such as Bramble Creek Farms in Washington County that asks visitors to work and cook as part of their experience. The Athens County Farmers Market is the largest open-air market in the state of Ohio with over 100 vendors, and the Athens County Convention and Visitors Bureau has created a 30 Mile Meal Map, so locals and visitors can find nearby local food and farm markets, CSAs, farm tours, and food festivals and events.

Appalachian Ohio has some of the oldest and most successful organizations involved with local food system development in Appalachia. Rural Action, formed in 1991, has as its mission to foster social, economic, and environmental justice in Appalachian Ohio. Their goal is to build sustainable development models based on the region's assets, including local food systems. The sustainable agriculture program has several successful initiatives. The Chesterfield Produce Auction was created in 2005 to provide a space for farmers to sell their produce, often in large quantities, to a range of buyers, large and small. An online project, Ohio Foodshed, provides a one-stop source for information about local food in Appalachian Ohio, with directories of growers, lists of farmers' markets, produce auctions, and community gardens, stores and restaurants that use local food, networking for local food advocates, and many other resources. In partnership with two other organizations working in the region, Rural Action has helped create the Trimble Township Farmers Market, bringing a seasonal market to one of the poorest areas in Athens County and one that accepts EBT benefits. They also offer workshops on diabetes prevention, landowner site assessment, local food for family and customers, and offer a summer feeding program for children.

Another Ohio group, Community Food Initiatives (CFI), is a grass-roots organization founded in 1992 with a mission of building and supporting a local food system that will give all people in their region access to fresh and nutritional food. They have programs that support community gardens and food and gardening education, a Donation Station in which local farmers, food producers, and community gardeners contribute local food to feed the hungry, and a Farm to Cafeteria/Edible Schoolyards program designed to introduce children to gardening and farming and to provide more nutritious meals in schools.

The Community Food Initiatives group is housed in the complex created by the Appalachian Center for Economic Networks (ACEnet), another highly effective organization in Ohio for community food efforts. ACEnet's mission is to build networks, support innovation, and facilitate collaboration with Appalachian Ohio businesses to create a strong, sustainable regional economy. One of their business incubators, the nationally recognized Food Manufacturing Center helps food entrepreneurs develop, manufacture, and market food products. Through their volunteer Appalachia Harvest group, ACEnet has had enormous impact on food security in Appalachian Ohio by preserving and distributing over 350 gallons and 445 pounds of fresh produce in a two year period, a program they plan to continue. They have been in

partnership with many other Appalachian food organizations and serve as a model throughout the region for more than 25 years of effective work.

One of ACEnet's partners in Ohio is the Appalachian Staple Foods Collaborative (ASFC). They were created in 2008 to build a model field-to-table food system for Appalachia based on the production, processing, and marketing of staple beans, grains, and oilseeds. Their processing facility is the Shagbark Seed and Mill Company, also located in the ACEnet complex. The philosophy of ASFC is "staple crops are easy to grow. Sow seed and buy a scythe. For larger-scale production, look into sharing equipment with your neighbors." Products from the mill are being sold in a local Kroger store and other grocers, in restaurants, and at farmers' markets.

In partnership with Rural Action, county extension agents, and farmers in Appalachian Ohio, the Appalachian Nutrition Network (ANN) began in 2004 as a non-profit agency that organizes, sponsors, and administers USDA food and nutrition programs such as the Summer Food Service Program, the After School At-Risk Program, and others for Appalachian Ohio and in West Virginia. Borrowing a slogan from Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project in North Carolina—"Fresher by Thousands of Miles"—ANN has made a commitment to purchase their fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers. They serve food to Appalachian children at 26 different sites.

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, while having only one Appalachian County (Ross) in its membership, conducted a Local Food Assessment and Plan in 2010 with relevance for its neighboring Appalachian counties. They recommended, for example, developing a state-level framework to assess urban and rural food deserts and modernizing Ohio's land-use statutes.

## PENNSYLVANIA SYNOPSIS

**Appalachian Counties:** Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Bedford, Blair, Bradford, Butler, Cambria, Cameron, Carbon, Centre, Clarion, Clearfield, Clinton, Columbia, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Fayette, Forest, Fulton, Greene, Huntingdon, Indiana, Jefferson, Juniata, Lackawanna, Lawrence, Luzerne, Lycoming, McKean, Mercer, Mifflin, Monroe, Montour, Northumberland, Perry, Pike, Potter, Schuylkill, Snyder, Somerset, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Union, Venango, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Westmoreland, and Wyoming.

One of the largest organizations working in local food issues in Pennsylvania is the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA). Founded in 1992, PASA has worked to transform agriculture and food systems in Pennsylvania and beyond in ways that improve land, restores health of citizens, and makes farming more viable. They work in sustainable agriculture education, regional marketing and business support, consumer outreach, advocacy for a safe, sustainable, fair food system, and community building. Their annual Farming for the Future Conference attracts over 2,000 attendees each year and is followed by field days and intensive learning programs. They coordinate Buy Fresh, Buy Local chapters in Pennsylvania and launched a Good Food Neighborhood social network to link local people to local food, farms, and one another. Coordinated through this network are their sustainability schools in which they offer short workshops on sustainable living for community members. PASA also monitors legislative policy that affects agriculture and local food efforts.

David Eason, director of Western Pennsylvania programs for PASA that includes 19 counties that are in Appalachian Pennsylvania, has become a national spokesperson for local food issues. He says, "Local seems to be the old idea that's new again." He believes the whole local food effort is a way "to take back regional production." Eason works to enhance local farm products with regional branding, adding that he wants to establish "a baseline of where we are in western Pennsylvania by branding regional food products."

In Central Pennsylvania, SEDA-COG, the local development district and council of governments, is very active in local food issues. Through their Community Resource Center and grant funding, they have assisted buy fresh, buy local programs and they work to establish connections between towns and cities in their area and local growers and others connected with the local food economy.

Pennsylvania's land-grant institution, Penn State, offers a vast array of agricultural programs in both curriculum and through the extension service. Notably, in 2012, the College of Agriculture there declared a "Year of Global Food Security," to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of the Morrill Act creating land-grant schools. For the initial event, they brought together 70 Fulbright Scholars from around the world to discuss the need for food security across the planet. The director of international programs for the college said, "We have to make sure the infrastructure is in place and that people have the incomes to access safe and nutritious food. Moreover, this work must take place in the context of sustainability, with sensitivity to sovereignty consideration." Students at Juniata College in Huntingdon started an organic garden on campus called "Roots and Shoots." Their Student Food Initiative has gotten commitments from the on-campus food service provider to incorporate the garden's produce into campus menus. At Lock Haven University, students in the MountainServe Center (whose motto is Learning by Serving Where the Ground is Uneven) assist with a Community Lunch program in partnership with the Salvation Army.



Pittsburgh, one of Pennsylvania and Appalachia's most significant cities, has many local food efforts underway. Grow Pittsburgh is a non-profit organization devoted to supporting urban farming. They say their vision is "the day when growing and eating healthy, local food is commonplace" and note that they are committed to growing food, growing farmers, growing community, and growing capacity. Grow Pittsburgh operates urban gardens in many neighborhoods of the city and they are widening their scope by working with Allegheny County and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy to encourage gardening partnerships outside the city. Each year they expand their Edible Schoolyard program to new schools, in which they integrate garden activities into the regular classroom curriculum to help improve eating habits and improve learning. Braddock Farms, an urban farm in the city's business corridor, teaches young people in their youth internship program about intensive gardening and they supply the area with fresh food. The Frick Art and Historical Center offered the city of Pittsburgh their Victorian greenhouse and their Shiloh Farm to provide fresh produce for the city. They promote the greenhouse and garden by saying that "the Frick market garden employs different gardening techniques and serves as an excellent model for backyard gardening." New initiatives of Grow Pittsburgh are City Growers, for starting community food gardens, Allegheny Grows for food gardens throughout the county, and the Community Garden Exchange for resource sharing and networking among all community food gardeners in the Pittsburgh region.

Working with Grow Pittsburgh is Slow Food Pittsburgh, whose members rely on fresh produce from local, urban farms. In a blog about the organization, one writer noted that the city of Pittsburgh had helped the urban farming movement by relaxing some city ordinances to allow farming, keeping chickens, and maintaining beehives.

