

Project Description

A robust local food system with year-round markets is paramount for agricultural producers working to meet the high demand for locally grown and produced food. The popularity of local food is evidenced as direct sales to consumers doubled for Indiana growers in the past 20 years, and the number of farmers' markets doubled in the past three years (Indiana Agricultural Statistics 2011-2012). However, sustained growth for local food cannot be solely maintained with seasonal farmers' markets alone.

Indiana imports an estimated 90+% of its food from out of state, yet the Hoosier state has the tenth largest agricultural economy in the US. Hoosiers spend over \$17 billion annually on food, with nearly half of all food dollars spent eating out. Currently, few resources exist for large volume buyers to source locally grown food, even though strong commitment and high demand exists among institutions, grocers, and restaurants. Intentionally developing local food systems will grow the state's economy by capturing a higher proportion of food dollars, which are currently leaving the state due to a lack of infrastructure.

This new extension program, *Rebuilding your Local Food System*, will enable communities to better understand their local food system, engage multiple groups in a dialogue about rebuilding their local food system, and assist with strategic planning for implementing their rebuilding strategy.

If your community is selected for the pilot program, please note that you, as a named applicant, will be a part of the initial Core Group. You will have the opportunity to engage multiple stakeholders in your local food community, and will also have a certain amount of responsibility for the success of the program. It is important for you to understand your role in the process as well as the role of Purdue Extension.

1. As part of the Core Group, you will identify community members from your local food system by developing a working list of stakeholders and categorizing their part in the food system.
2. Play a key role in centralizing communication efforts for the Rebuilding Program and be a main contact person for Purdue Extension.
3. Work with Purdue Extension to participate and lead community meetings that will engage stakeholders in the discussion of food system assets for their community.
4. Secure a location(s) for ongoing community meetings for the Program.
5. Participate in a day-long workshop and networking event and travel to a working food system for a learning workshop in Spring, 2014.
6. Purdue Extension will be available for support, education and guidance and will host/finance the workshop and travel events for the pilot community Core Group.

Please complete the following application and return to the Purdue Extension office in your County (see extension.purdue.edu). The purpose of this application is for the selection committee to understand more about the local food movement in your community. There are no wrong answers. We will evaluate your application based on the success of past community-based programming efforts and the level to which your community participates in local food exchange. We will choose two pilot programs, but will engage those communities not participating by providing educational and extension resources available for local food. For questions on this application, please contact Jodee Ellett, Local Foods Coordinator Purdue Extension, jellett@purdue.edu, 765.494.0349.

Please list the contact information for the Core Group applicants:

Group Leader/Applicant	
Name: Phil Metzler Title: Board Member Organization: Goshen Farmers Market Email: phil@transitiongoshen.org Phone: Website: www.goshenfarmersmarket.org, www.transitiongoshen.org	
Core Group Member	Core Group Member
Name: Kurt Bullard Title: Board Member Organization: Church Community Services Email: Phone: Website: www.churchcommunityservices.org	Name: Phyllis Miller Title: Board Chair Organization: Maple City Market Email: Phone: Website: www.maplecitymarket.com
Core Group Member	Core Group Member
Name: Dale Hess Title: Agroecologist Organization: Merry Lea ELC of Goshen College Email: Phone: Website: merrylea.goshen.edu	Name: Mike Yoder Title: Elkhart County Commissioner Organization: Elkhart County Email: Phone: Website: www.facebook.com/commissionermikeyoder

1. Please identify and *briefly* describe the region, county and/or community covered in this proposal. Please feel free to use data sources such as Stats Indiana and USDA's Census of Agriculture for detailed data.
2. Please describe the current status of 'local food' in your community. This is your chance to identify who is growing and where consumers can buy or enjoy local food and highlight different initiatives going on in your local food community. Feel free to use maps, webpages (e.g., Food Atlas, Market Maker, Local Harvest, etc.), literature, videos and photos, but limit to one page.
3. Describe a challenge that your community has faced, engaged, and overcome. Explain the community's approach to this challenge and how, as a community, the solution was implemented. Please be specific and outline the contributions of individuals, associations and institutions in 600 words or less.
4. What are your 'local food system' aspirations? This may include food supply, distribution, access, safety, processing, storage, health initiatives, economic development, waste recycling or other aspects of a local food system.
5. Please describe the experience of each Core Group member as it relates to local food systems, community development, and other applicable activities that could be useful in implementing this project in your community. 250 word maximum per member.

