

THE MICHIGAN GOOD FOOD REPORT CARD 2016



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Michigan Good Food Report Card 2016. This document highlights some of the many successes that are transforming the food system to be more healthy, green, fair and affordable and provides new data collected since the 2014 Michigan Good Food Report Card.¹ This 2016 report card demonstrates the significant increase in the number of activities and collaborations working towards the goals of the Michigan Good Food Charter over the last two years.

The Michigan Good Food Steering Committee is a group of committed good food advocates that represent more than 20 organizations across the state. Their work provides oversight and leadership of the Good Food Initiative. In 2016, the Steering Committee focused on policy, racial equity, shared measurement and gaps in the work towards the goals of the Charter.

Since its release, the Charter has helped catalyze a suite of new networks around specific aspects of its goals and many existing networks and initiatives have infused Charter goals into their activities. These include shared learning spaces for innovation and capacity building like: the Michigan Food Hub Network, the Michigan Farm to Institution Network, the Michigan Meat Network and the Michigan Local Food Council Network, among a number of others. The Michigan State University (MSU) Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS) acts as a backbone organization by helping to facilitate communication, collaboration and data collection across this network of networks.

MSU CRFS continues to partner with the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition to implement a shared measurement system to enable partners across the state to collect similar data to better understand progress on key indicators for the Charter goals, both locally and statewide.^{2,3} After extensive stakeholder engagement, the initiative began by hosting a series of trainings and workshops. In 2016, the focus moved to three priority areas: helping support the Cultivate Michigan data collection to track institutional purchases of Michigan food; initiating a healthy food access survey pilot in three communities (Battle Creek, Ypsilanti and Pontiac) and exploring opportunities to assess the economic impact of local food systems.



Photo courtesy of Chuk Nowak for Fair Food Network



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GOALS

Have we made progress towards the six goals?

Goal 1: Michigan institutions will source 20% of their food products from Michigan growers, producers and processors.

- Interest from school service directors in purchasing local foods remains high.
- Since 2014, the Michigan Department of Education has added an optional two-part question to the School Nutrition Program application within the Michigan Electronic Grants System Plus (MEGS+) online application system. Response rate to questions is greatly improved (81 of Michigan's 83 counties were represented) which enables better monitoring of the local purchasing patterns of Michigan schools.⁴
- 54% of the food service directors that responded to the MDE questions for the 2014-2015 year indicated that they source local Michigan foods for their school food program.⁵
- As of October 1, 2016, 52 institutions have joined the Cultivate Michigan campaign,⁶ pledging to purchase 20% of their food from Michigan sources by 2020. Since the beginning of the campaign, participating institutions have reported spending more than 3 million on Michigan grown or produced food.
- According to Farm Logix,⁷ Michigan schools spent \$218,624 on Michigan-grown apples, representing nearly 37% of what they spent on produce in school year 2015-2016 through the USDA Pilot Project for Procurement of Unprocessed Fruits and Vegetables.

Goal 2: Michigan farmers will profitably supply 20% of all Michigan institutional, retailer and consumer food purchases and be able to pay fair wages to their workers.

- Market demand for local produce continues, but measures of profitability, and farm worker wages in meeting that demand, are limited.
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the mean annual wage of farming, fishing and forestry occupations in Michigan increased to \$31,390⁸ in 2015 from \$28,560⁹ in 2012.
- The Double Up Food Bucks Program in Michigan has continued to receive funding, which in turn has supported Michigan farmers as they supply consumer food purchases. In 2015, the Food Insecurity Nutrition Program and private funds provided \$10.4 million, directing healthy foods to low income neighborhoods and sales to Michigan farmers.¹⁰
- SpartanNash is the first food distributor in Michigan to sign Migrant Legal Aid's Fair Food Pledge, affirming the company's commitment to fair labor practices for the state's more than 94,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families.

Goal 3: Michigan will generate new agrifood businesses at a rate that enables 20% of food purchased in Michigan to come from Michigan.

- Launched in 2015, the Michigan Good Food Fund is a \$30 million public-private partnership loan fund that provides financing and business assistance to good food enterprises that benefit underserved communities across Michigan.¹¹



Photo courtesy of Sprout Urban Farms

GOALS

Goal 4: Eighty percent of Michigan residents will have easy access to affordable, fresh, healthy food, 20% of which is from Michigan sources.

- According to Feeding America’s Map the Meal Gap (2014 data), nearly 1.6 million people (1,559,020) in Michigan are food insecure, or 15.7% of the population. Approximately 25% of these individuals are above the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program threshold of 200% of poverty.¹²
- According to The Food Trust, over 1.8 million Michigan residents, including an estimated 300,000 children, live in lower-income communities with limited supermarket access.¹³
- Preliminary analysis of data from the 2013 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance (BRFS) survey, indicates approximately seven percent of adults in Michigan think it is difficult to find fresh fruits and vegetables in their neighborhood and limited transportation is a problem in accessing produce all or some of the time for 12 percent of the population.¹⁴ Additional data from the 2015 BRFS survey on perceived ability to access healthy food is expected later this year.
- More than 650,000 Michigan households receive SNAP benefits (17% of total households in the state). More than 20% of households receive SNAP benefits in 16 of Michigan’s 83 counties but more than a quarter (26.2%) of all households receiving SNAP in Michigan are in Wayne county.¹⁵

Goal 5: Michigan Nutrition Standards will be met by 100% of school meals and 75% of schools selling food outside school meal programs.