Just outside Pittsburgh, in Natrona Heights in Allegheny County, four youthful partners bought Blackberry Meadow Farms from a couple retiring after 18 years. Their goal is to run the farm not only as a sustainable farm, but a model for a new generation of young growers. One of the partners told a *Pittsburgh City Paper* reporter, "We have big dreams for this place. We don't want it to be just a farm." To diversify their income streams, the farm partners operate a CSA and also sell wholesale as well as direct sales at farmers markets. One of the partners says, "the local economy is gonna be the only thing that survives," adding that diverse sources of revenue is as necessary as diverse crops: "It is a business. It has to be in the black. If we're in the red, it means local agriculture is dead."

Farms that offer CSA programs in Pennsylvania are plentiful. An example is the Edible Earth Farm in Tionesta, bordering the Allegheny National Forest and the Allegheny River. It is a certified organic farm, with both CSA and direct sales (with a plan in 2012 to open their own Country Shoppe on the farm) and the farmers are active members of PASA.

Crafting local beers and spirits has grown in Pennsylvania, as it has in other Appalachian states. The local beer business has given rise to two hops farms in the Centre County area. They both are organic growers and sell to a local café and aleworks. In Pittsburgh, an artisan whiskey distillery opened in 2011, named Wigle Whiskey for one of two men convicted of treason and sentenced to hang for his role in the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794. A similar venture in the area is Pennsylvania Pure Distilleries which makes Boyd & Blair vodka in Glenshaw. Pennsylvania also boasts significant wine production, producing over 195,000 gallons annually, making Pennsylvania the fourth largest wine growing state in the country.

## SOUTH CAROLINA SYNOPSIS

**Appalachian Counties:** Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg

In 2011, the Greenville County Planning Department spearheaded a local Food System initiative to learn more about the state of its food system and how it can be improved. With a mission to increase access to healthy, affordable foods, LiveWell Greenville has partnered with the County to support the efforts. The Food System initiative began in August 2011 with two forums for local food producers and a survey that was distributed to these local farmers to gather more information. Access to Healthy Foods is the name of the planning group. LiveWell Greenville is a partnership of dozens of public and private organizations that aims to make Greenville a healthier place to live, work, and play. Two efforts are healthier foods in schools and workplaces and nutritious snacks in child care centers.

The food systems professionals in the upcountry area are now connected by a lively internet forum that distributes information and opportunities to the participants. Many of the partners in the group are working to convert the Duke's sandwich facility in Simpsonville into a food processing/storage/hub for local food producers.

In May 2011, the Governor of South Carolina announced that Amy's Kitchen, the nation's leading maker of natural and organic convenience foods, was going to establish a new production facility in Greenville County, bringing with it 700 new jobs and a \$63 million investment. Amy's Kitchen uses certified organic ingredients, grown without pesticides, non-GMO, and do not contain hydrogenated fats or oils. The market for organic foods, according to the company, is among the fastest-growing grocery categories, with sales expanding more than 10% annually. Another growing entrepreneurial effort in Upstate is Appalachian Organics in Travelers Rest, which uses worms and worm castings to create organic mulch and compost.

An exciting development in 2012 was announcement of the plan for Spartanburg's new Healthy Food Hub, a public-private partnership that will open in 2013. The permanent, year-round farmers market will have a retail store, urban farm, educational and commercial kitchen facilities, and 21 new jobs. With initial funding from a federal Health and Human Services grant, additional funding comes from the City of Spartanburg, the Butterfly Foundation, the Mary Black Foundation, and the Hub City Farmers Market.

*Edible UpCountry*, a magazine devoted to celebrating the foods of Upstate South Carolina, created an issue in the winter of 2011 exploring the foods of the growing Latino community in the area, including Caribbean, Brazilian, Columbian, and Mexican foods. In 2012, *Edible Upcountry* sponsored the Upstate Food Hub, a business connection event to connect food producers and food buyers.

The David E. Shi Center for Sustainability at Furman University has as its core mission to support sustainability on campus and in the greater community. Multidisciplinary and cross-divisional, the center helps integrate sustainability themes and topics into the academic curriculum and research. In 2011, the Shi Center's theme was local food systems, with significant student and local community interest in the topic in the upstate region. Partners in the efforts include Edible Upcountry, Greenville Forward, Gardening for Good, and Greenville Organic Foods. Furman University has its own organic practice garden on site. The Furman Farm is a one-fourth acre garden that gives students and community members hands-on experience in sustainable agriculture and small scale food production. Produce is sold at the Randy Blackwell Farm Stand.

The Travelers Rest Community Farmers Market, held on Saturday mornings, is part of a downtown Greenville complex that has walking/biking trails, wide sidewalks, and a large public park. Oconee County has farmers markets at Seneca, Walhalla, and Westminster and has nearly a dozen berry, farm, and produce stands that include a dairy and a Christmas tree farm. Perdue's Mountain Fruit Farm is a Certified Roadside Market also in the Travelers Rest community north of Greenville. They produce many varieties of fruits and berries on a small scale and sell value-added food products. Owner Dick Perdue says, "There is a strong movement to buy local. When you buy local, you get two things. The local guy will grow a better variety and they taste better." He markets with inexpensive email newsletters that cost less than \$1000 a year and reaches 2000 families in South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Florida, and Georgia.

"The local markets are places to see familiar faces of vendors and customers, and they make you feel you belong to a community." So say agriculture officials who note that South Carolina has some 80 community-based farmers markets and 120 roadside markets. "Put the state on your plate" was the campaign slogan for one candidate for the state's Department of Agriculture commissioner, who also developed a "Certified S.C. Grown" campaign. Research shows nearly 80% of South Carolinians will pick a South Carolina product if that information is shown on the grocery aisle; 77% of 190 stores surveyed participated in the South Carolina grown campaign, even big chains like Wal-Mart, Piggly-Wiggly, IGA, and Bi-lo. Said one official, "The local foods movement is palpable. It is significant." A "Fresh on the Menu" program lets chefs who source 25% of their menu items from local farmers advertise their participation in the campaign.

Several farms (Brick House Farms, Old Paths Farm, Marik Farms) in the Gaffney area of South Carolina, raise pastured poultry, beef, and pork. Country Blessings Farm in Tamassee and Lost Marbles Farm in Pickens keep goats for dairy and cheese. Oconee Bells Family Farm in Westminster and Blue Skies Organic Farm and Nursery in Easley grow organic produce. The Happy Berry Farm in Six Mile is a pick your own farm with blackberries, figs, muscadines, blueberries, and seedless grapes. Bee Well Honey Farm and Carolina Honeybees, both in Pickens, are beekeeping operations that sell honey and honey-related products. Urban Farms in Spartanburg is a small urban farm that grows heirloom vegetables and saves seeds. There is a buffalo farm (Buffalo Farms) in Simpsonville and Barrioz Natural Gardens in Central that has vegetables and herbs. Each June, the Carolina Farm Stewardship program conducts the Upstate Farm Tour, featuring 20 different farms.

Clemson University in Clemson has a student-run organic farm to develop and demonstrate farming systems that are ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable to strengthen local food systems. It is certified organic and grows many heirloom breeds native to the area. Clemson University "works to create regionally and nationally recognized models for Sustainable Agriculture through research, teaching and public outreach programs." The organic farm was on the chopping block in 2008 because of the economic downturn, but now thrives with a Clemson Farmer's Market and an heirloom garden open for tours.

Anderson County Schools launched a program in 2008 called "Grow With Me" to supply Anderson schools with locally-grown produce, including melons, broccoli, cucumbers, tomatoes, strawberries and sweet potatoes. Students learn about the food in class and take tours to farms. This was the first farm-to-school program in South Carolina. There is interest in adding local meat to the program but because the meat is processed far away, it is not feasible at this time. Anderson County won an award from the Congressional Hunger Center for its efforts.

Anderson County Farmer's Market showcases produce grown only in Anderson County (waivers only if a product is not grown in the county) and, on Tuesday nights, local restaurants serve dinner at the market representing a "Taste of Anderson." The market manager says county residents spend about \$500 million a year on food but only 5 to 12 percent of that money stays in the county but they are working to change those numbers. Also in 2008, Anderson County hosted the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association conference on sustainable agriculture and a locavore group in Anderson held an Eat Carolina Food! Challenge. A farmers market opened in the Anderson Area Medical Center and other hospitals may follow.

Master Gardeners in South Carolina have a project called Plant A Row for the Hungry. In Greenville County, the Project Host Soup Kitchen Garden supplies produce for 250 people per day. A Spartanburg County project donated nearly 33,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables to local shelters.

