

## **Curry County: Community Food Assessment results 2015**

### **Opportunities in Agriculture**

1. Facilitate and increase institutional purchasing of local food by creating a connection between local farmers, ranchers, and fishermen and the institutions in our region. That way food production at a local level will have a greater capacity for growth and new markets can be created

- Identify institutional buyers throughout Curry County and beyond – K–12 schools, Head Start programs, colleges, hospitals, assisted living facilities and restaurants.
- Identify producers throughout Curry County (Curry County Local Food Guide can assist with this).
- Identify barriers for producers in selling products to institutions and for institutions in purchasing products from producers.
- Address ways to overcome barriers to local purchasing.
- Establish a platform to connect farmers with institutional buyers.

2. Identify, encourage, and provide information for producers interested in value added opportunities of their raw food products.

- Producers who can benefit from value added products include farmers, ranchers, harvesters and fishermen.
- Identify the economic value and impact of value added products (provide more local food options for local consumers, increase income for producers etc.).
- Identify value added grant opportunities and connect potentially interested farmers with opportunities.
- Connect producers with value added trainings and webinars;
  - Local and value added curriculum including classes and workshops have been developed by NeighborWorks Umpqua in Douglas County. This is a chance to partner and utilize their resources or create similar curriculum for Curry County.

3. Identify, examine, and promote the economic impact of sourcing local food for the county.

- Not everyone realizes or understands the positive impact distributing and purchasing local food can have on the local economy. This topic has been researched in other communities and should be addressed in Curry County. There could be a study conducted to research the extent of the effect of local food purchasing. This would provide more information and a better case for marketing the importance of local food purchasing to the county.

4. Generate farmer-to-farmer networking opportunities, especially for small-scale farmers and beginning farmers.

- A common theme when talking with farmers throughout Curry County was a desire to connect with each other and have more learning opportunities such as workshops, farm tours, equipment sharing, work parties, identifying funding opportunities, potlucks, and more.

5. Conduct feasibility studies for meat processing and for cranberry marketing.

- A feasibility study was conducted in 2011 for the construction of a USDA Inspected Meat Processing Plant in Coos and Curry Counties. Unfortunately, the family business interested in taking on this project decided the venture was too expensive.
- An alternative to this large venture could be forming satellite cut and wrap operations. How it works is local quarter and half beefs are purchased from slaughterhouses and cut and wrapped by local butchers for local retail sale. Laura Gwin at Oregon State University would be a great contact to discuss the feasibility of satellite cut and wrap operations for Coos and Curry County.
- According to local producers, the Oregon South Coast cranberry is a superior product with its deeper red hue and sweeter taste. There could be research conducted on our cranberries confirming this belief and a feasibility study to determine alternative marketing potential for our cranberry product.

6. Continue to update and expand the [Curry County Local Food Guide](#).

- The main goal of creating the guide is to assist Curry County residents and tourists in accessing fresh, locally produced food and help local producers market their products to consumers. The guide could expand to include restaurants that serve local foods, processors, more local producers, farm stands, and U-pick options, map of producers, and much more.

7. Identify storage and processing facilities available in Curry County and research the feasibility of building larger-scale storage and processing facilities.

- There may be enough small-scale storage and processing facilities available in Curry County. However, the facilities may not be well advertised and locals may not know they exist or how to access them. Creating a list of storage and processing facilities throughout our area and marketing the list could be beneficial for producers.
- After identifying what exists, we may find there is not enough of these facilities to fulfill the needs of our producers. A feasibility study for larger-scale storage and processing could be conducted.

## **Opportunities in Fishing**

1. The ports in Port Orford, Gold Beach, and Brookings are currently creating and implementing strategic plans focused on renewing and improving infrastructure to primarily support the commercial fishing industry, but also recreational fishing.

- The strategic plans were not available to the public during the time the assessment was first written. Including this information in the assessment would help better identify opportunities for the fishing industry.

2. More education and outreach about the commercial fishing industry should be provided to schools and to the community. There should be more information about types of fisheries

caught in Curry County, where to buy local seafood, fishing seasons, regulations, and cooking classes focused on how to prepare seafood.

3. There are fish such as Albacore tuna that can be sold by the fishermen directly off of their boats if the fishermen have the correct licenses. More marketing efforts should be made to inform the public about fishermen who sell directly off their boats to consumers, the types of fish available for purchase, and the timeframe this usually occurs.

4. Investigate Boat to School grant possibilities for school districts.

5. A thorough assessment focused directly on the local commercial fishing industry could be conducted to identify feasible projects.

- Identify grants available to fishermen
- Improve communication and engagement among the public, local government, and commercial fishermen.
- Identify access to market opportunities for local fishermen.