The voluntary Michigan Nutrition standard adopted by the Michigan State Board of Education in 2010, encouraged schools to start improving the healthfulness of food and beverages served and sold to students, paving the way for them to meet the requirements of the new, mandatory federal standards. The updated USDA standards implemented in 2012 to meet the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act, are similar to the Michigan Nutrition Standards in many ways, but the state level guidelines also apply to foods sold or provided outside of school hours, which is not true of the USDA standards. The USDA standards also only apply to schools participating in the National School lunch and breakfast programs.

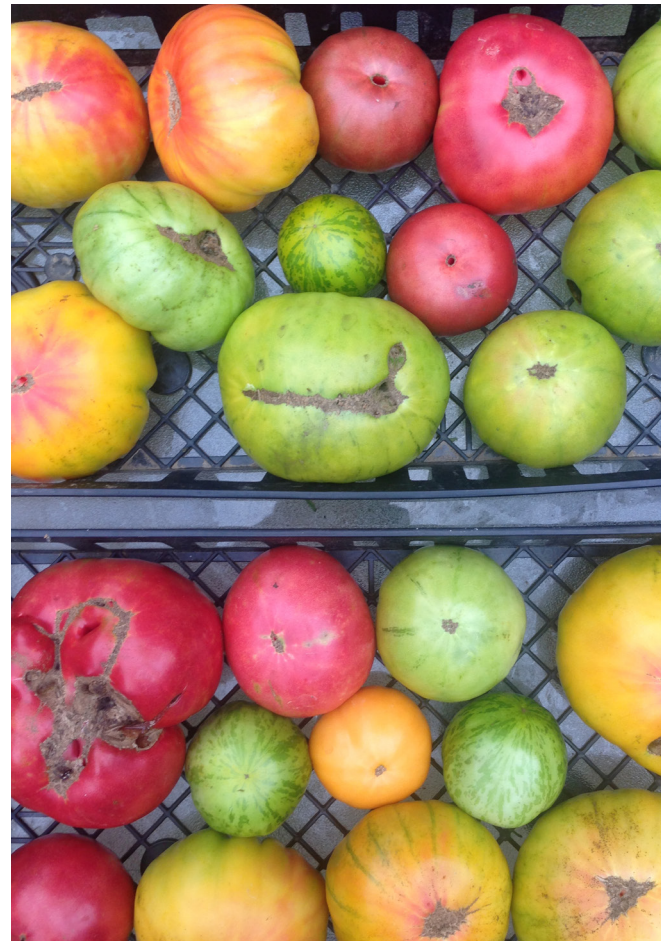


Photo by Kathleen Reed

The Michigan Good Food Steering committee met in July 2016 and agreed to maintain focus on both the state and federal nutrition standards. They agreed that while federal standards provide an outline of good food in schools, the Michigan Nutrition Standards are more comprehensive and should continue to be something that schools can work towards for better school meal programs.

- Nearly all of Michigan’s 865 (99.9%) school food authorities were certified for performance-based reimbursement as of March 2016,¹⁶ meaning they were in compliance with the federal standards for school meal programs.
- According to a 2014 CDC survey, 66% of Michigan secondary schools sold unhealthy food and beverages outside the school meals program, unchanged from 2012. However, only 23% of Detroit secondary schools sold these same unhealthy foods and beverages.¹⁷

GOALS

Goal 6: Michigan schools will incorporate food and agriculture into the preK through 12th grade curriculum for all Michigan students and youth will have access to food and agriculture entrepreneurial opportunities.

- A 2015 survey¹⁸ of pre-K through 12th grade teachers looked at resources teachers utilize for food, nutrition or agricultural education. This work may help improve existing programs to meet the needs of teachers incorporating food and agriculture into the curriculum. With nearly 2000 respondents, the survey showed:
 - 69% of teachers were interested in incorporating at least one new food, nutrition or agricultural topic into their teaching curriculum if resources were available to assist them.
 - 81% of teachers were already incorporating a food or agricultural topic into their classroom, not including healthy eating and nutrition.
 - Healthy eating and nutrition was the most widely incorporated topic (71%).
 - Over half of respondents, ranging from 55% to 89% depending on the program, had not heard of or were unfamiliar with 15 of the 17 programs and organizations listed which provide food, nutrition or agricultural education resources for teachers.
 - Michigan State University Extension and 4-H were the only two resources which over half of the respondents were familiar with.
 - 94% of respondents indicated that it was important that a resource have no fee associated with using it.

