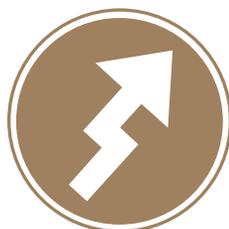




The Maine Food Strategy Framework

A Tool for Advancing Maine's Food System



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Bridget Besaw photo, courtesy of Maine Farmland Trust

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A Tool for Advancing Maine's Food Systems

Summer 2016



<http://mainefoodstrategy.org>

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Acknowledgments

At the Boat House in Belfast in 2011, a large group of people convened to talk about what was happening in food systems in Maine. More and more groups from the municipal level to statewide organizations were looking at opportunities and issues tied to the food supply chain and its operations. The question was raised: “How can Maine develop a statewide plan that helps focus our collective work?” Those early discussions led to the formal launch of the Maine Food Strat-

egy in December 2013 with the first meeting of an 18-member Steering Committee.

Food systems are inherently complex, and the network of individuals and organizations that have been involved in the Maine Food Strategy reflect this diverse landscape.

We offer our sincerest gratitude to all who have given their time, energy and expertise to the Maine Food Strategy along its journey and give special thanks to the following:

Current and Past Steering Committee Members

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The Maine Food Strategy’s Financial Supporters (past and current)

Broad Reach Fund
Donald Sussman
Doree Taylor Foundation
Elmina B. Sewall Foundation

Henry P. Kendall Foundation
Jane’s Trust
John Merck Fund
Hudson Foundation

Maine Community Foundation
Sandy River Charitable Foundation

The success of this project reflects the input and involvement from dedicated stakeholders in Maine’s food system. We would like to thank the hundreds of individuals who provided such input throughout this process. This especially includes the many participants at subcommittee meetings and the December 2015 Network Gathering and Work Session. Your input and support made valuable contributions to the development of this report.

The initial stages of this process involved many visionary and

dedicated individuals who foresaw the potential of a statewide food system plan. Those individuals were the spark that generated the Maine Food Strategy, and provided much expertise, advisement, and support. Those specific individuals and the committees they served on can be found in Appendix V.

A final special thanks to the original backbone team of the project’s first fiscal home at the Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service: Dr. Mark Lapping, Dr. Sam Merrill, and Barbara Ives.



Jenny Nelson photo, courtesy of Maine Farmland Trust

Planning for the Future of Maine Food

Formally launched in 2013, the Maine Food Strategy has involved stakeholders from organizations and businesses across Maine in identifying shared values and goals that support a robust and sustainable food system in our state. Similar to the scaffolding that supports workers and materials brought together to build or renovate a building, the Maine Food Strategy is creating a platform to connect the people and resources that can achieve measurable advances in Maine's food system for businesses and communities.

In recent years, Maine has seen accelerated growth in food production and markets. During the last census period, the value of agricultural production in the state grew 24 percent. A 2014 survey conducted for the Maine Food Strategy¹ on household buying habits and preferences demonstrated strong consumer interest in Maine products, and reflected findings from other studies that show shifting consumer preferences.²

Further demonstrating these trends, a report released in October 2015 by the Harvard School for Business and Government made a case for the economic potential of traded clusters³ in Maine's food industry. Even given structural challenges

Creating Connections

The Maine Food Strategy is a statewide initiative to create a broader and more strongly connected network of organizations and individuals working in food systems in Maine.

Networks organized to produce results have:

- A clear purpose and focus
- Engage the right people from across organizations and sectors
- Cultivate trust between participants
- Coordinate their ongoing work
- Collaborate with each other generously

Source: Networks That Work, Paul Vandeventer & Myrna Mandell (2011)

that include infrastructure and the skills and capacity of Maine businesses, the report suggested that food has the potential to drive economic growth statewide.⁴ Building on this momentum, industry leaders from many sectors in Maine formed an initiative called FocusMaine early in 2016. FocusMaine is aimed at catalyzing business expertise and resources that support growth in agriculture, aquaculture and biopharmaceuticals in Maine.

But while significant progress is underway, Maine needs broader and deeper change to create long-lasting improvements and opportunities in the food system.

Statewide initiatives have periodically reflected on the condition and status of food production in the state, and set goals that support its preservation and expansion. The last statewide planning effort took place in the mid-2000s and was led by an appointed committee whose work concluded with recommendations for a statewide food policy council, and policies to encourage increased consumption in Maine of locally produced foods. Ideas generated in *A Food Policy for Maine* (2006) helped seed efforts to expand the number of farmers markets and Community Supported Agriculture shares (CSAs), encourage farm energy audits, and provide resources and technical assistance to enable farm markets to process Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards.

Maine's 2006 food policy report helped fuel work underway to expand local food production and sales in the state. However, many challenges identified a decade ago were raised again during the Maine Food Strategy process and underscore the need for greater awareness of successful models, greater coordination and collaboration, and a clearer understanding of how to accelerate positive change.

Recognizing this need, the Maine Food Strategy asked people across the state what they wanted the food system to look like in the future. From large commodity producers in Presque Isle and Clinton to the many small organic producers who visited a Maine Food Strategy booth at Common Ground Fair, advocates working on behalf of Maine's aquaculture and fishing sectors, Farm to School programs, and Food Councils across the state, Maine

What Mainers Value

Maine people said they value a food system that:

- **Creates economic development** opportunities and builds lasting livelihoods
- **Relies upon and contributes** to a healthy and resilient environment
- **Enriches our cultural heritage**, ecology, economy and wellness and is strongly supported by Maine communities, and
- **Ensures everyone has access** to healthy food.

people agreed on several areas they value in a food system.

The opportunities for Maine's food system appear to be abundant. At the same time, changes in weather patterns, pressures from global competition and resource limitations have historically produced issues beyond our control.

Today, as Maine looks to the future, some parts of the state have seen temperatures warm by two plant hardiness zones, effectively creating a longer growing season but also providing conditions that support the growth of weeds, pests and plant diseases that are new to Maine. Offshore, climate change is credited in part for the state's record breaking lobster landings as warmer waters have encouraged the migration of lobster from southern areas. Growth for the lobster industry has occurred alongside the appearance of predatory species new to the Maine coast, and increasing ocean acidification affecting the health of shellfish.