6. Please check the following and sign the application.

- I have communicated with a member of my local Purdue Extension office that I am submitting an application as a pilot community for the Rebuilding your local food system program.
- Signature/printed name and title of county Extension Educator:

- I/we understand that if accepted we will function as the Core Group for the program and will be able to perform the responsibilities listed above.

Signature/printed name and title of all applicants:

It is the policy of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service that all persons have equal opportunity and access to its educational programs, services, activities, and facilities without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability or status as a veteran.

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1. Please identify and *briefly* describe the region, county and/or community covered in this proposal. Please feel free to use data sources such as Stats Indiana and USDA's Census of Agriculture for detailed data.

We've chosen to define our "food community" as Elkhart County (pop. 200k). Elkhart (pop. 52k) is the primary city, while Goshen (pop. 31k) is the County seat. The rural and urban communities within the County are closely connected yet still have distinct identities and food cultures. While the network of direct producer to consumer markets is rather dispersed and our core team members (and the groups they represent) are mostly focused on the Goshen and Elkhart communities, the prevailing local identity as a County seems to justify this otherwise arbitrary boundary. We recognize that our local foodshed extends throughout the region, but collaborating at a countywide level will enable us to find alignment with the geographic focus of existing key stakeholders and initiatives working at the same scale. While it's presumptuous for any one group to speak for all "local" communities at a County scale, our intention is to extend the current conversations to encompass stakeholders throughout the County.

Elkhart County is a unique composite of agricultural and manufacturing industries, rural and urban communities, large and small-scale farms, and diverse cultural identities punctuated by Amish and Mennonite communities throughout the County and growing ethnic diversity in our cities.

The County is well-situated in north central Indiana, part of the greater Michiana region and Northern Indiana Amish Country. We are conveniently situated between Chicago, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Detroit, Toledo, Fort Wayne, and Indianapolis. Access to these markets, urban and rural work forces, and convenient shipping routes have made the County an attractive home for commerce.

Despite these benefits, Elkhart County has felt the full impact of national economic struggles. Roughly half of the County economy is grounded in the recreational vehicle industry, which suffered greatly during the 2008 recession. Although unemployment has decreased to approximately 9 percent (roughly half of its recent peak), poverty has steadily increased. One recent study ranked Goshen 3rd in the nation among cities with soaring poverty. Food security remains a prominent concern, with 16 percent of residents classified as food insecure.

2. Please describe the current status of ‘local food’ in your community. This is your chance to identify who is growing and where consumers can buy or enjoy local food and highlight different initiatives going on in your local food community. Feel free to use maps, webpages (e.g., Food Atlas, Market Maker, Local Harvest, etc.), literature, videos and photos, but limit to one page.

We’re fortunate to inhabit a diverse agricultural landscape in Elkhart County with a relatively large proportion of small and mid-size farms. The 2007 Agricultural Census identified 186 farms with direct sales to consumers including the following:

Farms with vegetables harvested for fresh market	67	Greenhouse vegetable and fresh herb farms	9
Berry farms	21	Orchard farms	30
CSA farms	9	Small slaughterhouse facilities	2
Agritourism operations	6		

The number of Farmers Markets in Elkhart County has grown from 3 to 7 since 2007. Conversations with local agricultural leaders indicate that as new markets for direct sales have emerged, the amount of farms looking to diversify their production and customer base have also increased. Farm stands are common throughout the County and CSA subscriptions are increasing. The Wakarusa Produce Auction offers direct sales to restaurants, grocers, and institutions, and grocers such as Maple City Market and Martin’s Grocery Stores proudly promote locally grown produce and other products.