- In Michigan, FFA¹⁹ for grades 7-12 reported 7,587 members during the 2015-16 school year, up nearly 800 students from 6,804 members during the 2014-15 school year. In addition to FFA involvement, over 10,000 Michigan secondary students were enrolled in an Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR) course during the 2014-2015 school year.
- According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), 95% of secondary schools in Michigan with a required course on health education (87.3% of schools) tried to increase student knowledge on nutrition and dietary behavior. However, fewer than half (48.5%) covered all 20 nutrition and dietary behavior topics measured by the CDC.



Photo courtesy of Detroit Food Academy



Photo by Jude Barry

AGENDA PRIORITIES

What is the status of the 25 agenda priorities?

The successes reported under the agenda priorities here relate to the strategies articulated for each agenda priority in the Michigan Good Food Charter. For further details please see www.michiganfood.org.

AGENDA PRIORITIES SCORE

Being Implemented: 12 priorities x 3 points = 36
 Gaining Momentum: 9 priorities x 2 points = 18
 Slow Progress: 4 priorities x 1 point = 4
 Minimal Action: 0 priorities x 0 points = 0

58 points out of 75 possible

In the 2012 report card, the score reported was 42 and in the 2014 report card, the score reported was 47.

Being Implemented

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#1 - Expand and increase innovative methods to bring healthy foods to underserved areas

Strategies to improve healthy food access in Michigan continue to grow. In addition to the 300 farmers markets statewide, community garden initiatives, and more, programs such as Double Up Food Bucks, Prescription for Health, and Cooking Matters, are helping increase access to good food in underserved areas.

The Flint Fresh Mobile Market, a van delivering fresh Michigan produce to communities with limited food access, was launched in August 2016. This mobile market, run by the the owners of The Local Grocer, a new grocery store in Flint, was modelled off the successes of the Grand Rapids YMCA Veggie Van.

Hurley Children’s Center is writing prescriptions for fruits and vegetables at the Flint Farmers Market. In October 2015, the Hurley team received a grant entitled “Take One Apple Twice a Day: Integrating Nutrition Services for At-Risk Children” to subsidize the writing of these healthy food prescriptions. This grant was a part of the healthcare provision and healthy eating connection to the pediatric clinic’s move to the Flint Farmers Market last year. Increasing certain nutrients through healthy eating is known to help mitigate potential lead damage in children.

Hoophouses for Health, a program designed to increase access to fresh, local fruits and vegetables for vulnerable families, while at the same time expanding the season extension capacity of Michigan farmers, had 43 participating farmers in 2015. Loan repayment totaled \$79,864 in 2015, which is equivalent to the value of local foods distributed to vulnerable families in Michigan. 1,400 families received Hoophouses for Health vouchers.

Since 2012, when the Michigan Food Hub Network with funding from the Kresge Foundation, began hosting state-wide meetings and surveying attendees, nearly all Network members have consistently expressed interest in supplying food to underserved, low-income communities. In the November 2015 Network meeting evaluation, conducted by evaluation consultant Mark Lelle, 54% of attendees noted that they are working with a food hub that is actively trying to supply food to vulnerable communities.

Since 1990, the Food Bank Council of Michigan (FBCM) has been working with farmers to procure unmarketable produce surplus through the Michigan Agricultural Surplus System (MASS) program. These nutritious foods are then made available to local pantries, soup kitchens and shelters. In 2015, the Food Bank Council provided 9,066,863 pounds through the MASS program.

Michigan Farm to Food Bank, also run through FBCM, coordinated with Michigan farmers to have them grow for a specific food bank within 100 miles of their farm. FBCM supplied an additional 9,230,718 pounds of produce to seven partner food banks through a grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Foundation. The vast majority of this produce was grown in Michigan.

AGENDA PRIORITIES**#2 – Improve school food environments**

Federal Smart Snacks in Schools standards took effect in July 2014, and are now required for all schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program.

Michigan Senate Bill 139, now Public Act 42 of 2015, requires the Department of Education to establish an upper limit on the number and frequency of fund-raising activities during school hours that would allow the sale of food or beverages not meeting Federal nutritional standards, and requires the upper limit to be not less than two such activities per week. Prior to passage of this law, the Department of Education, as allowed under the called the federal “Smart Snacks in School” rule, did not allow any exemptions from Federal nutritional standards for school fund-raisers.

Businesses such as FarmRaiser are replacing competitive fundraising traditionally centered on junk food sales with healthy fundraisers that instead sell healthy, locally grown or made products. Close to 50 schools, clubs, and organizations in Michigan have hosted or are planning to host FarmRaisers, and many are on their second, third, or fourth FarmRaiser.