The need to be mindful of how our food system develops and expands is even more critical now. Maine must work to understand the impacts of issues beyond its control while supporting the sustainability of natural resources and encouraging diversity and balance in the food system as a whole.



Ben Martens photo

A Framework for Organizing Food Systems Work in Maine

The Maine Food Strategy was created to encourage and support an intentional coordinated approach to systems opportunities and issues. The initiative was envisioned by its early champions as a means of building greater awareness of the interconnectedness between sectors, and economic, social and environmental interests.

The Framework is based on the principles of Collective Impact,⁵ an organizing model first widely publicized in 2011 in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* as a more effective method to create widespread social or systems change.

The Maine Food Strategy Framework presents a shared agenda, suggestions for measurement and priority areas where focused attention and resources are needed to move Maine closer towards the values described above.

Goals and objectives presented in this document were developed from a review of over 200 reports and plans from Maine and other places, and from outreach and interviews with over 250 stakeholders and interested parties. The information was further developed and vetted through four subcommittees⁶ that provided input throughout 2015 and the beginning of 2016.

The Framework serves as an organizing tool:

- **To highlight** the intersections between interest areas and present a set of shared priorities;
- **To identify** specific activities where sectors may organize across boundaries;
- **To present** measurable indicators that can show whether change is occurring; and
- **To offer** the bones of an organizational model that can provide structure to support collaborative work.

The Framework is a guide that can be incorporated within individual organizations, but is intended to encourage greater collaboration and information sharing. Appendix II provides information on organizations working in areas related to the Framework goals and can be used to help identify partners, and to illuminate areas that may benefit from more efficient or additional resources. Appendix III provides information on data that is currently tracked and may be useful in showing whether changes are occurring that support the goal areas. Several indicators are also listed where data is not currently available but has been identified as important for understanding issues or progress in a particular area.

For the most updated information on subcommittees, partners and measures, visit the Maine Food Strategy website at www.mainefoodstrategy.org.

Four core components of Collective Impact are:

A SHARED AGENDA that helps focus all parties on one, or a set of, common goal(s).

SHARED MEASUREMENT that reflects agreed upon indicators of change that can be assessed over time.

MUTUALLY REINFORCING ACTIVITIES where all parties are also working within their individual spheres to support the common goals.

COMMUNICATION across sectors and organizations that facilitates information sharing on individual and collaborative opportunities, and deepens the network's understanding of issues and best practices.

Source: Kania, John & Kramer, Mark (2011) Collective impact. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*.



Ben Martens photo



Jenny Nelson photo, courtesy of Maine Farmland Trust

Aligning Food Systems Goals with Maine Values

The Framework goals and objectives were generated through extensive public outreach, subcommittee work focused on the initiative’s four goal areas, and research on food systems

issues and best practices from other places. The icons to the left of each goal and objective illustrate how a goal, strategy or action aligns with the Maine Food Strategy values.

The icons are color coded to correspond with the following Value Statements for Maine’s Food System:



Economic Development

Creates economic development opportunities and builds lasting livelihoods.



Healthy Maine Environment

Relies upon and contributes to a healthy and resilient environment.



Vibrant Communities

Enriches our cultural heritage, ecology, economy and wellness and is strongly supported by Maine communities.



Healthy Food for All

Ensures everyone has access to healthy food.

Example



If a goal, strategy or action aligns with one or more value statements, the corresponding icons appear; a blank space indicates no direct association with that particular goal area. In this example (left), the goal, strategy or action does not connect directly with the Healthy Food for All goal statement. The absence of the green Healthy Food for All icon reflects this.

GOAL I

Global and in-state market share of foods farmed, fished, foraged and/or processed in Maine shows measurable annual increases within the ecological bounds of the resource.

How do we get there?

Increase the effectiveness of marketing investments by encouraging cross-sector collaboration.

Convene public sector organizations

and industry groups that promote Maine food in general to develop and use consistent marketing messages in materials, websites, and events.

Encourage organizations

that promote Maine food or Maine food businesses to expand the cross-promotion of resources and events. For example, Chambers of Commerce might help promote events out of their geographic coverage area if some of their members are participating.

Encourage opportunities for public sector organizations that promote Maine food businesses to share databases in ways that allow information entered once by a business to populate multiple websites.

Provide targeted resources and technical assistance to increase awareness of state, regional and national trade show events and assist businesses to prepare materials and displays for these types of venues.

Increase business awareness of the advantages of cooperatives that allow smaller businesses to aggregate their marketing dollars and increase the impact of their marketing efforts.

TRENDING POSITIVE

Consumers are seeking better information on where and how products are grown, fished or produced.

Buying Local

80% of respondents to a Maine Food Strategy (MFS) Consumer Survey chose to purchase local or Maine food when given the choice of buying Maine-grown/raised/caught food or food from “somewhere else.” *

64% of respondents to the same MFS survey chose local or Maine food to “support local farmers/fishermen/businesses.”**

75% of Maine school districts claimed the biggest barrier to purchasing local foods is year-round availability – while only 50% said that cost was a barrier.**

88% of distributors in New England believe their local food sales to institutions will increase.**

Sources: * - <http://mainefoodstrategy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/MFS-Consumer-Survey-Full-Report.pdf>
** - <http://dashboard.farmtoinstitution.org/schools/> *** - <http://dashboard.farmtoinstitution.org/distributors/>

LEGEND:

The icons correspond with the following Value Statements for Maine's Food System:



Economic Development



Healthy Maine Environment



Vibrant Communities



Healthy Food for All



Increase sales of products produced using best management practices and risk management strategies that improve the resiliency of land and water resources, improve food quality and adhere to food and workplace safety standards.



Promote increased food producer awareness of processes for improving product quality such as those associated with producing higher quality grades of meat and improving soil fertility.⁷

TRENDING POSITIVE

Existing industry programs support and encourage quality and safety standards for Maine foods.



Promote greater business and consumer understanding of existing quality and sustainable production certifications.⁸



Develop Group GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) Certification programs in Maine.



Increase the availability of training and resources to assist farmers in complying with requirements in the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).



Increase consumer awareness of best management practices related to health and safety for the aquaculture industry.⁹



Expand programs working to develop systems that enable the traceability of seafood in Maine from boat to market.