Charitable food systems have also generated demand for local produce as food pantries have begun to advocate for greater access to fresh, healthy food (such as the Seed to Feed program highlighted in question 3). Most recently the Goshen Farmers Market collaborated with Maple City Market, The Window of Goshen, and Seed to Feed to produce a series of “Share the Bounty Week” events that raised awareness about local food insecurity and highlighted opportunities to increase access to local food. Commitment to continuing these conversations has been significant.

Grassroots initiatives such as Transition Goshen have initiated dialog about building resilient, community-based food systems by organizing networking events such as an Urban Agriculture Open Space; Connecting Our Local Foodshed; and curating the Lexicon of Sustainability. Local media such as Edible Michiana have played a particularly strong role in generating public interest and support for local food.

Gardening continues to be an important activity in Elkhart County, supported by Extension’s Master Gardeners program and increasing community gardens. Elkhart Local Food Alliance has helped create a network of gardens and people to promote food security and build community. In Goshen alone, we’ve identified at least a dozen community gardens of different structures. Although these may be small contributions to our overall food system, they represent valuable hubs of engaged citizens.

While these snippets offer a sampling of the types of initiatives already underway in Elkhart County, they’re by no means comprehensive. Inventorying our local food assets is a task we’re only beginning, but these examples highlight the quality and character of local food movement in Elkhart County. For a somewhat broader list, please visit: www.transitiongoshen.org/extension.

3. Describe a challenge that your community has faced, engaged, and overcome. Explain the community's approach to this challenge and how, as a community, the solution was implemented. Please be specific and outline the contributions of individuals, associations and institutions in 600 words or less.

A challenge that our community is facing, along with a large number of communities nationwide, is growing food insecurity among our citizens. A household is "food insecure" when its members lack consistent access to adequate food. Sixteen percent of Elkhart County residents are food insecure, and 25 percent of Elkhart County children are food insecure. Hungry students cannot learn, hungry workers cannot work, and hungry parents cannot parent. However, our community has the resources, leadership, and ability to eliminate this growing epidemic.

Supplying those who are in need with unwanted, unsold, or surplus food is only a short-term solution. The best intentions of these donations do not address better nutrition, education with the purpose of better health, transitioning to reliance on local food systems, or the transformation of people's lives to yield an improvement in their quality of life. Church Community Services' Seed to Feed program hopes to provide these solutions.

Seed to Feed began organically two years ago. Several people proposed raising and providing fresh, in-season produce to the guests at local food pantries. Church Community Services, a long-standing organization, was the natural conduit to provide coordination, distribution, and support for this fledgling idea. Seed to Feed's first year, 2012, produced 25,941 pounds of fresh produce from three gardens and \$49,870 from donated cash crops. This year the program has exploded to provide 140,302 pounds of produce from seven gardens and additional donors, 9,645 pounds of local meat and eggs, and \$51,363 dollars through donated crops. The funds were partially used to purchase over 10,000 pounds of local produce at The Wakarusa Produce Auction. Just in the first two years, Seed to Feed has logged over 7,800 volunteer hours, started a Kid's Cooking Club, hosted nutrition lessons involving Purdue Extension, participated in workshops in coordination with Elkhart Local Food Alliance, and provided recipes to pantry guests who will use the produce.

Our community's response to the challenge of food insecurity and Seed to Feed's efforts have been amazing. The gardening community has responded with seed, fertilizer, greenhouse space, plants, knowledge, volunteer hours, and produce donations. The farming community has donated soil tests, fertilizer, land, weed control, harvesting, trucking, and marketing. Several churches have started gardens on their own property, volunteered in the community gardens, promoted the program in their congregations, and have financially supported our efforts. School participation included 140 St. Thomas middle school students harvesting potatoes, and Fairfield High School and Northwood High School FFA programs helping in the gardens. Purdue Extension has provided support, in addition to the earlier mentioned recipes and nutrition program. We have volunteers in direct coordination with program areas of gardening, livestock, volunteer coordination, and crop production.

The goals for 2014 include increased garden locations, increased planning in variety selection to align with pantry needs, increased community food pantry participation

through survey implementation and result analysis, and an extension of growing season through technique usage and double cropping. The livestock segment goals include determining how to include producers in the community and determining selection of donated land and animals. The crop production segment goals include implementing a financial sustainability plan, determining viability of each land donation, and increasing producer donations.