#3 – Link public benefit programs to healthy food access

Michigan ranked third nationally in the number of farmers markets accepting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in 2014, with more than 32,000 SNAP Bridge Card transactions worth more than \$1.6 million, thanks to support from the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA). The 2015 MIFMA annual report showed that 155 of the 300 farmers markets accepted SNAP Bridge Cards, up from 111 in 2013.²⁰

Double Up Food Bucks (DUFB) doubles the value of SNAP dollars spent at participating farmers markets and grocery stores, helping people bring home more fruits and vegetables while supporting local farmers. In 2015, DUFB operated in over 140 direct market sites statewide in Michigan and Toledo, including farmers markets, mobile markets, CSA farms, farm stands, and food share programs. An extended season also piloted beyond October 31st at several markets, with 11 year-round sites across Michigan in 2015 and 2016. The DUFB grocery program expanded from 6 retailers in 2014 to 22 full service grocery stores in 2015. In April 2015, the Fair Food Network received a \$5.1 million grant from USDA for DUFB expansion. Grant funding will be used to expand the DUFB program to at least 100 more sites, with a goal of reaching 215 Michigan communities by 2019.

The Meet Up and Eat Up Summer Food Service Program, which provides free meals during the summer to children who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch during the school year, launched in 2012 and is administered through the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and community partners. The program had over 700 sites across Michigan in 2015 and increased participation by 6.2% over the previous year. However, because only 18% of qualified children participated, MDE continues to work with partners to expand the number of program sites and the number of days current program sites are open.

The Summer EBT for Children Program was first piloted in Michigan in 2011, and will be expanding to include Flint and Detroit in 2016. The program runs from June 1 to September 5, and includes Alpena/Houghton, Detroit, Genesee County, Grand Rapids/Kentwood, and Mid-Michigan. Children are selected to receive either \$30 or \$60 food packages monthly during this summer break time period.

In 2015, the Senior Project Fresh statewide redemption rate was 81%. In 2016, all 83 Michigan counties participated, up from 82 the previous year. This program provides qualifying older adults with Michigan-grown produce from farmers markets and roadside stands.

AGENDA PRIORITIES**#5 – Establish food business districts**

The Michigan Food Hub Network, co-coordinated by the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems and Morse Marketing Connections, LLC, is in its fourth year. According to Food Hub Network surveys, more than 440 different people have attended a food hub meeting in Michigan. This number represents 8 of the 10 Michigan food hubs as well as nonprofits, farmers, agri-businesses, academics, and community activists. Additionally, the Network has 500 listserv members, and brings together approximately 100 individuals at each statewide meeting. Data from 2015 surveys of these highly active members found that nearly 39% have formed collaborative partnerships as a result of their involvement, including hub-to-hub training that has spontaneously emerged out of the Network. Nearly 31% of members have also secured grant or loan funding for their food hubs since 2012 as a result of their involvement with the Network. The Network is in the second year of offering scholarships to Michigan food hub managers to attend the University of Vermont Food Hub Management Program. Five were awarded in 2015 and three were awarded in 2016. In both years, the largest cohort of students taking part in the program came from Michigan, in large part due to this scholarship program.

A 2014 economic analysis of Detroit's Food System, conducted through the Detroit Food and Fitness Collaborative, showed that Detroit's food system produces \$3.6 billion in revenue and directly employs more than 36,000 people. Growing Detroit's food sector by 30% could add 52,000 jobs and an additional \$1.3 billion in earnings in Detroit alone.²¹

Growers, producers, and others in the Greater Flint area are working to develop strategies for increasing the local food economy. Collaborating partners include Hoophouses for Health, the Women in Agriculture Network, edible flint, and others.

Taste the Local Difference (TLD) has become Northwest Michigan's local food marketing agency and, in 2016, began expanding into Washtenaw County. The TLD brand helps to differentiate locally made and sourced products for consumers, and includes a range of brand products available for use through the brand license. TLD had 507 brand partners in Northwest Michigan in 2014. TLD work has also expanded to include a magazine, smart phone app, and website to help connect consumers with information about the products and producers that take part in TLD.



Photo by Kathleen Reed

AGENDA PRIORITIES

#6 – Use policy and planning strategies to increase healthy food access in underserved areas

Results from a 2015 Food Systems Survey²² of local government activity, conducted as a joint project between the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and MSU CRFS, show that:

- 26 Michigan local government managers reported addressing food systems in their community's comprehensive, master or general plan; 7 reported the existence of a food-specific plan. In both of these cases, the raw totals were greater than for any other individual state.
- 19 Michigan local government managers indicated their food-related plans, policies or programs were motivated by concerns for food access/security.
- 87 Michigan local government managers reported the presence of at least one type of food-related policy, many of which are specifically targeted toward healthy food access issues.



Photo by Kathleen Reed

The Michigan Local Food Council Network was launched in 2015 to bring together food councils to build their individual and collective capacities to work on food and food policy issues, operate effectively, and engage their communities, through peer-to-peer learning.

In February, 2016, the Michigan Association of Planning (MAP) presented at the Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan Food Access Policy Action Team on Fast Food Zoning as part of their work with the Michigan Local Food Council Network.

Marquette County has been identified as a community of innovation through the national Growing Food Connections Project.

House Bill 5130 was introduced and would define a "hoop house" as a temporary structure and exempt such structures from the state construction code if they meet certain requirements. The bill received one hearing but as of the date of this report, no further action was taken on the bill.