Expand and promote outreach and education programs that increase public awareness of the relationship between food production, environmental and public health and ecological diversity.



Expand opportunities for farmers and fishermen to connect with markets.



Promote information, resources and technical assistance that support the ability of growers and fishermen to respond to the requirements of different markets.¹⁰



Expand technical assistance available to businesses interested in scaling up production for larger markets.¹¹

The Natural Label – Perception & Definition

Consumer **Perceptions** of the Natural Label on Meat and Poultry. Respondents in a 2015 poll said:

- No artificial ingredients or colors were added to the meat or poultry (65%)
- No artificial growth hormones were used (64%)
- The animals' feed contained no artificial ingredients or colors (61%)
- The animals' feed contained no GMOs (59%)
- No antibiotics or other drugs were used (57%)

Source: "Natural Food Labels Survey 2015 Nationally-Representative Phone Survey." Consumer Reports National Research Center.



Jenny Nelson photo, courtesy of Maine Farmland Trust

USDA definition

"A product containing no artificial ingredient or added color and is only minimally processed. Minimal processing means that the product was processed in a manner that does not fundamentally alter the product." ("Meat and Poultry Labeling Terms.")

Source: USDA Food Safety & Inspection Service. <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/>

GOAL II

Improve the ability of businesses across the food production supply chain to manage growth and change in the marketplace.

How do we get there?

Increase numbers of employees and businesses using workforce development resources.

Assess gaps in current training programs and resources based on business input and successful efforts from other states.

Promote and expand workforce and business development programs, especially for low- and mid-level management workers in businesses across the food chain.

Create or expand tax and other financial incentives for businesses to use workforce development programs.

Increase business awareness of best practices for workforce retention, operations and growth management.

Promote and expand training programs to assist fishermen in diversifying the types of seafood they harvest or raise.

Improve business access to data on market demand and pricing

Assess areas where Maine has a strategic production advantage, both regionally and nationally and share information with producers.

Create, support and maintain a central information hub to provide links to business and market data across the food supply chain.

TRENDING POSITIVE

Access to adequate skilled and consistent seasonal labor improves the ability of businesses to respond to opportunities.

Market demand for local and sustainably produced foods suggests opportunities for small and mid-sized businesses interested in growth.



Labor Shortage

A survey done of Waldo county farms by FINE in 2014 showed the strongest barrier to farm expansion is the availability of labor. From 2007-2012, employment in:

- **Agriculture** went up 1,326 jobs. Total of 9,417 jobs in 2012.
- **Fish and fishing** went down 209 jobs. Total of 7,040 jobs in 2012.
- **Food Manufacturing** went down 844 jobs. Total of 4,853 jobs in 2012.
- **Livestock processing** went down 32 jobs. Total of 103 jobs in 2012.

Source: Harvard Business - Maine Food Cluster Report



Jenny Nelson photo, courtesy of Maine Farmland Trust

LEGEND:

The icons correspond with the following Value Statements for Maine's Food System:

 **Economic Development**

 **Healthy Maine Environment**

 **Vibrant Communities**

 **Healthy Food for All**



Increase business awareness of existing tools and services that focus on market data and provide information and assistance to Maine producers in making this data relevant to decision making.¹²



Prioritize and support efforts and investments that will create a reliable telecommunications infrastructure for internet and data plans that enable producers across Maine to have real-time access to records, and receive timely data.



Increase awareness of successful business models.



Promote resources that assist businesses in understanding effective business models and factors that influence success.¹³



Research and promote information on business models for low volume/high quality fish and direct to consumer sales for fish.



Increase business awareness of technologies and equipment that improve production and cost efficiencies for different scaled operations.



Encourage open houses and information-sharing at successful food businesses and cooperatives in Maine and out of state.



Improve business access to financing and incentives that support development and expansion.



Explore tax incentives and credits as a tool to encourage investment in food systems infrastructure development and improvements that benefit Maine businesses.



Create Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts for food processing plants that meet employment targets.



Promote and expand resources for patient capital such as those provided through investor networks, program related investments, and community development financial institutions.¹⁴



Develop sustainable funding sources that support ongoing capitalization of the Working Waterfront Access Protection Program.¹⁵

TRENDING POSITIVE

As food production in Maine increases, business development opportunities may exist for storage facilities for fresh product and minimally processed foods; value-added producers and facilities; and transporters and distributors capable of serving Maine’s small and mid-sized food producers and fishermen.

Maine Advantages

Responses from businesses leaders to the Maine food cluster project survey, described later in this report, were consistent with quantitative data and anecdotal information collected.

Advantages of operating their companies in Maine included: access to a **“pristine” environment** with abundant land, water and

marine resources, a **dedicated workforce**, being part of a **heritage industry and a “dynamic foodscape”** in a state that values farming and food. Moreover, respondents cited the importance of Maine’s quality of life and “great reputation” for food produced in the state.

Source: <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/content/download/78267/1756232/file/Final%20Report.pdf>

GOAL III



Improve incomes, and access to benefits, for individuals employed in businesses along the food production supply chain.

How do we get there?



Increase numbers of employees and businesses using workforce development resources.



Increase awareness of financial planning and saving tools



Increase awareness of individual and family development accounts, health savings accounts and similar financial tools.¹⁶



Increase the availability of affordable professional and legal services for small businesses with information on options for retirement savings that also have tax benefits.



Include personal financial training as part of programs for sustainable agriculture, farm and fishing businesses, and journeyman programs.

TRENDING POSITIVE

Maine's food sector has a solid foundation to support expansion in traded food clusters where wages are typically higher.

Improving labor skills and productivity rates in Maine can improve business profitability.

Increasing interest in expanding year-round production for some Maine products may expand opportunities for workers.