Changes in micro-distillery laws in South Carolina spurred the development of the Dark Corner Distillery, the first time traditional moonshine whiskey has been produced legally in the state. Located in Greenville, the distillery features a tasting bar and museum about the history of the mountain area of South Carolina.

South Carolina has its Appalachian food "stars." Among them are celebrity chef Tyler Florence, a native of Greenville, who is a food network star, cookbook author, and restaurateur. He is most known for his show, *Tyler's Ultimate*, and now as host of the *Great Food Truck Race*. Chef Sean Brock, whose restaurants are in Charleston rather than Upstate, is a native of Appalachian Wise County, Virginia, and winning rave reviews for his cuisine. He told an Appalachian food blogger that "I'm so proud of where I come from that it hurts." Brock is bringing attention to Appalachian cooking in coastal South Carolina. PigeonPie Films in Greenville specializes in documentaries that portray the positive and unique aspects of Appalachian culture and society, including its foodways. "We believe that the beauty, sights, and sounds of Appalachia deserve to be preserved and shared with others."

## TENNESSEE SYNOPSIS

**Appalachian Counties:** Anderson, Bledsoe, Blount, Bradley, Campbell, Cannon, Carter, Claiborne, Clay, Cocke, Coffee, Cumberland, De Kalb, Fentress, Franklin, Grainger, Greene, Grundy, Hamblen, Hamilton, Hancock, Hawkins, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Knox, Lawrence, Lewis, Loudon, McMinn, Macon, Marion, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Overton, Pickett, Polk, Putnam, Rhea, Roane, Scott, Sequatchie, Sevier, Smith, Sullivan, Unicoi, Union, Van Buren, Warren, Washington, and White.

East Tennessee has long been a land of farmers. National Public Radio's Noah Adams wrote an article in 2010 about the number of Century farms, those owned by the same family for more than 100 years, in the mountains of Tennessee. In Sullivan County, the Massengill-Bell farm dates back to the 1700s and remains a cattle farm; in Johnson City, the Lone Pine farm retains only ten acres, all the rest gone to development, but the owners do raise all-natural beef and free-range chickens; and in Greene County, Still Hollow farm has turned to agritourism for survival. Although the owners of Still Hollow struggle to maintain the farm while they live away, they plan to keep passing it on to their children. They say, "We told our boys. You don't inherit something when someone dies as much as you're born to it when you're born. They inherited this land the minute they were born. They grow that inheritance. But they will have a treasure. Hopefully."

While some families struggle to hold onto farms, increasing numbers of young people are turning to farming to make a living. In East Tennessee's Monroe County, Jerry and Vanessa Barr, who didn't grow up farming, chose farming. Jerry Barr says, "Agriculture to me is not a job, it's a lifestyle." They raise dairy heifers, hay, straw, and a small amount of wheat for grain on about 550 acres. Vanessa Barr credits social media with helping them learn from other farmers, share their own experiences, and "take the mystery away from what a farmer is."

A number of organizations in Appalachian Tennessee are helping farmers reach new markets and connect even more with one another. Gaining Ground, an initiative of the Benwood Foundation in Chattanooga, works to increase the number of local food growers and their production capacity, educate citizens about the value of buying locally-grown food, and increase access to healthy, locally-grown food throughout their community. They award grants to creative local food reform projects. Another Chattanooga-based project is Crabtree Farms, founded in 1998 as a public/private partnership to renew urban agriculture. Their main priority is local food and farm education for community members and school children. In 2009, their Farm-to-School programs reached over 700 students; they offer Future Farmer internships, Farmer-for-a-Day programs, Community gardening training, and Farm Field Days. Crabtree Farms produces the local food guide for the area ("Taste Buds"), operates a farm stand and CSA, and participates in Chattanooga area farmers markets.

Rural Resources, based in Greene County, is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and improvement of agricultural land, preserving rural heritage, and developing a locally sustainable system of producing and marketing agricultural products. They offer Farm Day Camps, Farm and Food Teen Training, a farm internet service, a Mobile Farmers Market, and the Four Seasons Grazing Club for local livestock farmers.

The Jubilee Project in Hancock County, a United Methodist Mission, is dedicated to improving the lives of farmers, many of them former tobacco growers, and to helping small businesses. They helped form the Clinch Appalachian Farmers Enterprise (CAFÉ), a member-run organization of 20 farmers who grow mainly for public school and restaurant markets. They conduct training on subjects such as hoop houses and high tunnels, solar heating, composting, and other topics. For a time they operated the Clinch-

Powell Community Kitchen to assist developers of value-added food products; the kitchen now prepares food for needy youth and elders in three counties.

Unicoi County, just outside the Tri-Cities area, celebrates its agricultural base with the annual Apple Festival, Strawberry Festival, Ramp Festival, and the Farmhouse Gallery and Gardens (an agricultural business and tourist destination). With a recent ARC grant, they plan to open a community kitchen and business incubator for value-added food products.

Colleges and universities in Tennessee also contribute to local food development. The University of Tennessee, the land-grant institution, offers an array of agricultural programs and is home of the Agricultural Policy Analysis Center. The Knoxville campus also is site of the University of Tennessee Culinary Institute, a program responding to the growing need for chefs. The program director explains that “by 2012, for every 100 chefs, we’ll need 120 replacements.” Students at the university grow produce at the Organic and Sustainable Crops Unit and sell them at the UT Harvest Market.

East Tennessee State University (ETSU) has students involved in documenting agricultural history and in 2011 partnered with nearby Milligan College to present the East Tennessee Local Food Summit, bringing together consumers, producers, students, educators, elected officials, and others interested in local food. ETSU recently opened a farmers market on-campus and produced a film titled, “Ramps and Ruritans: Tales of the Revered and Reeking Leek of Flag Pond, Tennessee.” Fred Sauceman, who works in the ESTU President’s office, has authored numerous books about regional foodways. A group of young people in the Johnson City area in 2011 launched “Build It Up East TN,” a non-profit working to create and support a comprehensive food justice program in East Tennessee by reclaiming food culture. They plan to offer workshops on food preservation, food insecurity, and Appalachian history, community gardening assistance, and a “Holler to the Hood” project to connect rural and urban communities. They intend “to reclaim our region’s food sovereignty and revive the spirit of independence in Appalachia.”

Even institutions such as prisons are helping develop local food. The local jail in Scott County has a small garden behind the jail where inmates grow produce and use it in their meals. At the Knox County Detention Center there is a garden, known as McCulley Park, that has been producing food for inmates for nearly four years. The work is done by women inmates, including planting and harvesting, growing heirloom tomato seedlings in a donated greenhouse, and caring for chickens, goats, and donkeys. One of the officers says many of the women inmates who ask to be on the crew have little, if any, gardening experience, but “many have left with learning life-long lessons.”

Wine production and distilling has been increasing in East Tennessee, just as it has in other parts of Appalachia. Two wineries recently opened in the Tri-Cities area in Blountville, Countryside Vineyards and Winery and Corey Ippolito Vineyards. The oldest licensed winery in Tennessee, Highland Manor Winery, is located in Jamestown on the Cumberland Plateau. The Ole Smoky Tennessee Moonshine distillery in Gatlinburg is the first federally licensed distillery in the history of East Tennessee.

Increasing numbers of markets and grocers carry local foods. Three Rivers Market in Knoxville has operated for over 30 years, selling local, organic, and naturally grown foods, which they also serve at their in-store café. They offer workshops for what they call Urban Land Scouts to teach good land stewardship.

Blackberry Farm and the Inn at Blackberry Farm have become a mecca for foodies from throughout the South. The farm, which grows the food for the two restaurants of the inn, boasts a chef, master gardener, baker, cheese maker, forger, butcher, jam lady, chocolatier, restaurant manager, and

sommelier. They offer cooking schools and special epicurean events, and they host the annual dinner and meeting for the Southern Foodways Alliance.

## VIRGINIA SYNOPSIS

**Appalachian Counties:** Alleghany, Bath, Bland, Botetourt, Buchanan, Carroll, Craig, Dickenson, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Henry, Highland, Lee, Montgomery, Patrick, Pulaski, Rockbridge, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise/Norton, and Wytthe and the independent cities of Bristol, Buena Vista, Covington, Galax, Lexington, Martinsville, Norton, and Radford.

Virginia has a history of farming that extends to the Founding Fathers of the United States. Washington situated his farm to face the mountains, turning his back on the old world, and Jefferson and Madison created their farms in the Blue Ridge mountains. Farming was central to their lives and the ways in which they shaped a vision for the country.