The City of Flint laid out changes to its zoning in the "Imagine Flint Master Plan" which was adopted in October 2013. The City of Flint is currently holding hearings to review draft regulations on urban agriculture use.

A new publication, "Sample Zoning for Agriculture-like and urban agriculture," was released from MSU Extension in May 2015 to assist local governments prepare zoning regulation for agricultural activities in urban and suburban areas.²³

Legislation (House Bill 5180) was introduced to create the Healthy Food Assistance Act and a state Healthy Food Financing Fund, which could align with the Michigan Good Food Fund. The bill received one hearing but no further action was taken. A "place holder" for "Healthy Food Assistance" was included in the House-passed version of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016-2017 budget, but was not included in the final budget bill. At this time, the bill sponsor, Rep. Dave Pagel (R-Berrien Spings), is still hoping to establish funding in a supplemental budget bill, expected to be introduced in early Fall 2016.

AGENDA PRIORITIES**#8 – Encourage institutions to use their collective purchasing power to influence the food supply chain to provide healthier food and more foods from Michigan**

The Michigan Farm to Institution Network (MFIN), launched in 2014, now has now has 450 members statewide. Cultivate Michigan has featured 12 seasonal, Michigan foods over three years: asparagus, blueberries, tomatoes and apples in 2014; milk, peppers, winter squash and dry beans in 2015; and kale, carrots, potatoes and cherries in 2016.

The Cultivate Michigan campaign, which launched at the same time to support institutions in pledging to purchase 20% Michigan foods by 2020 and tracking their progress, now has 52 participating institutions collectively serving 129,072 meals per day. To date, 12 participating institutions, including hospitals, schools, early childhood programs, colleges and universities, and long term care facilities, have reported a total of \$3,382,893 in purchases of Michigan grown or produced foods from January 2014 through June of 2016.

Survey data for the 2014-2015 school year, documented in a 2016 MSU CRFS report, indicated that 54% of school food service directors purchase local foods for their school food programs.²⁴ Of these, 80% purchase local foods through their full-service distributor and 58% source Michigan-specific food through federal food programs such as Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and the USDA Fresh Produce Pilot Program (piloted only in Michigan and Florida). According to the 2015 USDA Farm to School Census, 43% of Michigan School Districts are participating in Farm to School purchasing, impacting 702,896 students. On average, schools responding reported spending 20% of their budgets on local products, or a total of \$19 million invested in the Michigan economy through the purchasing of local food.

#12 – Implement a reimbursement program to provide an additional 10 cents per school meal

The “10 Cents a Meal” project launched as a privately-funded pilot in the northwest lower peninsula in 2013; this local pilot included seven school districts in three counties, which purchased 25 different varieties of fruits and vegetables from 36 farms. A 142% average annual increase in spending on locally grown fruits and vegetables was seen as a result. This year, for the first time, the Legislature provided \$250,000 in state funding for a “10 Cents a Meal” pilot project in the FY 2016-2017 budget, to expand the current pilots in state Prosperity Region 2, and add Prosperity Region 4, which together cover much of the north and west counties in the lower peninsula.

#15 – Direct \$10 million to regional food supply chain infrastructure

The Michigan Good Food Fund (MGFF), launched in June 2015, is a relatively new \$30 million public-private partnership loan and grant fund created to finance healthy food production, distribution, processing, and retail projects that benefit underserved communities throughout Michigan. MGFF not only provides multiple financing options to meet enterprise needs, but also offers business assistance services to support business ventures as they prepare for funding or work to reach the next level of success.

Efforts to pass legislation and appropriations for a state Healthy Food Financing Initiative have not yet succeeded, but the debate will continue in the remainder of the 2016 session, and into the next legislative session (2017-18) (see agenda priority #6 and details on House Bill 5180).

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) offers a Value Added/Regional Food Systems Grant Program, which offers grant opportunities of up to \$249,000 in order to promote the expansion of value-added agriculture production, processing, and access within the state. This grant program is intended to assist in the expansion or development of regional food systems and access to healthy food. Grants will also go toward establishing, retaining, expanding, attracting and/or developing value-added agricultural processing in Michigan.

AGENDA PRIORITIES

#16 – Implement a food safety audit cost-share or reimbursement program

In 2013, a pilot GroupGAP (Good Agricultural Practices) certification program was run through the Upper Peninsula Food Exchange and coordinated through the USDA and the Wallace Center.²⁵ This pilot was one of seven pilot program sites throughout the US. A 2015 study around the Michigan GroupGAP pilot project found that collective certification is cost-effective, scalable, and opened new markets for small and very small farmers.²⁶ A Michigan GroupGAP Network, led by Cherry Capital Foods, has been established to move this program forward and build capacity statewide. In addition to growth of the program in Michigan, the USDA AMS announced the launch of a national GroupGAP program in April 2016.

Michigan Food & Farming Systems has begun Food Safety Assessment work through funding from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. There has also been a Safe Food System Tool Pilot that is more thoroughly integrating food safety elements with the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program’s technical assistance.

