What have they done for us lately?

ERIN MEIER, U OF M SE REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP
SE SUSTAINABLE FARMING ASSOCIATION MEETING – FEBRUARY 15, 2014
OUR PURPOSE

To support sustainable development in greater Minnesota by directing University resources to address community-identified research, education, and outreach needs in the areas of -
sustainable food & agriculture, renewable energy, natural resources, communities & tourism
OUR VALUES

- Active citizen leadership
- Sustainable development
- Land-grant mission (1862 Morrill Act created land-grant universities to provide education & outreach in applied fields.)

A note about scale –
We strive to promote community-scaled solutions in partnership with our land-grant U – so channels are created to potentially scale-up to state & national levels.
AG/FOOD PROJECTS IN SE

- SE Foodshed Planning Initiative
- Cold Climate Greenhouse Resource
- Growing Home
- Main Street Project
- Healthy Food Alliance of SE MN
- FEAST
The Food Environment of Southeast Minnesota

A Set of Research Tools and Studies
Revised February 2014

Prepared by the University of Minnesota Southeast Regional Sustainable Development Partnership as a deliverable of the Olmsted County Statewide Health Improvement Program grants and for those working towards a healthier food system in southeast Minnesota
WHAT IS THE SEFPI?

- Multi-disciplinary, multi-year research
- Brings the analytical strength of U of M resources to our efforts to build a regional food infrastructure
- Broad-based research is one way to start ‘connecting the dots’ of small-scale, localized projects that have not yet shifted our overall food environment.
SEFPI RESEARCH COMPONENTS

- Cultural & Ethnic Food Demand
- Food Expenditures
- Food Hub Studies
  - Statewide Food Hub Overview
  - Dodge County Food Hub Feasibility
- Foodshed Analysis
- Food System Change Approaches
SEFPI RESEARCH COMPONENTS

- Food System Perspectives Survey
- Local Foods Landscape – production assessment & mapping
- Regional steering committee for capacity-building & research feedback - has developed into the Healthy Food Alliance of SE MN in collaboration with public health & other community partners
COLD CLIMATE GREENHOUSE RESOURCE

- Reviews design & operational successes & innovations of producers across region who winter grow
- Outlines greenhouse design alternatives that prioritize efficiency & low reliance on fossil-fuels
COLD CLIMATE GREENHOUSE RESOURCE

- Case-study design for a greenhouse at Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center, outside of Lanesboro, for on-campus food production & educational purposes
DEEP WINTER PRODUCERS ASSOC

Garden Goddess Produce – Northlands
Winter Greenhouse Manual, Ford & Waibel
DEEP WINTER PRODUCERS ASSOC

- Developing network of small-scale, food entrepreneurs using high-efficiency winter greenhouses in WC MN
- Goals - more fresh food during winter months, distribution sales system, discounts on inputs purchased in bulk
GROWING HOME - WHAT

- Inspired by Growing Power in Milwaukee, a collaborative in Olmsted County is driving an urban gardening/job-training/housing project in Rochester
- A nonprofit has formed as a sister organization to Center City Housing Corp, which is looking to develop stable housing for families and older youth
GROWING HOME - WHAT

- Employment & training opportunities for residents of permanent, supportive housing
- Option for steam & electricity from Olmsted waste-to-energy facility
- Urban farming venture, starting with a composting operation, that has widespread community interest
GROWING HOME - PARTNERS

- Olmsted County - Community Services, Environmental Resources, Public Health, Building Operations
- Center City Housing Corporation
- Rochester Public Schools (Golden Hill Alternative Learning Center) & RCTC
- UM SE RSDP
GROWING HOME - ACTIVITIES

- Finalized first phase business plan for compost operation
- Established Memorandum of Understanding with Full Circle Organics
- Nonprofit formed with interim board
MAIN STREET PROJECT - WHAT

- A number of symbiotically connected agricultural enterprises
- Free-range poultry at the heart of system
  - Manure as fertilizer for crops
  - Short life cycle of poultry
  - Familiarity to many immigrant families
  - Potential for vertical integration
MAIN STREET PROJECT - WHAT

- Agripreneurs
  - Training
  - Supporting graduates through a business incubator process
  - Identifying financing options
  - Building a replicable poultry production & delivery system
MAIN STREET PROJECT - PARTNERS

- Main Street Project – Niel Ritchie & Reginaldo Haslett-Marroquin
- UM SE RSDP
- Greg Schweser – Associate Director, Sustainable Local Foods, U of M RSDPs
- Phyllis Onstad – Retired U of M Extension
- U of M Applied Economics – Dr. Rob King & Grad Student Mario Renato Carrillo
MAIN STREET PROJECT-ACTIVITIES

- Consultant revised poultry production training manual
- Grad student developing production & processing cost profile & wholesale market description
MAIN STREET PROJECT-ACTIVITIES

