

Community Food System

Current Research

Iowa State has very good research we can utilize to facilitate financing and underwriting healthy food retail projects. When I worked with them 2006 through 2008, a focus was on the economic impact of a regional based food system. The research shows positive benefits to rural areas.

http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/research/marketing_files/seiowa.html

<http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs/staff/prices/prices.pdf>

South Dakota is capitalizing on this research to evaluate the economic impact in our state. The work done for Value Added Agriculture Development Center (VAADC) and Buy Fresh Buy Local (BFBL) is also providing evidence of positive benefits. The most accessible market currently is about 10% of the market, which is \$146,000,000 in South Dakota. If the farmer received 15%, it is \$22,000,000 back to local economies. The extended benefits really add up when processing and distribution are factored in. (*takes 45 seconds to load*)

http://www.bfblsd.org/uploads/Community_Foods_Presentation.pdf

The distribution issue is well documented and presents challenges. The VAADC meeting in Central South Dakota was focused on the positive economic impact the two grocery stores have on the community. Local food system is a disruption in terms of outright competition to distributor minimum buying requirements. The food deserts and lack of fresh produce in many rural areas are the direct result of an extremely efficient logistics system. The issue is this logistics system is based on cheap energy. Energy is not going to stay cheap. Communities need to find ways to have profitable grocery stores with local food supply. Start with community gardens which will provide excess produce to sell at local farmers markets. As the community becomes comfortable with the farmers market, perhaps the school or nursing home may purchase local food. The key is to start now before the next energy crisis forces change on us.

<http://www.cfra.org/newsletter/2009/11/sustaining-small-town-grocery-stores-part-ii>

<http://www.soc.iastate.edu/extension/pub/posters/RuralFoodDeserts.pdf>

VAADC and BFBL are working on community food systems. The following link is to a grant *M2011-03 Research and Development of an On-Line Local Foods Buying Club Cooperative in Iowa*. This is very similar to what is being done in South Dakota.

http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/compgrants/MFSI_grant_updates_3-31-2011.pdf