#20 – Ensure that all state and higher education business, work force and economic development programs include farming and agriculture in their target audiences

The Farmer Veteran Coalition of America launched a Michigan chapter in November 2015. The Coalition works to assist veterans in a transition from military life to farming life, helping them create and sustain a livelihood around agriculture. Nearly 660,000 veterans live in Michigan and as the state with the second most diverse agricultural industry, the Coalition believes that Michigan is uniquely equipped to strengthen and support both veterans and local food systems through this initiative. Their third Annual Stakeholders conference will be hosted by the Farmer Veteran Coalition of Michigan in Lansing, MI in December, 2016.

The Michigan Food and Farming Systems launched and is growing its Veterans in Agriculture Network, a network to engage Veterans in farmer-to-farmer support within their geographical regions and to connect them to resources around the state.

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), Michigan’s lead economic development agency, lists agriculture and natural resources as one of eight core industries for Michigan. MEDC and MDARD are working on an agriculture economic development strategy that will jointly guide and serve the agencies when looking at growing companies, increasing jobs and encouraging investment in Michigan.

The Workforce Development Agency lists agriculture as one of five state priority industry clusters. Teams working on each of the industry clusters aim to drive workforce development efforts toward meeting skill needs within the clusters. The Workforce Development Agency works collaboratively with MDARD around agriculture workforce issues in order to work toward better alignment of activities and programs in this area.

Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) now has a Bronson Healthy Living Campus, a partnership between KVCC, Bronson Healthcare, and Kalamazoo Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. They offer degree programs in Sustainable Brewing, Culinary Arts and Sustainable Food Systems.

Jackson College, Albion College, the University of Michigan, Michigan State University and Wayne State University all now offer courses in food systems.



Photo by Kathleen Reed

AGENDA PRIORITIES

#22 - Include Michigan food and agriculture in state marketing efforts

In Spring 2016, Travel Michigan launched three new Pure Michigan 30-second ads in various locations across the nation, one of which, "Fertile Ground," focused on Michigan's farm-to-table operations. This is in addition to "Fresh," which focuses on Michigan fresh produce and agriculture, a Pure Michigan ad that is also in national rotation. Commodity groups and individual farms can get permission to use Pure Michigan on their packaging.



Photo by Kathleen Reed

AGENDA PRIORITIES**Gaining Momentum**

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#4 – Training and technical assistance to launch new and improve existing grocery stores

The Michigan Good Food Fund, a \$30 million public-private loan fund is a healthy food financing initiative launched in June 2015. The fund will increase loans, training, resources, and technical assistance to support new and existing grocery stores and other value chain businesses in underserved areas.

#7 – Preserve Farmland

A package of bills was signed into law this year (Public Acts 265, 266, 267 of 2016), that will help Michigan's underfunded Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program (Public Act 116). Under the new laws, dedicated funding is established for the state's signature farmland preservation program, in part to provide adequate program staffing levels to ensure timely payments of tax credit and other transactional services for farmers who enroll in farmland development agreements. The temporary agreements keep farmland in production for periods from 10 to 90 years in exchange for a tax credit and other benefits. Approximately one-third of Michigan's farmland is enrolled in the program. The new laws may also free up some funding for grants to eligible local programs to help purchase agriculture conservation easements on farmland.

There are regional pockets making progress on farmland preservation, but are mostly confined to the few townships and counties with dedicated millages for that purpose (two townships in Grand Traverse County, Ingham County, and several local governments in Washtenaw County). In lieu of a dedicated millage, other innovations include Leelanau Conservancy's FarmAbility program, which has been adopted by another conservancy and under consideration by others. Kent County leaders demonstrated the economic importance of agribusinesses and the need for farms in their region through a 2016 report presented to and adopted by the County Commission.²⁷

The American Farmland Trust developed "Farming on the Edge" in 1997 (and updated in 2002), a series of maps that depict the levels of risk and vulnerability of valuable farmland throughout the country, including in Michigan. In 2016, Heart of the Lakes, the state association of Michigan's land conservancies, mapped at risk farmland in Michigan, divided by Prosperity Regions, and produced other advocacy tools to focus on how farmland preservation supports farming. Through the mapping and better understanding of these vulnerable areas, preservation efforts can be focused on farmland throughout the state that is most at risk.

Overall, progress is slow. Solutions include more local preservation programs with dedicated funding; greater capacity for Michigan's land conservancies to undertake farmland preservation (as only a few have strong programs but funding for purchasing easements is always a challenge); and dedicated funding for Farmland and Open Space Preservation grantmaking to local programs. There is also currently little integration between local and regional food system development and farmland preservation and viability, and that collaboration could be a valuable means of future preservation progress.

The Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) continues to bring together training, technical assistance, conservation practice support and other resources to help Michigan farmers protect the environment and land they farm while remaining performance based and cost effective.²⁸ MDARD provides MAEAP verification to producers who identify and address any risks to the environment. The number of farms in Michigan that received MAEAP verification reached 3,416 in 2016. In 2015, legislation was passed (Public Act 118 of 2015) which increased and extended the sunset date on certain fees (to December 1, 2021), which support the MAEAP program, and allow it to continue with producer education and technical assistance.