Net Farm Income

Average per farm, net cash farm income, \$1,000

Area	2007	2012	% Change
Maine	20,609	20,141	-2.27
Androscoggin	80,987	11,524	-85.77
Aroostook	34,582	38,718	11.96
Cumberland	-1,788	-8,354	-367.23
Franklin	4,613	9,021	95.56
Hancock	59,120	-4,199	-107.1
Kennebec	28,057	12,811	-54.34
Knox	3,257	-1,379	-142.34
Lincoln	-1,769	2,094	-184.48
Oxford	4,380	5,576	-21.45
Penobscot	5,740	11,892	107.18
Piscataquis	4,936	9,706	96.64
Sagadahoc	-8,212	6,995	185.18
Somerset	22,660	41,082	81.78
Waldo	9,834	7,674	-21.96
Washington	54,848	204,698	273.21
York	1,640	-1,030	162.8

Source: https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Full_Report/Volume_1_Chapter_2_County_Level/Maine/st23_2_004_004.pdf



Bridget Besaw photo, courtesy of Maine Farmland Trust

LEGEND:

The icons correspond with the following Value Statements for Maine's Food System:



Economic Development



Vibrant Communities



Healthy Maine Environment



Healthy Food for All

GOAL IV



Public policies are supportive of farms, fisheries and other food production supply chain businesses that contribute to communities, local economies, and natural resource sustainability.

How do we get there?



Increase public awareness of food systems issues and opportunities.



Encourage participation in community food councils and citizen initiatives organized to support local food and food access.



Encourage ongoing evaluation, volunteer management and recruitment to ensure long-term sustainability of community groups.



Publicize success stories and lessons learned from community organizing efforts.



Build community and consumer awareness of positive community, economic and environmental impacts created by food producers, farmers, and fishermen.



Increase the number of, and participation in, programs that provide hands-on community education about local food production such as school and community gardens, harvest lunches and community suppers using local foods.



Increase community awareness of existing Pre K-12 educational resources on Maine agriculture, aquaculture, and fisheries.¹⁷



Increase producer and community participation in the network of educational programs seeking knowledgeable and experienced speakers and volunteers from farming, aquaculture and fishing businesses.



Support programs that provide consumer education on food safety, oversight for food safety, and potential risks associated with the manner in which food is processed before sale.



Promote and expand youth programming on careers, entrepreneurship, leadership, and employment in food sector jobs.



Strengthen and expand programs that promote local food production as a community, ecological, and economic asset including those offered through the downtown and tourism promotion councils, public health organizations, conservation groups, and emergency food service providers.

TRENDING POSITIVE

Communities are increasingly recognizing the value of local food production and fishing to their economies, quality of life, and the conservation of natural resources.

Food Buying Influences

Approximately 600 Maine households were interviewed as part of a survey on buying habits and preferences in Maine. The data below reflects the percentage of responses to a question about factors consumers consider when making buying decisions:

93% Freshness	70% Cost	57% Antibiotic/ hormone free	44% knowing producer/ fisherman	34% Easy to prepare
87% Flavor	65% Humanely raised	48% Fair trade	39% GMO free	26% Certified organic
85% Nutrition	60% Local			

Source: <http://mainefoodstrategy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/MFS-Consumer-Survey-Full-Report.pdf>

Goal V



Food insecure individuals and communities in Maine have access to resources that address their needs.

How do we get there?



Expand consumer education on nutritional food choices and options for accessing healthy foods.



Expand the availability and reach of programs aimed at educating consumers about the preparation, use, and storage of fresh food.



Assess opportunities for using or building shared facilities for teaching the preparation, processing and storage of fresh food.



Expand nutritional education programs that provide information on the full range of healthy food choices, including fresh, fresh frozen, and canned foods.



Provide better information on options for accessing healthier foods including but not limited to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and special programs available at individual food pantries.



Expand nutrition education programs in the public school system such as home economics.



Encourage and support the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Harvest for Hunger Program.



Develop statewide policies, partnerships and incentives that support increased access to healthy foods for all Mainers.



Increase awareness among health insurance providers, institutions and the business community of successful incentive and other program models that encourage healthier diet choices among clients and employees.¹⁸



Provide technical and financial assistance to enable more farmers markets and farmers to process Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) purchases.



Create financial incentives for landlords who provide garden space to tenants.



Publicize and expand successful gleaning programs at Maine farms.¹⁹



Identify and promote activities and programs that improve access to healthy food for isolated communities whose access is restricted by transportation and/or distribution costs.



Work with New Mainers, food retail establishments, and farm/garden supply businesses to increase business awareness of consumer demand for food products and seeds used by immigrant communities living in Maine.

TRENDING POSITIVE

Successful nutrition and cooking education programs exist throughout the state.



Policymakers and the general public have a better understanding of the conditions that contribute to food insecurity and the unique nutritional needs of different populations.



Promote credible economic data and research on the potential impacts of a minimum wage increase and encourage continued dialogue around whether an increase could be effective for addressing food insecurity in Maine.



Convene partners to develop a strategy for improving public awareness of conditions associated with poverty and food insecurity for different populations and communities in Maine.



Increase public awareness of the emergency food system in Maine, how it operates, numbers of volunteers and clients involved statewide with the goal of highlighting the breadth of support provided by communities to address food access needs.



Research and promote information on Maine's growing senior population and programs that can help address increasing food security needs.

TRENDING POSITIVE

More Maine institutions are incorporating fresher healthier foods in their menus.

Successful models exist for offering incentives and subsidies that lower the cost of local food for consumers, for example matching dollars for SNAP benefits at farmers markets.



Collin Howell photo

LEGEND: The icons correspond with the following Value Statements for Maine's Food System:





Jenny Nelson photo, courtesy of Maine Farmland Trust

Beyond Maine: Supporting regional change over time

The concept of a “food system” encompasses all the ways we get food from its source of production to our plate, as well as the relationships these processes have with our health, our environment and our communities. While the impact of an individual meal seems small, the aggregate of our food choices and policies creates waves across a massive network of businesses, people, locations and ecosystems, from the smallest unit of a household, to the largest – our global food system.

In the last decade, more and more communities, regions and states have recognized the relationship between the food supply chain and community economic development, public, and environmental health. Some of the country’s largest food producing states including Iowa, Minnesota, and California, have statewide grassroots coalitions dedicated to promoting businesses, policies and activities that support values that extend beyond efficiency and profitability.

In the Northeast, **Food Solutions New England (FSNE)** was launched in 2011 at the University of New Hampshire in response to growing interest in regional food systems planning, and has helped to spur food planning initiatives in Maine and other states. FSNE annually convenes stakeholders and practitioners to explore issues and promising innovations in food systems work. In 2014, the network released the **New England Food Vision** which presented scenarios for different levels of food production in the region and proposed a vision for change by 2060. Recent New England Food Summits have delved into issues of social and racial inequity within the food system.