The part of the charge that is incomplete is that the challenge that has been "overcome." Many small goals have been realized, but the challenge of eliminating food insecurity in our local community is an ongoing process whose success can only be measured by the reduction of needed services, families who have been helped, and individuals who have improved their lives. Our community is ready for the challenge.

4. What are your 'local food system' aspirations? This may include food supply, distribution, access, safety, processing, storage, health initiatives, economic development, waste recycling or other aspects of a local food system.

We appreciate the challenges and opportunities associated with rebuilding local food systems and value Purdue Extension's leadership in this area. The "Rebuilding your Local Foodshed" program would help us continue networking unique stakeholders and grassroots initiatives and convening conversations about our local "foodshed". As we facilitate fresh connections between the local food movement and the larger agricultural community, our goal will be to find common ground around opportunities for economic development and addressing food insecurity.

We understand that food systems are uniquely complex and involve much more than producers and consumers. Because food systems include broad webs of interdependent relationships, we are seeking to address them qualitatively as well as quantitatively. Our initial goals in facilitating this process are:

- to establish a common language about local food to strengthen conversation;
- to inventory and map our local food assets to facilitate continued networking and provide a base for local food guides.
- to initiate a food assessment for Elkhart County that will provide baseline data with which to justify and monitor improvements to local food production, markets, and infrastructure.

We see these steps as foundational to the larger tasks of improving access to local food and mitigating food insecurity. It's still too early to predict what the best leverage points for spurring the rebuilding process may be, but we can continue to build on the successes of existing initiatives such as Seed to Feed, Wakarusa Produce Auction, and our local Farmers Markets. Thorough asset mapping and assessment will then enable us to identify potential niches and specific opportunities to rebuild local food infrastructure.

We believe the intersection of manufacturing and agriculture in Elkhart County provides fertile ground for innovation and collaboration towards rebuilding our local food system, recognizing this process as both a challenge and an opportunity. We have the physical, financial, and cultural resources necessary to get things done. Once we have brought the community to the table and assessed our current context and assets, we'll be in a strong position to strategically rebuild the many specific components of our food system, including storage, processing, and distribution.

5. Please describe the experience of each Core Group member as it relates to local food systems, community development, and other applicable activities that could be useful in implementing this project in your community. 250 word maximum per member.

Kurt Bullard

The interest and experience that I have for local food systems is deeply based in my family history. Both sets of my grandparents were farmers that supplied food locally, and my parents were also farmers that grew and supplied food to our immediate area. After graduating from Purdue with an agronomy degree, I returned to our farm and transitioned from grain farming to vegetable farming strictly due to agriculture economic reality during the 1980's.

After 23 years of engaging all aspects of local vegetable marketing, I have returned to grain farming and decided to help with the local problem of food insecurity by using my experience to assist in the production of vegetables with the purpose of supplying our local food pantries' guests with fresh produce. I helped start, and continue to provide leadership in, the Seed to Feed Program in order to accomplish this goal. The Seed to Feed program also involves education, volunteer participation, community involvement, and coordination of all the food pantries of Elkhart County. I believe this pilot project mirrors the efforts that we are already undertaking and will accelerate and magnify the expected results.

Martin "Mike" Yoder

Born and raised in Elkhart County on a dairy farm near Middlebury.

Graduated from Michigan State University Institute of Agricultural Technology in 1974.

Moved back to the family farm in 1978 to start a dairy farming operation.

In addition to owning Crystal Valley Dairy Farms, he is serving in his third term as Elkhart County Commissioner

Served in leadership positions on the board of directors of the Indiana Farm Bureau Inc., Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance Companies and is past President of the Indiana Professional Dairy Producers Assn. Also served one year as a member of the Indiana Department of Agriculture's advisory committee representing the dairy industry and farmland preservation interests. Other past state agriculture boards and organizations include Indiana Soybean Alliance and Indiana Farm Bureau Dairy Policy Advisory Committee.