In more recent years, Appalachian Virginia's development of local food systems has come to national and international attention, first through best-selling books and then as a place of best practice. In 2006, Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma* became a #1 *New York Times* Bestseller and its "star" became Joel Salatin, a farmer in Swope, Virginia, whose Polyface Farm provided the country with a mandate for food with a face, a place, and a taste. (In 2009, Salatin won a \$100,000 Heinz Award for his alternative farming practices.) Then in 2007, Barbara Kingsolver published *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, which also became a *New York Times* Bestseller. She recounts the story of her family's journey to live off food from their own mountain farm in southwest Virginia or from neighboring farms for one year. Her message was "eaters must understand how we eat determines how the world is used." The locavore movement had found a vibrant center in the mountains of Virginia. More recently, Jim Minick's *The Blueberry Years: A Memoir of Farm and Family* has drawn attention to his organic, blueberry farming in the New River Valley, where he also teaches at Radford University.

Though these books brought the spotlight to Appalachian Virginia, many had already been toiling in the local food fields for some years. Anthony Flaccavento, now a nationally known speaker on the local food movement and other sustainability issues, founded Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD) in 1995 in Abingdon, a nonprofit dedicated to developing healthy, diverse, and ecologically sound economic opportunities in southwest Virginia and East Tennessee. ASD, now headed by Kathlyn Terry, has many programs including an aggregation facility where produce is washed, graded, packed and shipped to local consumers. Their certification and branding program, Appalachian Harvest, helps consumers identify local food in the many regional supermarkets where the produce is sold. ASD also provides education and training programs for farmers and consumers. Flaccavento, now the founder of SCALE, a sustainability consulting service, and an organic farmer himself, has been designated a Hero of the Food Movement by the IATP Food and Society Fellows, among other national honors. In 2010, he published "Healthy Food Systems: A Toolkit for Building Value Chains" and "The Transition of Appalachia," an article on sustainable local economies for the *Solutions Journal*.

The Abingdon area recently welcomed the new Heartwood Center that opened in 2011. Heartwood, deemed "Southwest Virginia's Artisan Gateway," is home to Round the Mountain, southwest Virginia's artisan network and the Crooked Road, Virginia's heritage music trail. In addition to art, craft, and music, the center also houses a restaurant and café that uses locally-sourced food in traditional mountain recipes such as soup beans and cornbread.

South of Abingdon, Floyd County is home to Sustain Floyd, a nonprofit created in 2009 to build on the community's assets to create a sustainable future. They have a permanent farmer and artisans market, the Floyd Community Market, with goals of developing the local food system and local



entrepreneurship. A Farm-to-School program has established a relationship between local growers and the school system to provide a market for the farmers and learning opportunities for school children. SustainFloyd has been investigating the feasibility of building a food processing facility and a dairy processing facility. Floyd also has a Tasting Room at which visitors can sample locally produced wine, beer, cider and mead and hosts an annual Taste of Floyd festival.

In Blacksburg, Virginia Tech, as Virginia's land-grant university, offers a diverse array of agriculture programs on-campus and through the extension service. As students on campus became more attuned to local foods, they formed the Virginia Tech Sustainable Food Corps to bring local food into the dining halls and to offer students more information on the need for sustainable eating. The university has reached beyond the campus to offer grants to local high schools for innovative projects in growing and marketing alternative crops. The College of Agriculture, as well as other units in the university, have teamed with Grayson LandCare, Sustain Floyd, the Virginia Farm Bureau, the Virginia Departments of Agriculture and Consumer Services, of Conservation and Recreation, of Forestry, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, several county governments and others in a major collaboration called the Blue Ridge Plateau Project that includes Whole Farm Planning, pastured cattle and sheep, and an emphasis on balancing farm profitability, community stability, and environmental vitality. With an ARC planning grant, the group is developing plans for an abattoir in the area.

A similar partnership led to construction of the Alleghany Highlands Agricultural Center in Monterey in Highland County that serves farmers in Highland and Bath counties of Virginia and Pendleton and Pocahontas counties in West Virginia. The local extension agent noted that the facility "will provide the entire region with infrastructure for local livestock producers to market locally grown products, branded meats, further processing of meats, as well as traditional marketing avenues. This is a big step in sustaining our agricultural heritage and stimulating our local economy with new jobs." The Donald slaughterhouse in Lexington, closed for some years, reopened in 2010 with a waiting list of farmers.

In Scott County, in extreme southwest Virginia, several farmers began raising sheep after the decline of tobacco. The Scott County Hair Sheep Association, founded in 2000, now has a partnership with Food City, a 100 store supermarket chain to sell their lamb products. Border Springs Farm in Patrick County has become well-known for its lamb in the kitchens of fine chefs. In Lexington, Virginia, at Washington and Lee University, students have a Campus Kitchen in which they prepare food to send home with school children in backpacks, so they have food to eat over the weekend. The university also has a strong commitment to local food; in 2009, they increased their purchase of local food from 25% to 32% from the previous year and from 8.5% in 2007-8. The campus coordinator for the project notes that Washington and Lee used to buy apples from Washington State that traveled 3,562 miles to Lexington; now, apples from Nelson County travel only 68 miles.

Appalachian Virginia is home to numerous wineries that also offer food and attract many tourists. An economic impact study released in 2011 found that between 2005 and 2010, the wine industry in Virginia doubled its impact to nearly \$750 million, with jobs increasing from 130 to nearly 200 and spending on winery tourism increasing from \$57 million in 2005 to \$131 million in 2010. There are also numerous ciderworks (such as the Murray Cider Company in Roanoke) and craft breweries (such as the New River Brewing Company in Ashburn and the Shooting Creek Farm Brewery in Floyd County) scattered across the Virginia mountains. Highland County is known for its maple syrup production and the annual Highland Maple Festival.

Restaurants that feature local food have sprung up all over the mountains of Virginia and have found national notoriety. Barbara Kingsolver and her husband Steve Hopp operate the Harvest Table

Restaurant in Meadowview, serving local food and selling local goods. Zynodoa Restaurant in Staunton uses local purveyors, whose names and farms they proudly display, and they sometimes have special events such as a program featuring Joel Salatin of Polyface Farm (they use his meat products) and a documentary film about his life. The Palisades Restaurant in Eggleston is an annual site for the James Beard Foundation Celebrity Chef dinner, and the Hotel Roanoke in Roanoke uses locally grown food in its dining areas. Numerous famous chefs have come from Appalachian Virginia, including Sean Brock from Wise County, who has restaurants in Charleston, South Carolina, Barry Maiden from Saltville who owns the Hungry Mother in Boston (named for Hungry Mother State Park in Marion), and Jack McDavid from Clinchport who owns restaurants in Philadelphia. Some food producers have become famous, too. Allan Benton of Scott County received the Jack Daniel's Lifetime Achievement Award from the Southern Foodways Alliance in 2007 for his dry-cured country ham, served in many famous restaurants across the country.

## WEST VIRGINIA SYNOPSIS

**Appalachian Counties:** All counties. Barbour, Berkeley, Boone, Braxton, Brooke, Cabell, Calhoun, Clay, Doddridge, Fayette, Gilmer, Grant, Greenbrier, Hampshire, Hancock, Hardy, Harrison, Jackson, Jefferson, Kanawha, Lewis, Lincoln, Logan, Marion, Marshall, Mason, McDowell, Mercer, Mineral, Mingo, Monongalia, Monroe, Morgan, Nicholas, Ohio, Pendleton, Pleasants, Pocahontas, Preston, Putnam, Raleigh, Randolph, Ritchie, Roane, Summers, Taylor, Tucker, Tyler, Upshur, Wayne, Webster, Wetzel, Wirt, Wood, and Wyoming.

As the only state that is fully in the Appalachian region, West Virginia has taken advantage of its statewide interconnectedness to propel it to one of the leadership positions in Appalachia in the development of local food systems. From federal government installations to family farms, expansion of local food interest has reached even the smallest communities in the Mountain State.

Near Beckley, the Appalachian Farming Systems Research Center, part of the United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, is a laboratory that develops knowledge and technology to increase the profitability of small-farm agricultural enterprises in the Appalachian region while enhancing soil and water quality and environmental integrity. They help farmers fill niche markets and they assist with challenges of climate, steep terrain, and eroded soil. Their current priorities are climate change research, carbon sequestration, food safety, and global food security. Additionally, they maintain an archives of photographs, documentaries, and narratives about Appalachia's agricultural history and heritage. Other federal installations, such as the Martinsburg Veterans Administration Medical Center, use locally sourced food in their kitchens and offer internships for culinary students from a local community college. The Center even hosted a "Taste of Appalachia," in 2011 that featured local produce, local rainbow trout, and local grass-fed beef.