In addition to the work of FSNE, coalitions in every state in New England are currently engaged in food systems planning, or are in the process of implementing statewide plans. There is the **Mass Food Plan, New Hampshire Food Alliance, Connecticut Food Systems Alliance, Rhode Island Food Council, and Vermont Farm to Plate**. Vermont’s

program is the most robust, having a pledged network of over 350 organizations working towards 25 food system goals, and supported by more than \$1 million in dedicated funds from the Vermont Legislature since 2009. New Hampshire and Connecticut are still in the drafting phases of their plans, and Massachusetts recently released its recommendations.

These initiatives have been supported by various combinations of private, public and government resources. Some have been the result of legislative action, others have emerged from grassroots coalitions. Regardless of how they were initiated, each has coalesced around similar priority areas: community economic development, supporting sustainable resource use, improving food access and justice, and building public awareness and support for food systems that promote these values.

In each state, organizers recognize the need to better understand how the various parts of our food system relate to each other. Each also recognizes the amazing successes occurring as a result of individuals and organizations and the power of broadcasting these stories and resources to a wider audience.

Leadership from many different places, inclusivity of diverse interests and a focus on collaborating to support measurable change over time – these are common themes across the New England initiatives. Together they hope to amplify opportunities for commerce, transportation, land access, environmental health, and the overall resiliency of the region.

For more information:

www.mafoodplan.org
www.vtfarmtoplate.org
www.rifoodcouncil.org
www.ctfoodsystemalliance.com
www.nhfoodalliance.com
www.foodsolutionsne.org/

Next Steps and Conclusions

The food system is a complex network that can easily allow access to information across sectors so businesses and organizations can be successful. However, in some key areas, connections are weaker or non-existent, making it difficult for people to fully understand barriers or see opportunities.

The information contained within the Maine Food Strategy Framework document sets forth multiple opportunities across a range of sectors to help strengthen Maine's food system. Through the process of drafting the Framework report, three priorities emerged as critical to advancing the identified goals and objectives:

1 Network Building: Convening organizations around common needs and interests; seed opportunities for collaboration

2 Keeping the Whole System in View: Promoting deeper public awareness of the interconnectedness between food systems components and their impact on public, community and environmental health and well-being.

3 Demonstrating the Value of Collaboration: Showcasing how and where coordinated approaches can help us more effectively address areas of opportunity and concern.

To support these areas, we envision the following next steps:

- **Action:** Partners convene to work on specific activities, policies and programs that advance the goals identified in the Framework.
- **Assessment:** Work within this emergent food systems network to find agreement on measurements that will help us know when progress is made.
- **Evaluation:** Develop channels for deeper communication across and within the network.

It's a barn raising! Join together:

- **Connect your work.** If you or your organization are involved in work that relates to the Framework goal areas, share that information with others in the network.
- **Take the pledge.** Sign on to the Maine Food Strategy Network Agreement and become a part of the network.
- **Work in tandem.** Subcommittee discussions shaped the focus of the Framework's goals. Participate in subcommittee efforts to advance collaborative projects.
- **Connect the dots.** Invite others who should add their voice and their skills to the work.
- **Network for action.** Join us in December when the Maine Food Strategy and partners from other statewide organizations host a 2nd Annual Network Gathering at the University of Maine, Orono.

Many people, businesses, and organizations have contributed to the tremendous strides Maine's food system has made over the past two decades. The Framework is intended to be used as a guide for work of individual organizations. There is a hope that it also will be used as a roadmap and the next step in mobilizing people to work together to build a healthy and equitable food system for all.