- $48K U of M Healthy Foods, Healthy Lives Institute Community-University Partnership Grant to evaluate food safety & health claims

- Invited to submit full research/education application to NCR-SARE
HEALTHY FOOD ALLIANCE OF SE MN

- Since 2010, UM SE RSDP collaborating with regional Statewide Health Improvement Program partners
- Dec 2010 workshop outcome - establish long-term, well-organized food system development agenda for the region
HEALTHY FOOD ALLIANCE OF SE MN

- The group has formalized name, mission, vision, structure & is now actively recruiting across 11 SE MN counties
- Mission - promote, educate & advocate for healthy regional food
- 2014 educational & networking meetings across the region
FEAST seeks to increase awareness of the local food entrepreneurship & creativity driving this portion of our region’s economy

By creating resources, solidifying partnerships & leveraging resources to deliver services
Financial support - Financing Advisory Group & Local Foods Fund

Business expertise - Market Development & Peer-to-Peer Network

Regional connections - Resource Development & Local Foods Trade Show

Partners: S MN Initiative Foundation, Renewing the Countryside, MDA, UM SE RSDP, Rural Advantage, Main Street Project …
Business-to-Consumer Local Foods Festival
Sunday, November 2
Mayo Civic Center, Rochester
Expecting 100+ exhibitors & 5,000+ attendees
- For new & existing local foods entrepreneurs to showcase products to buyers
- To increase awareness by consumers of local foods available in the area
- To educate consumers about value of local foods & how to find & prepare them
- Business-to-Business Trade Show
- Monday, November 3
- Mayo Civic Center, Rochester
- Expecting 80+ vendors/exhibitors & 200+ participants
For new & existing local foods entrepreneurs to showcase products to buyers

For buyers to find new products

To provide food entrepreneurs with information & resources to expand & enhance their business
SOME STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES

- Building Capacity for Local Foods [website]
- MN Department of Health
  - Statewide Health Improvement Program
  - Community Transformation
  - Food Charter
- MN Food Council Bill
BUILDING CAPACITY FOR LOCAL FOODS

- Website - educational modules targeting farmers, community groups, Extension
- SARE tri-state project involving RSDPs, NDSU Extension, FARRMS, Buy Fresh Buy Local SD
BUILDING CAPACITY FOR LOCAL FOODS

- Workshops in 3 rural communities on community food issues - Bemidji, MN, Spearfish, SD, Napoleon, ND
- To identify existing activities, goals, barriers to building local food systems
- One outcome - “toolbox” of resources compiled on website to address a range of capacity needs
BUILDING CAPACITY FOR LOCAL FOODS

- Have very little existing on-the-ground local food resources (see Getting Started)
- Are working to build momentum in their community food systems (see Building Capacity)
- Have well established & recognized local foods movements (see Staying Strong)
MDH

- Communities employ evidence-based strategies in four settings: schools, communities, worksites & health care.
- SHIP aims to make it easier for Minnesotans to choose healthy behaviors.
  - Rather than try to convince people to walk more, local communities may see the need for more sidewalks so that people CAN walk more.
– Rather than simply asking people not to smoke around children, communities are deciding to make parks and playgrounds smoke free.

– Rather than telling people fruits and vegetables are good for them, SHIP works to make fruits and vegetables more available in their community.
More communities are biking and walking friendly as a result of community design.

More children are walking and biking to school.

More residents have access to high quality, nutritious foods in their communities through Farm to School programs, healthy school meals/snacks, grocery and corner stores, and farmers markets.

More employees have healthy vending in their worksite.

More post-secondary campuses are tobacco-free.

More parks and outdoor recreation facilities are tobacco-free.
COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

- Supporting regional food councils & public health learning communities
- Involving residents in participatory process for the development of a food charter
- Developing access strategies to increase healthy foods within institutional sectors, such as schools, health care sites & workplaces
MN FOOD CHARTER

- “Ensuring that healthy, affordable and safe food is the easy choice for every Minnesotan is the driving force…”
- In 2013, over 2,000 from across state contributed feedback on barriers & solutions to healthy food access via events, online input, interviews, focus groups
MN FOOD CHARTER

- Drafting committee now meeting
- Developing access strategies to increase healthy foods in institutional sectors, such as schools, health care sites & workplaces
- Launch of Charter this October
- mnfoodcharter.com & facebook
MN FOOD COUNCIL
BILL H.F.0874

- Representative David Bly, Northfield & Senator Matt Schmit, Red Wing
- Calls for a council of reps from MDA, MDH, DNR, U of M, legislature & stakeholders of farmers, consumers & environmental/public health advocates
MN FOOD COUNCIL BILL H.F.0874

- Information sharing, research & policy recommendations for the development and expansion of secure, local sustainable food production systems that promote economic viability, ecological soundness, and social responsibility.

- Focus on financing mechanisms

- http://www.mnfoodcouncilnetwork.org/
Peeps working together