



The Local Food Economy: An Expanding Source of Jobs and Prosperity for NS Communities

By David Van Seters, President Sustainability Ventures

Three enterprises illustrate the local food economy in action



100,000 lbs of food + 150 jobs for youth in downtown Vancouver



\$6 million revenues, food box + kitchen + school program + food justice + mobile market in Toronto



200 varieties of crops on 300 acres and 13 greenhouses in Milwaukee

The local food economy offers many benefits



- ❑ Better health from fresher, local food
- ❑ Revitalization of downtown areas
- ❑ Urban farms produce 13x more jobs per acre
- ❑ **+** Good jobs for people with barriers to employment
- ❑ Sustainable enterprises for new entrepreneurs
- ❑ Great local tax revenues
- ❑ Opportunities to build community through food
- ❑ A hedge against rising fuel prices

With benefits this good, why no plan?

- ❑ Few communities do any food planning
- ❑ Most have never tried to quantify the size of their local food economy
- ❑ Many would be surprised and impressed if they did



Understand your local food economy

- ❑ Identify the value of local food produced, processed and/or sold
- ❑ Calculate the jobs, taxes, indirect employment and other benefits
- ❑ Look at all food channels (retail, food service, restaurants, and direct-to-retail outlets - farmer's markets and home delivery)
- ❑ Identify potential gaps and market malfunctions in the local food picture



Go beyond gardens and markets

- ❑ Most local food initiatives start and end with community gardens and farmer's markets
- ❑ A broader view uncovers many opportunities
- ❑ Initiatives that integrate retail, distribution, processing, education and food-related office are the hallmark of local food economy 2.0
- ❑ The result: A virtuous cycle of job creation, entrepreneurship, community spirit and local pride

Local Food is Miles Better

Size up the local food shift

- Once you have figured out how big your local food economy is, now figure out how big it could get
- A study of a 16 country region in NE Ohio looking at a 25% shift to local food provides the answer:

+

REALLY BIG!

- If the north shore achieved similar results, 175 new jobs and \$175 million in new economic activity would be created

How can communities better support the local food economy

- ❑ Introduce new zoning policies and tax incentives
- ❑ Encourage food infrastructure facilities
- ❑ **+** Introduce new regulations
- ❑ Create a municipal food bond
- ❑ Foster connections between community members



Local food connection ideas

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Thanks for listening

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