End Notes

- ¹The 2014 Maine Food Strategy Consumer Survey report was developed from a survey of approximately 600 Maine households conducted by the Survey Research Center at the University of Southern Maine. <http://mainefoodstrategy.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/mainefood-strategys-consumer-survey-report.pdf>.
- ²In the 2014 Consumer Survey Report, nearly 80% of respondents said that, if given the option between a local or Maine food and a product produced or caught elsewhere, they would choose to purchase food or fish grown, raised or caught in Maine. In the same study, two-thirds of households said they purchase local food to support farmers, fishermen and businesses. For more information, on national trends, see Low, Sarah A., Aaron Adalja, Elizabeth Beaulieu, Nigel Key, Steve Martinez, Alex Melton, Agnes Perez, Katherine Ralston, Hayden Stewart, Shellye Suttles, Stephen Vogel, and Becca B.R. Jablonski. Trends in U.S. Local and Regional Food Systems, AP-068, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, January 2015. <http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/1763057/ap068.pdf>.
- ³Traded clusters are groups of related industries that provide goods and services to markets beyond the region in which they're located.
- ⁴See *Growing Maine's Food Industry*, *Growing Maine*, The Maine Food Cluster Report, October 2015. Harvard Kennedy School of Business and Government. https://www.hks.harvard.edu/content/download/78250/1755962/file/HarvardMFCP_SummaryReport_Final_Screen_SinglePgs.pdf.
- ⁵Collective Impact is an organizing model developed by John Kania and Mark Kramer of Foundation Strategy Group and first widely publicized in 2011 in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. http://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact.
- ⁶In 2015, Maine Food Strategy Steering Committee members convened stakeholders in four informational subcommittees organized around economic development, environment, food security and community development. Nearly 100 individuals participated in these discussions and providing input into the goals and objectives presented in this document. Information on the subcommittees and updated information on future meetings is available at www.mainefoodstrategy.org.
- ⁷"Inspection and Grading of Meat and Poultry: What are the Differences?" USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service Fact Sheets. http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/production-and-inspection/inspection-and-grading-of-meat-and-poultry-what-are-the-differences/_inspection-and-grading-differences
- ⁸Examples of existing certification programs include: Global Aquaculture Alliance Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) certification program, Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, Certified Naturally Grown, and the USDA Grass Fed Small and Very Small Producer Program.
- ⁹Voluntary practices for shellfish growers for vibrio vulnificus is one example. Vibrio is a naturally occurring bacterium that inhabits brackish and warm ocean water and causes illness in humans consuming undercooked shellfish.
- ¹⁰For example, selling to wholesale markets, institutions, ethnic markets, international markets. Farm to Institution New England Food Service Toolkit, <http://www.farmtoinstitution.org/food-service-toolkit> is a good resource.
- ¹¹Maine Farmland Trust has offered workshops on scaling up to sell wholesale: <http://www.mainefarmlandtrust.org/the-business-of-farming-for-wholesale/>. University of Maine Cooperative Extension Recipe to Market Program.
- ¹²USDA Agricultural Marketing Service offers weekly, quarterly and annual statistics on products and markets: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/market-news/local-regional-food>
- ¹³Participants in Maine Food Strategy discussions suggested factors to business success include a strong workforce, adequate capitalization, excellent marketing and lack of competition.
- ¹⁴Investor networks include organizations such as Slow Money Maine that work in part to connect businesses with financing.
- ¹⁵The Working Waterfront Access Protection Program is coordinated by Coastal Enterprises Inc.(CEI) Fisheries and Aquaculture staff in partnership with the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) and the Land for Maine's Future (LMF) Program, CEI Fisheries and Aquaculture staff coordinate the WWAPP. The program offers a one-time monetary award to owners of important waterfront properties used for commercial fishing or aquaculture access. The amount is approximately 25% of the property's Fair Market Value (FMV) as determined by a standardized appraisal. In exchange, the owner signs a restrictive covenant, which prohibits conflicting uses in perpetuity.
- ¹⁶Family Development Accounts (FDAs) are funding through federal grants and offer a matched savings account for income-eligible individuals and families who want to save money to buy a home, pay for education or training, or start or expand a small business.
- ¹⁷Programs that provide these resources include Maine Ag in the Classroom, Maine School Garden Network, Maine Farm to School and Gulf of Maine Research Institute.
- ¹⁸Activities that can encourage consumption of healthier foods include "veggie prescription" programs provided by healthcare providers, coupons redeemable for produce at farmers markets, or health care insurance incentives. The Fruit and Vegetable Prescription program was launched in Maine with support from Wholesome Wave which works with farmers and small retailers to create incentives for healthier eating.
- ¹⁹Gleaning is the practice of harvesting vegetables and fruit left in fields or orchards after a crop is harvested and is a practice allowed by some farmers and fruit growers in Maine. In Maine, one gleaning program is the Downeast Gleaning Initiative coordinated by Healthy Acadia in partnership with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension. The program coordinates gleaning opportunities throughout Hancock and Washington counties and connects volunteers with farms, orchards, farmers' markets, and other food producers and vendors to collect food that would otherwise be discarded for redistribution.

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Appendix I Project Timeline



Jenny Nelson photo, courtesy of Maine Farmland Trust

2011

Food systems stakeholders in Maine convene to discuss how to better coordinate their efforts.

An ad hoc committee releases a Request for Proposals to launch a statewide planning process.

2012

The Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine is selected to conduct a participatory planning process involving input from multiple sectors, and to develop an organizational structure to support collaborative food systems work over time.

Over 20 stakeholders are interviewed about opportunities and challenges for Maine's food system and research, and findings from over 200 reports and food plans from Maine and other states is compiled.

2013

An ad hoc committee of individuals involved with different parts of the food system – from production to research to advocacy – helps select a steering committee to advise the Initiative over the long-term. The 18-member Steering Committee first convenes in December 2013.

The Maine Food Strategy and the Center for Survey Research at the University of Southern Maine (USM) design a study on household food purchasing habits and preferences in Maine.

The Maine Food Strategy participates in a planning committee to assist University of Maine Cooperative Extension in organizing a Food Summit at University of Maine Orono. Approximately 250 people attend the December event.

Volunteers from the Maine Association of Nonprofits Sustainable Food System Leadership Institute conduct a review of food related legislation introduced in the 126th Maine Legislature. Pulse Check: Food Policy Report, 126th Maine Legislature is published.

2014

The Maine Food Strategy releases the results of the Consumer Survey Report study conducted by the Survey Research Center at USM. The report receives widespread media coverage and is the focus of briefing sessions organized in Lewiston, Portland and Caribou.

The Maine Food Strategy Steering Committee identifies an initial set of values and priorities to guide food system planning efforts. The values and suggestions for over 150 possible action areas are vetted with other interested individuals and groups in Maine.



Collin Howell photo

The Initiative works with Penobscot East Resource Center to conduct interviews with stakeholders involved in Maine fisheries and publishes the Fisheries Primer – Integrating Fisheries into a Maine Food Strategy.

2015

The Initiative works with a contractor to conduct a series of discussions with groups that have been harder to solicit input from because of personal constraints or language barriers. Information is used to inform emerging goals and objectives.

Subcommittees are formed for each of four food systems goal areas and stakeholders are invited to work with these groups to help refine goals and objectives for the Framework.

The Steering Committee moves the Initiative’s fiscal home from the University of Southern Maine to Third Sector New England, a Boston-based resource center for nonprofits, foundations and other groups involved in voluntary activities.

The Maine Food Strategy Steering Committee administers an open nomination process to bring seven new members on to the committee.

The Initiative organizes its first statewide network gathering at the University of Maine Orono.

2016

The initiative begins work on the Framework report, finalizing goals and objectives with a final round of input from experts and interested parties. The Framework is published.

The Steering Committee develops agreement language to clarify expectations for individuals participating in the initiative and for subcommittees that are expected to assist with implementation.

Subcommittee meetings and statewide meetings with prospective implementation partners are planned for August – October.

A statewide planning committee is created to advise the agenda and activities for the 2016 Network Gathering in December.

The Steering Committee launches its third open nomination process for new members.

Federal / State Government Agencies									
Island Institute	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Wolfe's Neck Farm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
ME Dept. of Ag., Conservation & Forestry	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
ME Dept. of Marine Resources	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Maine Made - America's Best	•								
Maine International Trade Center	•	•							
University of Maine Cooperative Extension	•	•						•	
Policy / Advocacy									
Maine Conservation Law Foundation								•	•
Maine People's Alliance									•
Natural Resources Council of Maine**									•

Table B: Prospective partners that have not provided information on work in the areas above.