Trout farming and other aquaculture has become big business in West Virginia, which is home to the U.S. Trout Farmers Association. Supported by the work of the Freshwater Institute in Shepherdstown, there are numerous fish farms in West Virginia, including High Appalachian, a trout farm in Raleigh County and West Virginia Salmon and Trout in Mingo County, which uses water from reclaimed coal mines to raise the fish. High Appalachian and the Mountain Aquaculture and Producers Association in Tucker County are the state's two processing facilities for fish. A recent decline in the world's caviar supply has brought a new market to West Virginia's fish industry, filling the void with trout caviar.

In addition to farm-raised food such as fish, West Virginia has been capitalizing on products from forest foraging as well. Ramps, the pungent wild leek that grows in mountain woods early in the spring, have become a delicacy far beyond Appalachia. Prices for ramps have risen and fears about over-harvesting have grown. Each year, Richwood, West Virginia, hosts the annual ramp festival called the Feast of the Ramson. Richwood, in Nicholas County, calls itself the ramp capital of the world, but there are ramp festivals all over West Virginia and in many other Appalachian states. In 2010, one couple in Richwood boasted that they had the only ramp farm in the world, cultivating seeds and bulbs and selling fresh ramps to customers as far away as New York City and Louisville, Kentucky. Along with ramps, hunting for morels and other wild mushrooms is another grassroots economic activity. West Virginia, according to the state's division of natural resources, boasts 1,700 different species of mushrooms and other fungi, each species recorded and housed at Davis & Elkins College in Elkins. The popularity of the wide variety of edible mushroom species has now developed a small industry in mushroom production.

Community supported agriculture (CSA), in which consumers buy a share of the season's harvest, are widespread across West Virginia's 23,000 farms. But, farmer and Chef Dale Hawkins, of Fish Hawk Acres, a group of family farms in Rock Cave, takes it a step further and operates a Community Supported Kitchen (CSK). The CSK, developed to meet market demand, offers customers a wide range of prepared dishes and products, quite literally from soup to nuts. Hawkins also developed the New Appalachian Farm and Research Center on his own farm to develop new farm production and marketing strategies and provide training for farmers.

West Virginia has numerous outstanding organizations working on local food systems in local economies. The state Department of Agriculture assists farmers in all aspects of agriculture but has an especially vigorous program in marketing development. Their AgVentures logo helps promote agritourism across the state and they offer trade show participation and opportunities for international marketing through their "Heart of Appalachia" menus for foreign chefs that feature West Virginia products. The Small Farm Center at West Virginia University helps farmers with value adding, training for beginning farmers, farmers market management, agritourism, and animal production and marketing, including aquaculture. They partner with the West Virginia Farmers Market Association for the farm market curriculum.

Beyond state government, others groups have taken leadership in local food work. The West Virginia Farm and Food Coalition, with funding from the Benedum Foundation, works to have a statewide conversation about healthy, locally-produced food for all citizens, especially low income families and other vulnerable groups. They offer food news and opportunities, an internet network connection for food advocates, and many resources on food, nutrition, and agriculture. The Collaborative for the Twenty-First Century Appalachia brings together farmers, chefs, home cooks, community members, scholars, and others interested in local food in a variety of ways. They worked with the Department of Agriculture to produce a very popular tourism booklet called "101 Unique Places to Dine in West Virginia." Each year they sponsor the Cast Iron Cook-Off that brings together outstanding West Virginia chefs with cooking teams to compete, using local ingredients, cast iron cookware, and traditional recipes. Recently, they have expanded the event to include a Pan-Appalachian Colloquium to bring together local food practitioners from many of the other Appalachian states for in-depth discussions, and they are including chefs and teams from other parts of Appalachia in the competition. The organization produced a toolkit on cultural and culinary heritage to help communities develop their own community cook-offs and agritourism. With a West Virginia Humanities grant, they now are documenting food heritage with their Food With A Story project.

Because of its industrial history of mining and steel in some parts of the state, West Virginia is home to many threads of ethnic cuisines (German, Swiss, Italian, Hungarian, Polish, Welsh, African, Russian, to name but a few) and there are festivals devoted to many of them. Clarksburg holds an annual Italian Heritage Festival and the pepperoni roll is a food icon in West Virginia; Helvetia treats visitors to Swiss food traditions. There are close to twenty vineyards in the state, numerous bottled spring water operations, and a legal Mountain Moonshine distillery in Morgantown.

In 2009, British chef Jamie Oliver brought his food revolution television series to Huntington, West Virginia, which had been proclaimed the unhealthiest community in America for poor nutrition and rates of obesity and diabetes. He made many local folks defensive and angry but eventually won over many of them to the need for healthier, fresh food, especially in the schools. He noted that "they have never had food from scratch in their life." Even before his programs, and certainly since then, the state has been exploding with local, healthy food initiatives. More recently, Andrew Zimmern, host of "Bizarre

Foods” on the travel channel, made a second trip to West Virginia to sample local cuisine; he declares it one of the most distinctive cuisines in the country and says West Virginia is his favorite state in America.

## APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A** Agendas from Local Food Workshops

**APPENDIX B** Notes from Local Food Workshops

Appendix A

**GROWING THE APPALACHIAN FOOD ECONOMY**

*An Appalachian Regional Commission Workshop on  
Sustainable Agriculture and Local Food Assets*

October 6, 2010	10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.	Blairsville, Georgia
9:30 a.m.-10:00 a.m.	<b>Registration and Morning Coffee</b>	
10:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m.	<b>Welcome and Opening Remarks</b> John Cartwright, <i>Appalachian Regional Commission</i> James Thompson, <i>Georgia Program Manager, Appalachian Regional Commission</i> Jean Haskell, <i>Whisman Appalachian Scholar, Appalachian Regional Commission</i>	
10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	<b>Bringing it to the Table: Stories of Successful Organizations</b>  <b>Brooks Franklin</b> , President, Georgia Mountains Foodways Alliance; Director, Sustainable Mountain Living Communities, Rabun Gap, Georgia <b>Alice Rolls</b> , Executive Director, Georgia Organics, Atlanta, Georgia <b>Charlie Jackson</b> , Executive Director, Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, Asheville, North Carolina <b>Anthony Flaccavento</b> , Organic Farmer; Owner, SCALE, Inc.; Founder, Appalachian Sustainable Development, Abingdon, Virginia <b>Allen Arnold</b> , Executive Director, Collaborative for the 21st Century Appalachia, Charleston, West Virginia	
12:00 p.m.-1:15 p.m.	<b>Luncheon of Seasonal, Local Food</b> , prepared by Culinary Program students of North Georgia Technical College	
1:15 p.m.-1:30 p.m.	<i>Break</i>	
1:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m.	<b>Panel and Workshop Participant Discussion</b> How do you identify your community's food and farm assets and needs? How do you integrate regional cultural heritage into the food economy? How do you develop infrastructure (community kitchens, processing facilities, culinary and leadership training, etc.)? What are helpful tools for creating healthy food systems? How do you develop sustainable agricultural and culinary tourism? How do you create sustainable non-tourism jobs in agriculture and local food ventures? In what ways can ARC most effectively support the growth of Appalachia's local, sustainable food economy?	
2:30 p.m.-3:00 p.m.	<b>Summary and Recommendations</b>	

## Strengthening Local Food Networks across Appalachia

### *An Appalachian Regional Commission Workshop on Sustainable Agriculture and Local Food Assets*

Friday, March 11, 2011

The Falcon Center, Fairmont State University/Pierpont Community & Technical College  
Large Conference Room