AGENDA PRIORITIES

#9 – Expand opportunities for youth to develop entrepreneurship skills and learn about good food related career opportunities

In Michigan, FFA for grades 7-12 reported 6,804 members during the 2014-15 school year.²⁹ During the 2015-2016 school year, FFA membership was 7,587 for the same age group, showing an increase of nearly 800 students in Michigan. In addition to FFA involvement, over 10,000 Michigan secondary students were enrolled in an Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR) course during the 2014-2015 school year.

The Detroit Food Academy works with local educators, chefs, and business owners to inspire Detroit youth through self-directed food related entrepreneurial experiences. They believe that through this process, Detroit youth can grow as healthy, connected, and powerful leaders - affecting change within and beyond the local food system. Programs include The Academy, Small Batch Detroit, and the Summer Leadership program.

World Food Prize Michigan Youth Institute held their first statewide competition in August 2015. Twelve high school youth took part in the event in order to learn about and engage in topics of food access, food security, and feeding a growing global population.

#10 – Establish Michigan as “the place to be” for good food

Michigan has the second most diverse agriculture industry in the United States. The USDA notes that Michigan’s unique micro-climates allow for the production of 300 different food and agricultural products. Michigan leads the nation in the production of blueberries, cucumbers, squash, tart cherries, and four varieties of dry beans. The approximately 52,000 farms throughout the state generate more than \$100 billion in economic business.³⁰ With continued support and market expansion for new farms and farmers, including the growth of farm to institution and food hubs, Michigan fosters a positive environment for the development of good food.

The Michigan Good Food Charter³¹ is one of the first such documents in the United States and has served as inspiration for other food charters throughout the country, including the Minnesota Food Charter and West Virginia’s ‘Road Map for the Food Economy.’

Agritourism in Michigan includes a broad range of agricultural experiences, including U-Pick, wineries, farm stands, Christmas tree farms, harvest festivals, farm-based bed and breakfasts, farmers markets, on-farm events, and a variety of other experiences. Michigan currently has 119 wineries, a 40 percent increase over the last four years. Michigan is also ranked fourth in the nation for farmers markets, with 300 markets throughout the state.

The Locavore Index, which ranks U.S. states, plus Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, based on a variety of local food production and consumption indicators, ranked Michigan at 21st in the country in 2016. This Index is completed annually by Strolling of the Heifers, a Vermont based food advocacy non-profit. In past years of the index rating, Michigan ranked 15th in 2015 and 26th in 2014.



Photo by Jude Barry

AGENDA PRIORITIES

#18 – Develop a farm-to-institution grant program

In 2015, there were 20 Farm to School grantees from 12 counties across Michigan. These grants, administered by the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems, went to the planning and implementation of farm to school programming and have an impact on nearly 25,000 students.

#19 – Direct state agencies to maximize capital access for farm financing

The Michigan Good Food Fund offers multiple financing options and will work with borrowers to match their needs with the right product. Financing services include loans, new market tax credits, and limited grant dollars to expand and prepare enterprises for investment capital.

#21 – Contingent upon further market assessment, establish a state meat and poultry inspection program

The Michigan Meat Association, an organization representing a group of small scale meat processors, continues to advocate and work to support its membership in regulation concerning processing in the state.

An infographic report³² of the 2014 Michigan Meat Processing Capacity Survey³³ was developed by faculty and staff at Michigan State University and MSU Extension. These two documents provide an understanding of the current capacity of the Michigan meat processing industry and provide vital information for understanding inspection needs in the state.

The Michigan Meat Network, launched in the spring of 2016 by CRFS, is a network of livestock producers, meat processors, distributors, and food buyers and professionals looking to make business connections, find answers to challenges (e.g. regulatory issues), and build viable markets for local and regional meat in Michigan.



Photo by Kathleen Reed

AGENDA PRIORITIES**#24 – Examine all of Michigan’s food and agriculture related laws and regulations for provisions that create unnecessary transaction costs and regulatory burdens**

The Michigan Food Policy Council was eliminated in December 2014. With the dissolution of this statewide council, MDARD has formed an Interdepartmental Collaboration Committee (ICC) Subcommittee on Food Policy. The ICC Subcommittee on Food Policy is a statewide action team to support food policy discussions. This transition was in an effort to better unite the work being done across state agencies and organizations and to reduce administrative barriers in order to best achieve policy in support of the goals of the Michigan Good Food Charter.

The GroupGAP Working Team has been established to move the program forward statewide, including reviewing policies in place and working to reduce barriers for farmers working to get their GAP certification.

Senate Bill 144, now Public Act 142 of 2015, amended the Food Law to allow a local health department to conduct an in-office consultation and an operational review of, rather than an inspection of, a proposed temporary food establishment that would serve only low-risk food. “Low risk food” would mean any of the following: a) raw or prepackaged food that is not potentially hazardous food (time/temperature control for safety food); b) potentially hazardous food (time/temperature control for safety food) that is prepared in a licensed facility and is not prepared on-site; or c) commercially processed potentially hazardous food (time/temperature control for safety food) that is fully cooked and heated only for hot holding.