Industry Groups	Public Health and Nutrition	Mano en Mano	ME Dept. of Economic & Community Development
Agriculture	Area Agencies on Aging	Cumberland County Food Security Council	ME Dept. of Health and Human Services
Food Producers/Processors	Let's Go Maine	Training, Education & Workforce Development	ME Dept. of Labor
Seafood*	Maine Hospitals	Gulf of Maine Research Institute	USDA Farm Service Agency
Chamber of Commerce Organizations	Spectrum Generations	Maine Apprenticeship Program	USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services
Maine Restaurant Association	Maine SNAP-ed	Maine Sea Grant	
Tourism Councils	Community Development & Organizing	Maine Soil & Water Conservation Districts	Policy / Advocacy
Community Development Financial Institutions/Investors	Cooperative Development Institute	Workforce Investment Boards	Environment Maine
Council of Government Organizations	Cooperative Maine	New Ventures Maine	Maine Center for Economic Policy
Economic Development Corporations	Cultivating Community	Federal / State Government Agencies	Maine Farm Bureau
	Food Corps	ME Centers for Disease Control	
	Grow Smart Maine		

*A limited number of industry groups responded to requests for information. Table B. aggregates information provided from organizations that completed the survey but does not represent all activity underway through industry groups.
 **Organization submitted survey information but did not indicate work in priority areas.

Appendix III: Measures

In the last U.S. Ag Census, Maine learned that the numbers of new farmers and women farmers in the state had increased markedly, but the average net income for producers has remained at approximately \$20,000 for the last 10 years. Measurement is an important tool for both tracking outcomes and determining policies and programs that can advance a set of goals. The Maine Food Strategy has identified several measures that may indicate when, and at what magnitude, change is happening in the goal areas presented in this framework. Many of these measures are being used in other food planning efforts and are connected to data that is regularly tracked by the state or federal government.

In general, we looked for measures that had the following characteristics:

- **Illustrated a change likely to occur** if progress is being made in a goal area;
- **Are tied to data regularly collected** by a credible source such as the Ag Census or administrators of state or federal programs;
- **Pulled from data that is easily accessible**, either via online resources or an individual contact person.

In a few cases, measures have been identified for which no data currently exists, or is not available at the state level.

To Submit Data Source Suggestions

The Maine Food Strategy is interested in suggestions for additional data being tracked at the state or national level that can help inform work in the goal areas. **For information on how to submit suggestions for other data sources, visit us at www.mainefoodstrategy.org.**

Where included in the appendix, these measures are designated with an asterisk (*) and represent gaps in information that are believed to be important to our full understanding of issues associated with a goal area.

Importantly, we acknowledge that data can be interpreted in many different ways. As an example, the number of food pantries may be used as an indicator for food access. But, while a decrease in the number of food pantries could indicate that fewer people are using the service due to better employment, lower household costs or other factors, it may also indicate declining resources available for emergency food providers.

Goal I: Global and in-state market share of foods farmed, fished, foraged and/or processed in Maine shows measurable annual increases within the ecological bounds of the resource.

A. Direct Sales to Consumers, Retailers, & Wholesalers, aggregate value in dollars, agricultural products (US Census of Agriculture <https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/>)

B. Direct Sales to Consumers, aggregate value in dollars, seafood (Data not currently available.*)

C. Direct Sales to Consumers, Retailers and Wholesalers, number of farms (US Census of Agriculture <https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/>)

D. Food Manufacturing, number of employees, Maine (2012 Economic Census of the United States. "Annual Survey of Manufactures: Geographic Area Statistics: Statistics for All Manufacturing by State" (Maine). US Census <http://factfinder.census.gov/>)

E. Food Manufacturing, total value of receipts and services, Maine (2012 Economic Census of

the United States. "Annual Survey of Manufactures: Geographic Area Statistics: Statistics for All Manufacturing by State" (Maine). US Census <http://factfinder.census.gov/>)

F. Land in active food production, acres (US Census of Agriculture <https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/>)

G. Licensed commercial kitchens, number (Quality Assurance and Regulations, ME Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. For current data, contact the Department's Inspection Process Analyst.)

H. Seafood landed in Maine, aggregate sales in dollars (Annual Commercial Landing Statistics, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.)

I. Value of Production, Aquaculture, sales by state (US Census of Agriculture <https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/>)



Ben Martens photo

Goal II: Improve the ability of businesses across the food production supply chain to manage growth and change in the marketplace.

A. Farm Energy Audits, number (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Maine/Newsroom/Publications and Fact Sheets. “Fiscal Year Annual Report”. USDA NRCS Maine <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/me/home/>.)

B. Food manufacturing capital expenditures, total value (2012 Economic Census of the United States. “Annual Survey of Manufactures: Geographic Area Statistics: Statistics for All Manufacturing by State” (Maine). US Census <http://factfinder.census.gov>.)

C. Food Manufacturing, number of employees (2012 Economic Census of the United States. “Annual Survey of Manufactures: Geographic Area Statistics: Statistics for All Manufacturing by State” (Maine). US Census <http://factfinder.census.gov>.)

D. Food Product Recalls, number of recalls of products from Maine (US Food & Drug Administration <http://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/default.htm>)

E. GAP Certified Farms, number of farms (“Companies that Meet GAP and GHP Acceptance Criteria”. USDA Agricultural Marketing Service

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/>.)

F. Nutrient Management Plans, number of farms (Nutrient Management Program, Maine Dept. of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. For current data, contact the Department’s Nutrient Management Coordinator.)

G. Occupational Injuries/Illnesses and Fatal Injuries Profiles (“Annual Survey Summary Numbers and Rates”. US Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics <http://www.bls.gov/data/>.)

H. Shipments & Receipts for Services in Food Manufacturing, total value (2012 Economic Census of the United States. “Annual Survey of Manufactures: Geographic Area Statistics: Statistics for All Manufacturing by State” (Maine). US Census <http://factfinder.census.gov>.)

I. Food Manufacturing, production workers total annual wages, Maine (2012 Economic Census of the United States. “Annual Survey of Manufactures: Geographic Area Statistics: Statistics for All Manufacturing by State” (Maine). US Census <http://factfinder.census.gov>.)

Goal III: Improve incomes, and access to benefits for individuals employed in businesses along the food production supply chain.