### **Opportunities in Community Food Access**

1. Encourage an increase in participation for those eligible for [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#).

- In 2009, 6,476 individuals qualified for SNAP benefits, but only 3,452 individuals signed up and received benefits. If all who qualified to receive SNAP would have participated in the program, it would have meant benefits for an additional 2,824 individuals, who would have the spending power of an additional \$2,143,286 .
- Encouraging an increase in SNAP participation will benefit those who are at risk of hunger; it will bring more federal money to the area; and it will support stores and farmers' markets where SNAP benefits are accepted (Addressing Hunger, 2010).

2. Encourage stores and farmers' markets that do not accept SNAP benefits to do so.

- Identify barriers to accepting SNAP and host workshops for managers to help address these barriers
- Encourage farmers' markets and stores that accept SNAP to provide more outreach about how to use SNAP at the market
- Recruit one new farmers' market to accept SNAP by 2015. (For example, Curry Grown and Crafted out of Gold Beach would like to accept SNAP at the farmers' market, but the manager mentioned she is not sure what to do.)

3. Increase nutrition and cooking education throughout Curry County

- Identify organizations currently providing nutrition and cooking education in Curry County, such as [OSU Extension](#) with their food preservation program. Provide marketing assistance so there is greater outreach to the public about what is currently being offered.
- Identify the gaps in nutrition and cooking education for the county.

- Partner with existing organizations to develop curriculum to cover the gaps. Or, find already developed curriculum from organizations, such as [Share Our Strength](#) with their Cooking Matters at the Store Tours
4. Increase educational efforts for local foraging opportunities.
    - Curry County has an abundance of options, including clamming, fishing, mushroom foraging, and wild game hunting. For those experiencing barriers to accessing food, foraging allows individuals the opportunity to access food, usually just for the price of a license.
    - Identify foraging classes and educational materials available in the community to assist community members in acquiring foraging knowledge and skills.
  5. Explore the feasibility of creating a gleaners group.
    - As previously mentioned, there are no formal gleaning groups in Curry County, though several people interviewed showed interest in being a part of one. Gleaning groups pick surplus fruits and vegetables off the grower's property and donate the extra food to community organizations, schools, food bank, or food pantries.
    - Identify if there is enough interest to create a formal gleaning group and who could coordinate the group.

### **Opportunities in Community Food Efforts**

1. Create and support a food system council or coalition of regional stakeholders.
  - The council should be comprised of stakeholders from all facets of the food system including farmers, ranchers, fishermen, nonprofit organizations, city government, interested citizens, retailers, and distributors.
  - As there will be one Resource Assistance for Rural Environments AmeriCorps member next year for Coos and Curry Counties, it was decided the coalition should represent a united Coos & Curry food system council.
  - Those involved with creating the council should host planning workshops to gather interested stakeholders and create a strategic plan for 2014-2015.
  - Identify needs within the county that are not currently being addressed by other organizations. Focus on finding ways to address and take action on those needs.
  - This council could serve as an incubator to help initiate regional food system projects.
2. Increase communication and partnerships between all involved in the food system.
  - Increase communication between existing food-oriented organizations.
  - Create one website for everything Coos/Curry Foods.
  - Continue to update the Curry County Local Food Guide.
3. Increase community food system outreach and education.
  - Plan service-learning opportunities and field trips to share gardening strategies for citizens interested in learning about growing in their own backyard garden.

- Sponsor community meals featuring locally sourced food where attendees can learn about area farmers who supplied food, where to access these local foods, how to cook what is being served nutrition of foods being prepared, etc.
- Organize informational booths at Farmers' Markets, fairs, festivals, and other community events.
- Continue to update and expand Curry Local Food Guide.
- Continue to manage Curry Local Foods Facebook page.
- Continue to update and manage Curry Local Foods website.

#### 4. Increase visibility of local food in grocery stores, co-ops, and markets.

- The grocery stores, co-ops, and markets throughout Curry County do provide local foods for purchase. It would be a good idea to assess the foods that are currently stocked in each of the retail outlets in the county.
- Retail outlets could increase marketing around those local foods, such as having a 'local food only shelf', in-store displays listing the local food options and profiles of the farms, and in-store samples of the local foods available for purchase.

#### 5. Community Outreach

- Nurture food-based educational opportunities through existing organizations and groups.
- Coordinate events and programs around local foods (expert speakers, Farm dinners, Farm tours, gleaning opportunities).
- Write press releases, newsletters, Facebook pages, and Website updates.

#### 6. Increase food systems and garden education to school districts throughout Curry County.