House Bill 4017, now Public Act 41 of 2015, amended the Food Law to specify that a retail food establishment, farmer, wholesaler, wholesale processor, distributor, or other person who donated food for use or distribution by a nonprofit organization or nonprofit corporation, and a nonprofit organization or nonprofit corporation that collected and distributed the donated food to another nonprofit organization or nonprofit corporation free of charge or for a nominal fee, would not be subject to any criminal liability under the Law, or any civil liability resulting from the nature, age, condition, or packaging of the food, unless the donor or nonprofit organization or nonprofit corporation knew or reasonably should have known when it donated or distributed the food that the food was adulterated or not fit for human consumption. The bill also would require a nonprofit organization or nonprofit corporation that served donated food to employ or designate a food safety manager who was certified under a personal certification program provided in the Food Law.

#25 – Develop systems for collecting and sharing production and market data

The Michigan Good Food Charter Shared Measurement Project, initiated in October 2014, is engaging stakeholders in the process of developing common metrics. The initial priority areas identified are healthy food access, economic impacts of local food and institutional purchasing of local food. The project hosted a series of trainings in fall 2015 and spring 2016 to build capacity for data collection and analysis. Three Michigan communities began a pilot of a survey on perceived access to healthy food in May 2016.

The Michigan Food Hub Network conducted a feasibility study, in association with New Venture Advisors, to assess the need, function, ownership structure, and costs of a statewide IT platform for Michigan food hubs.³⁴ This shared platform could lead to improved performance and more effective communication across all Michigan food hubs and their community partners. From the conclusion of this study, a four-phase plan has been created to help move the Network forward in establishing the shared IT platform.

In March 2016, the Michigan Farmers Market Association received a \$60,000 Rural Business Development Grant from the USDA to conduct an economic impact study of Michigan farmers markets. Planning began in November of 2015 and the study will be conducted during the 2016 season. The goal of the project is to identify and recognize the economic contribution farmers markets make to Michigan’s rural communities.

AGENDA PRIORITIES**Slow Progress****4****#11 – Incorporate good food education into the preK-12 curriculum**

A 2015 survey through the Center for Regional Food Systems and the MSU Department of Community Sustainability found that of the 2,072 Michigan PreK-12th grade teachers responding to a survey, 1,799 taught a food, nutrition or agriculture related topic. A few resources available to teachers around incorporating these topics into curricula include Groundwork Center's Farm to School TBAISD website, FoodCorps, and classes and programs through the Central U.P. Farm to School Committee.

The Agrarian Adventure (TAA) helps to connect over 3,000 students in Ann Arbor, Michigan and the surrounding area to their food, communities, health and environment. TAA continued their "Farmer in the Classroom" program, reaching 15 schools and 753 students in the 2014-2015 school year.

The use of school gardens continues to grow, with a handful of school districts receiving support from FoodCorps Michigan in developing and implementing good food education. Ten FoodCorps service members were located in Michigan at six service site locations in the 2016 program year (September 1, 2015 – July 31, 2016). FoodCorps Michigan service members organized 1,578 student activities, reaching 6,344 children. They also collectively brought in 1,374 pounds of local food to school cafeterias.

#13 – Amend Michigan's General Property Tax Act to exempt certain on-farm renewable energy installations

Legislative discussions regarding the energy efficiency and renewable energy standards established in Public Act 295 of 2008, which extended through 2015, continue. There are opportunities to raise the issue of taxation of on-farm renewable energy installations in these legislative discussions.

#14 – Set targets for state funded institutions to procure Michigan foods

While voluntary, the Cultivate Michigan campaign, launched through the Michigan Farm to Institution Network, helps institutions track their local food purchases while supporting their pledge to purchase 20% Michigan foods by 2020 and is actively supported by staff in Michigan Departments of Education, Agriculture and Rural Development, and Health and Human Services.

#17 – Provide financial incentives for farmers for development of food system infrastructure to support institutional local food purchasing programs

While statewide integration of food and agriculture into curricula is not yet a reality, numerous educators, schools and districts are taking the initiative to incorporate these themes into lesson plans, including Detroit Public Schools, Eastern UP Intermediate School District (ISD) and Traverse Bay Area ISD. In the 2013-14 school year, the Agrarian Adventure, based in Ann Arbor, facilitated Farmer in the Classroom visits for 734 students in 12 schools. A growing number of school teachers are utilizing school gardens in lesson plans.

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Photo courtesy of Chuk Nowak for Fair Food Network



Top photos by Jude Barry; Bottom photo by Kathleen Reed



Michigan Good Food is a policy and outreach initiative hosted by the Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems and centered on the Michigan Good Food Charter, which was developed with input from hundreds of people across Michigan. The 2016 Michigan Good Food report card is intended to assess progress made on the goals and agenda priorities of the Charter, which was released in June of 2010. The document is compiled by staff at MSU CRFS.

WWW.MICHIGANFOOD.ORG

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