### AGENDA

- 9:00 AM      **Registration and Morning Coffee/Tea**
- 10:00 AM      **Welcome and Opening Remarks**
- John Cartwright, Director of Planning & Research, *Appalachian Regional Commission*  
Ralph Goolsby, *Manager, Local Capacity Development, West Virginia Development Office*  
Mary Hunt-Lieving, *Senior Program Officer, Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation*  
Jean Smith, *Director of Marketing & Development, West Virginia Department of Agriculture*
- 10:20 AM      **Farm to Consumer: The Food Supply & Distribution Conundrum**  
Anthony Flaccavento, *Organic farmer, Owner, SCALE, Inc.; Founder, Appalachian Sustainable Development, Abingdon, Virginia*
- 10:40 AM      **Increasing the Yield: Supporting “Agri-preneurs”**  
Dale Hawkins, *Chef and Farmer, Fish Hawk Acres; Founder, New Appalachian Farm and Research Center, Rock Cave, West Virginia*
- Shared Soil: Appalachian Regional Collaboration**  
Jean Haskell, Ph.D., *Whisman Appalachian Scholar, Appalachian Regional Commission*
- 12:00 PM      **Local Foods Luncheon**, prepared by Chef Brian Floyd, Chef Jay Mahoney and students in the Pierpont Community and Technical College Culinary Academy
- 1:00 PM      **Working Group Strategy Sessions**  
Food Supply and Distribution Issues (Moderators: Katie Hoffman, Ph.D., *Assistant Professor, Virginia Commonwealth University*; Anthony Flaccavento)
- Development of “Agri-preneurism” (Moderators: Cindy Martel, *Marketing Specialist, West Virginia Department of Agriculture*; Dale Hawkins)
- Appalachian Regional Collaboration Issues (Moderators: Allen Arnold, Ph.D., *Executive Director, Collaborative for the 21st Century Appalachia*; Jean Haskell)
- 2:30 PM      **Summary and Recommendations**
- 3:00 PM      **Adjourn**



## Strengthening Local Food Networks Across Appalachia

### *An Appalachian Regional Commission Workshop on Sustainable Agriculture and Local Food Assets*

Friday, March 18, 2011

The Pilot Center, 612 East Main Street, Pilot Mountain, North Carolina.

### AGENDA

- 9:00 AM      **Registration**
- 10:00 AM      **Welcome and Opening Remarks**
- Earl Gohl, *Federal Co-Chair, Appalachian Regional Commission*  
Olivia Collier, *North Carolina ARC Program, North Carolina Department of Commerce*  
Earl Sheppard, *Mayor, Pilot Mountain, North Carolina*  
Jean Haskell, Ph.D., *Whisman Appalachian Scholar, Appalachian Regional Commission*
- 10:30 AM      **“Bringing it to the Table”: Examples of Successful Local Food Operations**
- Charlie Jackson, *Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, Asheville, North Carolina*  
Hillary Wilson, *Maverick Farms, Boone, North Carolina*  
Susi Gott-Seguret, *Seasonal School of Culinary Arts, Madison County, North Carolina*  
Jerry Moles, *New River Valley LandCare, Grayson County, Virginia*
- 12:00 PM      **Local Foodways Luncheon**, prepared by Soppers Restaurant, Pilot Mountain, NC
- 1:00 PM      **Working Group Strategy Sessions** (participants answer questions below in small groups)
- *How do you identify your community's food and farm assets and needs?*
  - *How do you develop infrastructure (community kitchens, processing facilities)?*
  - *How do you create sustainable jobs and added value through local food ventures?*
  - *What are helpful tools and resources available for creating healthy food systems?*
  - *How do you develop sustainable agricultural and culinary tourism?*
  - *How do you integrate regional cultural heritage into the food economy?*
- 2:15 PM      **Reporting Out, Summary and Recommendations**
- 3:00 PM      **Adjourn**

Appendix A

**GROWING THE APPALACHIAN FOOD ECONOMY**  
*An Appalachian Regional Commission Workshop on  
Sustainable Agriculture and Local Food Assets*

**MAY 26, 2011 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.**  
**Farmhouse Gallery and Gardens**  
**Unicoi, Tennessee**

9:30-10:00 a.m.

**Registration**

10:00 a.m.-10:45 a.m.

**Welcome and Opening Remarks**

John Cartwright, *Director of Planning and Research, Appalachian Regional Commission*  
Johnny Lynch, *Mayor of Unicoi, Tennessee; Wildlife Artist; Co-owner, Farmhouse Gallery & Gardens*  
Ron Coats, *East Tennessee Regional Supervisor, Food and Dairy, Tennessee Department of Agriculture*  
Jean Haskell, Ph.D., *Whisman Appalachian Scholar, Appalachian Regional Commission*

10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

**Struggle, Success & Innovation in the Local Food Economy**

Larry Fisher, *Director, Appalachian Center for Economic Networks (Food Ventures Center), Athens, Ohio*

Mary Lou Surgi, *Executive Director, Blue Ridge Food Ventures, Asheville, North Carolina*

Kathlyn Terry, *Executive Director, Appalachian Sustainable Development, Abingdon, Virginia*

Tess Lloyd, Ph.D., *Literature and Language, Appalachian Studies;*  
John Lewis, Ph.D., *Appalachian Studies, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee*

12:15-1:00 p.m.

**Appalachian Foodways Luncheon, presented by Pat Lynch, Co-Owner, Farmhouse Gallery & Gardens**

1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.

**Discussion Topics**

Developing Agri-preneurism  
Commercial Kitchens & Food Business Incubators  
Food Supply and Distribution  
Food Policy and Regulation  
Appalachian Regional Collaboration

2:30 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

**Summary and Recommendations**

# Growing the Appalachian Food Economy

*An Appalachian Regional Commission Workshop on  
Sustainable Agriculture and Local Food Assets*

Wednesday, December 7, 2011  
Melvin & Dollie Younts Conference Center, Furman University  
3300 Poinsett Highway, Greenville, SC

## AGENDA

- 9:00 AM      **Registration**
- 10:00 AM      **Welcome and Opening Remarks**
- Brittany DeKnight, *Associate Director, Shi Center for Sustainability, Furman University*  
                  Eleanor Dunlap, *Lead Facilitator, LiveWell Greenville*  
                  Bonnie Ammons, *South Carolina ARC Program, South Carolina Department of Commerce*  
                  Earl Gohl, *Federal Co-Chair, Appalachian Regional Commission*
- 10:30 AM      **Panel Discussion: Opportunities and Challenges to Growing Local Food Networks in the  
Upstate and Across the Appalachian Region**
- Moderator: *Jean Haskell, Ph.D., Whisman Appalachian Scholar*
- Distinguished Panelists:  
                  Peter Marks, *Program Director, Local Food Campaign, Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture  
Project, Asheville, North Carolina*  
                  Dr. David Hughes, *Assistant Director, Clemson Institute for Economic and Community  
Development, Clemson, South Carolina*  
                  Fred Broughton, *Marketing Specialist, South Carolina Department of Agriculture, Columbia,  
South Carolina*  
                  Dale Hawkins, *Chef and Farmer, Fish Hawk Acres; Founder, New Appalachian Farm and  
Research Center, Rock Cave, West Virginia*
- 12:30 PM      **Luncheon**, prepared with locally-sourced ingredients and is provided in part through the generous  
sponsorship of the [Shi Center for Sustainability](#) at Furman University and [LiveWell Greenville](#).
- 1:15 PM      **Working Group Strategy Sessions (Instructions provided)**
- 2:30 PM      **Summary and Recommendations**
- 3:00 PM      **Adjourn**

## GEORGIA ARC WORKSHOP NOTES

**How to identify community's food and farm assets:** surveys, polling; available research sources; is there a single source to identify farmers--census, Local Harvest, foundations, cooperative extension, online data.

**How to integrate regional cultural heritage into the local food economy:** Foxfire, ties to history (e.g., moonshine), anticipate negative perceptions, success with Georgia Made, Georgia Grown, website for ExploreGeorgia.com, incorporate numerous cultural experiences (food, music, dance, etc.), need photos of agri-businesses for promotion at visitor's centers (send to [www.drop.io/gapictureframes](http://www.drop.io/gapictureframes)), reinvent fairs and festivals.

**How to develop infrastructure:** mobile processing facilities (disposal issues, etc.); need for permanent processing facilities; consider processing hubs; do research, know state regulations and restrictions; consider unique processing (e.g., dehydration); frustrating and challenging regulations make processing difficult; big niche for local farmers; possible grant opportunities, need business plan. Use churches, schools, other facilities with kitchens that meet regulations, explore possibility of food policy for canned and dehydrated foods; regulations interpreted differently in different counties; would Appalachian Food Policy Council make a difference?; ARC and USDA could endorse this kind of discussion; look at distribution models with online farmers' markets; Athens, GA, has a software package that addresses online purchases from farmers at [Locallygrown.net](http://Locallygrown.net).

**How to promote farms and other agritourism sites:** internet sales tend to happen closer to larger, more progressive metropolitan areas (Lulu's Foods, Richmond, VA; Local Food Hub, Charlottesville, VA).