Family includes his wife Rhonda, an elementary music teacher, Lindsay and Grant Williams and grandson Alex, Tasha and James Nichols.

Mike has worked with leaders in Elkhart County and North Eastern Indiana, to preserve farms and farmland. The American Farmland Trust recognized these efforts in 2000 when he was selected to receive the Land Steward of the Year award. He is currently serving as chairman of the Wood Land Lakes Land Trust. A land trust dedicated to working with farmers to preserve productive farm land in northern Indiana. The land trust currently holds conservation easements on approximately 10,000 acres.

Phyllis Miller

A Registered Nurse employed at Elkhart General Hospital for over 30 years. As an RN, has had experience in Critical Care, Home Care, Hospice & Clinical Informatics. Experienced in quality initiatives achieving a LEAN Green Belt. In her current position of Clinical Decision Support, Billing & Systems Analyst, is coordinating a Patient Safety Initiative at EGH with the national Hospital Engagement Network. Has also held a certification in Project Management.

Acquired her Masters in Public Administration from IUSB, with a focus in Public and Community Management.

Was born and raised in Middlebury Indiana on a small farm where she gained a love for the country, healthy food & hard work. This farm provided fruit, vegetables, livestock including meat & dairy for her family.

Has been an Owner / Member of Maple City Market Cooperative Grocery in Goshen for over 15 years. In 2011 she was elected to the Board of Directors. In 2013 appointed as Chair. Involvement with Maple City Market as a key partner with others in this community as we move toward rebuilding our local food systems. MCM has defined goals of achieving healthy people, planet and commerce in our community, by promoting accessible and affordable healthy food, locally produced & promoting locally-owned cooperative business models.

Phil Metzler

Moved to Goshen in July of 2011 from Boulder, Colorado, where he was actively involved in progressive food localization efforts. Has since networked extensively with local groups and individuals working to strengthen local economies and food systems, improve education, build healthier communities, and nurture a sense of place. Co-founded Transition Goshen to initiate creative projects bringing these contacts together and helping connect local resources to local needs. Through Transition Goshen, has collaborated with local facilitators and organizations using a variety of social technologies, fundraising tools, and awareness raising campaigns to convene community conversations.

Currently serves as Treasurer for the Goshen Farmers Market, which has operated year-round for more than 12 years and represents a connecting point for community members, growers, and craftspeople.

Has a M.S. in Civil Engineering and worked as a consultant domestically and abroad before switching to construction. His technical background is complemented by a design

certificate in permaculture, which orients him towards systems-based solutions that tend to be interdisciplinary and ecologically-oriented. Embraces the challenge of building community-based food systems as an opportunity to find holistic solutions that model collaboration.

Dale Hess

Dale is a plant pathologist and graduate of Purdue University who evolved into an agroecologist through more than a decade of crop protection research among subsistence farmers in West Africa. He directs and teaches in the Agroecology Summer Intensive program at Merry Lea's Rieth Village and teaches the botany course at Goshen College. His work led to the creation of the Merry Lea Sustainable Farm in 2013. Dale joined the Merry Lea faculty in 2004."

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, Genetics and Plant Breeding, 1989
M.Sc. Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, Plant Pathology, 1984
B.A. Millersville State College, Millersville, PA, Biology, 1976
University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Short-term student, School of Science, 1975-76

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

2011-Present	Agroecologist and Ecological Field Station Director, Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen College, P.O. Box 263, Wolf Lake, IN 46796
2004-2010	Agroecologist and Collegiate Program Director, Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen College, P.O. Box 263, Wolf Lake, IN 46796
2001-03	Visiting Assistant Professor, Agronomy Department, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907
1996-01	Principal Scientist, International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), B.P. 320, Bamako, Mali
1990-95	Principal Scientist, ICRISAT, B.P. 12404, Niamey, Niger
1989-90	Postdoctoral Research Associate, Department of Biochemistry, Purdue University
1988-89	Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Agronomy, Purdue University
1986-88	Research Associate, Projet d'Appui à la Recherche Agricole, B.P. 429, Niamey, Niger
1985-86	Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Agronomy, Purdue University
1982-84	Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Botany and Plant Pathology, Purdue University