**How can ARC help:** To great extent to follow lead of states; know your ARC representative for your state, your state ARC program manager, and members of local development districts; cross-fertilize services; National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition has new online guide to federal funding for agriculture; if this workshop is helpful, let ARC know; examples of projects in sustainable agriculture that may have ARC potential for funding: asset-based development projects, look at ARC criteria; seed money or catalyst for further development; federal stimulus money for green agriculture-related projects (Georgia Food Policy Council from stimulus); Department of Labor green jobs initiatives; need to be vigilant about keeping sustainable farming at the forefront of green movement.

**How to create sustainable agricultural jobs:** growing interest among young people in sustainable agriculture; poor economy has created an interest; use an integrated production chain as much as possible; wineries are important agritourism businesses; need to evaluate education systems to determine how to interest young people in farming; farming supports incremental job growth; need to shift thinking about job creation in economic development to always include agricultural jobs.

## WEST VIRGINIA ARC WORKSHOP NOTES

### Food Supply and Distribution Issues

\*One challenge is to help farmers and restaurants connect; farmers don't always understand how much supply restaurants need (maybe 3 times what they grow); farm food may be more expensive, scaling up sometimes too hard on farmer.

\*Another challenge is managing regulations for healthy food handling, meat slaughter, etc.; growers need education about GAPs (Good Agricultural Practices), local regulations may also be difficult in interpretation and application.

\*Community development and economic development entities are currently driving the movement to sustainable development but often disconnect with farmers, extension agents, and others.

\*Another challenge is introducing a new, local food product into market; one good newsletter/magazine is Growing for Market.

\*Accessibility and convenience can be problematic for consumers and growers; consumers want food available at grocery store hours; some consumers and farmers don't want to change behavior; most successful operations have pickup places or hubs that are about an hour from a farm to allow for easy aggregation; some consumers want products year round rather than when seasonally available in the local area but that changes with local food markets so people understand prices, availability of certain items, etc.; one farmers market in Ohio started with few consumers but after a time it began to thrive with 150-200 vendors now; people are being attracted more quickly because of national media attention to local food.

\*Bottlenecks exist in certain parts of the local food chain; need to identify and ameliorate the problems in distribution; an example is plenty of slaughterhouses to process a pig but no smokehouses if the consumer wants smoked ham or bacon—an opportunity for agri-preneurs.

\*Roads in the mountains can pose problems and changing fuel prices are a problem.

\*USDA regulations for self-canned items from non-commercial kitchens can often be circumvented by freezing the products and often the regulations are local and not USDA.

\*State departments of agriculture need to help small distributions businesses find distribution points.

\*Assets and opportunities include: farmers markets that now take SNAP cards or vouchers for senior citizens; empty warehouse spaces in many states; small, independent grocery stores willing to work with local farmers; seeing people who are in the local food business as community assets.

\*Strategies include more hubs for aggregation/distribution; community kitchens that meet regulations (though these are difficult to sustain because of cost and competition; renting, borrowing or sharing space (with beverage distributors, for example); solving problems for processing facilities for meat and fish; getting farmers to grow more and greater variety; build on existing distributors; using local branding and developing relationships between local producers and local businesses; identifying local markets (stores and restaurants) and approaching them to form partnerships; education of buyers through news stories, blogs, economic implications of buying local food, establishing nonprofits to help drive the effort; building supply to match demand such as WalMart's pledge to take 25% local produce; building supply to build market (need list of local producers (in-state and neighboring states); reach out to existing producers;

educate farmers on GAP issues; develop virtual communities such as WV Greenup Council, address job and community development ([thegreenaccelerator.org](http://thegreenaccelerator.org)); need more food hubs, need an Appalachian Food Policy Council.

### **Developing Agripreneurs**

- \*Develop networks; educational outreach, market development
- \*Provide education on funding to agricultural programs and online
- \*Teach sustainable agriculture and soil management
- \*Provide information on trends, next hot products
- \*Make sure information is culturally appropriate for interest groups and way to rebuild community
- \*Cooperative, but local, branding
- \*Need equitable access to social capital and funds to create systems
- \*Need equitable and sustainable consumer education to create demand; make food and food production less wasteful, more efficient, more affordable for low income populations; do creative recycling.
- \*Develop complementary businesses in community compatible with small scale, sustainable farming; have to compete with subsidized farms.
- \*Barriers to production and distribution can mean opportunities for entrepreneurs who solve the problems.
- \*Farmers sometimes don't see themselves as small businesses; provide classes at extension sites on accounting, managing regulations, marketing, etc. Appalachian Harvest is a good model; develop curriculum aimed at farmers such as Rural Action's Market Ready/Retail Ready program; regionally tailor curriculum to Appalachia.
- \*Need to overcome resistance to try new ideas and to create confidence.
- \*Educate local, regional communities to value growers and products they produce and see food industry as key part of local economy.
- \*Develop leadership programs specifically around farming and food system development; also develop Followership programs.
- \*Have programs and competitions on agri-preneurship for youth at schools, camps, churches.
- \*Strategies: develop cooperative branding (elect board of directors; start producer organizations; develop human and social capital); marketing strategies need technical support; focus on one product or regional focus; producer and consumer education (develop online printable tool on available resources for producers such as Healthy Family Initiative; facilitate in-person contacts; educate through taste-testing; give free samples; interact with crowds who don't go to farmers markets; educate food stamp recipients on local foods and how to cook them, create multimedia messaging; have in-school demonstrations and field trips for students; increase, "we need more farmers," message and provide education on opportunities in farming); build a story with a strong identity, find a theme, use local community and culture, build value stream; increase farm policy literacy among farmers; have a Match.com for people and local food; get local government and local economic development groups involved in food movement; educate policy makers about local food and farming issues; encourage growers to be part of civic/business groups and engage with Chambers of Commerce; don't ignore "urban" growers and consumers.

## **Increasing Regional Collaboration**

- \*Need education for youth and for farmers (through agricultural extension agents)
- \*Show opportunities; “farming–your next job,” show results, success stories, in local media and blogs on Appalachia
- \*Find match makers to connect farmers and markets
- \*Follow successful models
- \*Develop a toolkit for agriculture agents with “proof” that sustainable, local farming works
- \*Develop a branding through an Appalachian icon
- \*Empower farmers through education and enthusiasm; show them return on investment; Market Maker has those statistics
- \*Create an Appalachian Farmers Network for communication, information-sharing, standards, and disseminate information about joining at feed stores, Southern States, etc.
- \*Show links among food, health, drug use, crime
- \*Barriers to regional cooperation are state and local rules and regulations, lack of business and marketing knowledge among producers, communication barriers
- \*Connect food with economic development and tourism; create a subcommittee on food and tourism within the Appalachian Regional Commission Tourism Advisory Council; broaden the Cast Iron Cook-Off in West Virginia to a regional event.
- \*Foster greater literacy in food production and consumption and valuing of food preservation
- \*Encourage trend to visit/live on farms and help produce food–“come to Appalachia” campaign
- \*Identify and figure out how to use existing infrastructure across state lines.
- \*Identify and connect regional collaborators
- \*Conduct a regional study of gaps and opportunities for local food system development
- \*Need more state organizations to think across state lines and connect regionally; Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project in North Carolina, Appalachian Sustainable Development in Virginia, the Collaborative for the Twenty-first Century Appalachia in West Virginia, Southern Foodways Alliance in Mississippi all reach across state lines.
- \*Need a centralized brand, mission, vision, association
- \*Massive amount of data around many topics (culinary work, economic development, agritourism, etc.) needs to be organized at state and regional levels.
- \*Funding agencies often drive regional collaboration
- \*ARC really only entity that promotes regional collaboration
- \*Civil War Trails project is good model for products and marketing
- \*Need a national media outlet (HGTV in Knoxville or the Food Channel) to do shows on farms and food in Appalachia.
- \*Need regional promotion to national media
- \*Create cultural demand for local foods through regional marketing
- \*Start collaborations among adjacent counties in neighboring states to get the ball rolling
- \*Create a Sister Cities program across the mountains to connect on farming and food best practices and turn into agritourism packages
- \*Develop a central database for agriculture and local food in Appalachia and an agricultural map, using state GIS offices
- \*Create a website with an Appalachian brand and share staffing and funding
- \*Create youth programs across the region, such as Appalachian Farm Apprenticeships, women to women farming, farmer-veteran coalitions.

## Appendix B

- \*Develop a listserv discussion group region-wide on farming and food issues
- \*Create a trade association or investment council



## **NORTH CAROLINA ARC WORKSHOP NOTES**

### **Identifying Assets and Needs**

- \*Develop a resource inventory, working with growers, consumers, NC extension service
- \*Use existing templates
- \*Look at successes and failures
- \*Need to develop more grower-to-wholesale/chef markets
- \*Need permanent tailgate sites and more farmers markets
- \*Assess location of markets; think about language used to describe assets
- \*Survey schools, hospitals, and other mass buyers
- \*Use agricultural census data, community food assessments, and ask key stakeholders
- \*Use the information to do food mapping
- \*Find resources and partners to provide capital
- \*Identify gaps in local food industry
- \*Connect with inventory of tourist assets, branding and marketing
- \*Link local food to local culture of community

### **Developing Infrastructure**

- \*Define infrastructure assets and needs; transportation, distribution, broadband, shared use facilities (kitchens, warehouses, incubators, EBT/SNAP/debit
- \*Conduct feasibility studies on infrastructure
- \*Develop infrastructure in an incremental process
- \*Critical population mass necessary to be effective
- \*Need to have longevity and successional planning
- \*Need to develop leadership infrastructure, not just physical facilities

### **Creating Jobs in Agriculture and Tourism**

- \*First step is to retain jobs, stabilize the agricultural economy
- \*Show farmers how sustainable farming can lead to financial stability, improved community service, and environmental sustainability
- \*Find ways to keep local money in the local community
- \*Factor in ways national energy costs and problems figure in the equation
- \*Marketing and sales need to be separate from farming operation
- \*Demonstrate for local community how food ventures generate traffic, commerce, and taxes
- \*Provide viticultural education
- \*For agritourism, local food restaurants need to be convenient and consistent
- \*Organize local restaurants and chefs to use local food and market it
- \*Use social media to connect growers, consumers, tourists
- \*Use the resources of state government such as local development authorities, departments of commerce, cooperative extension, etc.
- \*Stress the value of certifications such as GAP (Good Agricultural Practice) and organic
- \*Develop a campaign of public education at farmers markets to teach consumers true costs of

## Appendix B

food and value of local food and local relationships

- \*Begin consumer education on local food with children and youth
- \*Use regional templates as guides, such as Appalachian Sustainable Development and Foothills Connect
- \*Learn to drive demand by getting people interested in local food, seasonality; build capacity
- \*Farmers need business plans to increase profitability
- \*Relationships are important; take buyers to farms, connect generations

### **Integrating Regional Cultural Heritage**

- \*Use local knowledge about agriculture and food traditions in planning
- \*Use stories, not just facts, to convince growers, processors, and consumers of benefits of local food system
- \*Combine local music, storytelling, and art with food events
- \*Coordinate farmers markets with calendars of cultural events
- \*Link young or new farmers with existing farmers or landowners who may want to see their land farmed
- \*Find ways to appeal to diverse audiences, to increase numbers of buyers for local food
- \*Identify or develop community college, college, and university courses that use an interdisciplinary approach to understanding food and culture
- \*Farm experiences can sometimes give outdoor skills to troubled youth or just to help create regional identity
- \*Develop multi-farm CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture) and an online ordering platform
- \*Work with local farms, wineries, chefs, food organizations to help educate tastes of consumers, creating passion for local food, then demand.

## TENNESSEE ARC WORKSHOP NOTES

How do we build local-to-local market activity?

- \*use media support, newspaper, radio, television, internet
- \*use church related activities
- \*holding public meetings
- \*choosing one local food item to highlight for one meal
- \*doing local meals to introduce people to farmers and foods
- \*presence at festivals and other local events, such as the Strawberry Festival, the Ramp Festival
- \*Know Your Farmer campaign; East Tennessee State University has photos, oral history, and other materials
- \*need customers and need to be open consistently 5-7 days a week
- \*food stamp grant to double money spent at local farmers markets
- \*need to determine how far farmers can drive to reach aggregation facility

What about pick-your-own sites?

- \*problems with customers who don't treat plants well
- \*put in sections just for that purpose, other sections for farmer's use
- \*use trellises and offer we-pick price
- \*advantage in late season when labor too expensive
- \*U-pick is weather dependent
- \*takes time to build market
- \*berries are better for this than beans
- \*need to have plenty of advertising
- \*winery in Blountville sells grapes
- \*be child friendly
- \*match kind of business to kind of sales you want

What do we do about aging farmers?

- \*training for young farmers
- \*Maverick Farms in Boone, NC is developing program
- \*organic grower's school in Asheville, NC has apprenticeship program
- \*WOOFERS in Greene County is international program
- \*farm incubators
- \*program at Appalachian State University and USDA New or Young Farmers Program
- \*farmer/veteran coalition
- \*sometimes not able to train young people such as in FFA because of liability issues
- \*need to create celebrity farmers
- \*many young people would consider farming if they felt they could stay in their home community, close to family, and make a living.
- \*build on renewed interest in regional traditions
- \*tradition has been for years that farmers have a "day job" but farm because they love it.
- \*need diversification
- \*FFA programs need more support and agricultural classes need more material on entrepreneurship and other business matters
- \*Agricultural extension services are being cut, underfunded; expensive five year learning curve

## Appendix B

for new agents

\*Extension and Departments of Agriculture are very different; departments of ag are about regulation

\*Extension services are operated by state and some funding at local level; hard to convince government for more funding when farmers are only 2% of population.

\*need to influence public policy on agriculture

**NOTES, ARC WORKSHOP, SOUTH CAROLINA**

**Question One: What do you see as the three best assets for your local food economy?**

- Long growing season and climate
- Diversity of products grown
- Population density, diversity, education, interest, purchasing power
- Growing farm base
- Growing demand from knowledgeable and supportive consumers for “local” products
- Multiple organizations involved; good networks
- Natural resources in the area
- Amount of information and technical help available
- Supportive environment for large businesses; strong local economy
- Good communication and collaborative spirit among farmers, consumers, community, especially LiveWell group that has developed strong connections among stakeholder groups
- Supportive state and local government agencies, colleges and universities

**Question Two: What are some specific ways these assets can be strengthened?**

- More education for farmers and consumers and in public schools
- Shift from quantity to quality
- Develop cooperatives and infrastructure (GAPS, insurance, processing, value-added, commercial kitchens)
- Clarify farming and food policies
- Provide affordable training for farmers, food safety training, and an amnesty program for producers and caterers
- Reduce turnover in safety evaluation staff, especially DHEC
- Better land use planning to ensure affordability of farm land and effective use of land space
- Reduce city regulations on community gardens and urban farms; clearer regulatory standards among government agencies and easier accessibility to forms and information
- Increase funding for local food programs and research new funding sources
- Promote community interest groups and events based on agriculture and local food
- Better coordination among existing networks
- More use of high tunnels, greenhouses, cold frames, and water management in summer
- Integrate SNAP benefits into more programs
- Form more public/private partnerships
- Strengthen land-grant system
- Provide more training and financial information

**Question Three: What are the three greatest needs in your local food economy?**

- Progressive system of regulation that fits various sizes of small businesses; farm friendly regulatory environment
- Better collaboration between growers and consumers through educational outreach
- Water, funding, USDA involvement
- Have policy watchdogs who review and translate legislation; advocacy network; reduce apathy

## Appendix B

- Convenient farm to food buyer system
- Grant funding for operational programs, not administration or policy
- Food preparation and distribution networks, including commercial kitchens, storage, transportation
- Increase consumer demand for home cooking, fresh food
- More accessible land for farming, more farms, bigger labor force
- **Question Four: What are some ways you can help address these needs?**
  - Central hub for good business models and other information
  - Developing a farm incubator system, including apprenticeships and internships
  - Improved access to capital (coops, CDFI's, investment clubs, etc.), agriculture specific loan programs, tax benefits for leasing agricultural land
  - Land-link program (CFSA)
  - Have online catalog to promote local foods and specialty foods
  - Conduct feasibility studies
  - Seek major funding from a foundation to promote/market local food
  - County agricultural economic development position
  - Funder-driven collaboration
  - Get farm programs (4H, FFA, etc.) back in public schools and in higher education
  - Reciprocal agreements across states in the region and collaborative effort across agencies, institutions, and private entities targeting community kitchens, value-added products, and tax incentives
  - Develop a media, social media strategy and campaign for programs on local food
  - Become policy watchdogs; join organizations that advocate for local food systems; lobby chambers of commerce for resources
  - Be emissaries for local food system, be vocal and involved.