A. Access to Benefits by Occupation (“National Compensation and Benefits Survey”. US Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics <http://www.bls.gov/data/>.) (State level data by occupation is not currently available. *)

B. Employee participation in workforce education and training programs (Data not currently available. *)

C. Occupational Employment and Wage State Statistics (Occupational Employment Statistics,

Farming, Fishing and Forestry Occupations. ”State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates, Maine”. US Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics <http://www.bls.gov/data/>.)

D. Share of Medical Claims Paid by Private Industry Workers, by Occupation (National Compensation and Benefits Survey: US Bureau of Labor Statistics. (State level data by occupation is not currently available. *)

Goal IV: Public policies are supportive of farms, fisheries and other supply chain food production businesses that contribute to communities, local economies and natural resource sustainability.

A. Community Food Councils, number of councils (Maine Network of Community Food Councils <http://www.mainefoodcouncils.net/>.)

B. Economic Development (County and Regional) plans that include goals to support increased food production, processing and distribution, number of plans (“Economic Development Directory” – Economic Development Districts, Maine”. US Economic Development Administration <https://www.eda.gov>.)

C. Farm to School Programs, number of programs (Maine Farm to School Working Group)

D. Farmers Markets, number (Get Real Get Maine. “Farmers Market Directory”. Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry <http://www.maine.gov/dacf>.)

E. Institutional food service programs using locally sourced products, Maine, number of programs (Farm to Institution New England)

F. Soil and Water Conservation Districts, annual county and state funding (Annual Reports of County Soil and Water Conservation

Districts. Contact information for district offices: Maine Association of Conservation Districts <https://maineconservationdistricts.com/district-locations/>.)

G. University of Maine Cooperative Extension, annual funding, county governments and University of Maine (University of Maine Cooperative Extension)

H. Environmental Quality Incentive Program, number of farm contracts (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Maine/Newsroom/Publications and Fact Sheets. “Fiscal Year Annual Report”. USDA NRCS Maine <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/me/home/>.)

I. Organic Initiative Program, number of farm contracts (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Maine/Newsroom/Publications and Fact Sheets. “Fiscal Year Annual Report”. USDA NRCS Maine <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/me/home/>.)

J. Organic Certifications, number of farms (MOFGA Certification Services. “Interactive List of MOFGA Certified Organic Farms”. Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association www.mofga.org.)

Goal V: Food insecure individuals and communities in Maine have access to resources that address their needs.

A. Communities with food security plans, total in Maine (Number of municipalities and public organizations including food access in planning) (Data not currently available. *)

B. Federal Child and Adult Care Food Program in Maine, total participants (“Child and Adult Care Food Program”. USDA Food and Nutrition Service www.fns.usda.gov.)

C. Federal Food Distribution Programs in Maine, total participants (“Food Distribution Program Tables”. USDA Food and Nutrition Service www.fns.usda.gov.)

D. Food insecure in Maine, percentage of total (Map the Meal Gap. “Food Insecurity in Maine”. Feeding America www.feedingamerica.org.)

E. Healthy living incentives offered through insurance providers, number at Maine businesses, total (Data not currently available. *)

F. Nutrition Education Programs, annual Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants, Maine. (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). “State Level Annual Data, Persons, Households, Benefits, and Average Monthly Benefit per Person & Household”. USDA Food and Nutrition Service www.fns.usda.gov.)

G. School Gardens, total number, Maine (“Garden Directory”. Maine School Garden Network www.msgn.org.)

H. Public School Districts with Nutrition and Food Skills Education, total (School Health Profiles, US CDC). <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/>

data/profiles/pdf/2014/2014_profiles_report.pdf)

I. Retailers in Maine (including Farmers Markets and Farm Stores) that accept SNAP and EBT Benefits, total number (“SNAP Retailer Locator”. USDA Food and Nutrition Service www.fns.usda.gov.)

J. Senior Farm Share Program, number of participants and funding levels (Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. For current data, contact Program Manager, Maine Senior FarmShare Program.)

K. SNAP, number of Maine participants and funding levels (“SNAP State Activity Reports”. USDA Food and Nutrition Service www.fns.usda.gov.)

L. Summer Food Service Program, monthly meals by site or sponsor, Maine (Maine Department of Education, Summer Food Service Program. “Monthly Meal Totals”. Maine Department of Education School Food Service Reports https://portal.maine.gov/sfsr/sfsrdev.public_reports.main_page.)

M. Soup Kitchen Meals Served, total in Maine (Contact individual organizations: Agricultural Development Resource Division, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). “Food Assistance by County”. Maine Dept. of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry www.maine.gov/dacfl/.)

N. Food Pantry Donations, pounds of food donated per year (Contact individual organizations: Agricultural Development Resource Division, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). “Food Assistance by County”. Maine Dept. of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry www.maine.gov/dacfl/.)

Appendix IV: Outreach Methods & Findings

In 2011, funders and nonprofits, government agencies, and small businesses began discussing how to effectively coordinate efforts in food systems to improve impact and return on investment in both the public and private sectors. Their conversations led to the Maine Food Strategy, a nascent effort to lead a research-based, participatory planning process that would identify shared statewide goals and a collective path forward towards building a stronger and more sustainable food system in Maine. Recognizing the work of individuals involved in past planning efforts in Maine, and the experience and knowledge of people engaged in a broad range of sectors associated with the food system, the Maine Food Strategy has used a variety of information gathering and outreach methods. Primary outreach methods and findings were as follows:

1. Recommendations from Food Systems Plans and Exploratory Stakeholder Interviews

In preparation for the official launch of the Initiative in 2013, the Maine Food Strategy reviewed over 200 past planning reports from Maine, other states and Canada, and conducted a series of interviews with stakeholders from some of the leading Maine organizations, state agencies and businesses working in production and on food systems.

Information from the document review was presented in a report published in November 2012. *Research Summary: Historical & Current Food Plans from Maine & Other Places*. The report provided information on key components included in other state plans, policy implications and core and emerging issues.

Recommendations on specific policies, programs or activities identified through the document review and stakeholder interviews were then consolidated in an internal planning document that provided the foundation for Steering Committee and Subcommittee work to identify collaborative priorities.

2. Indicator Identification

The Maine Food Strategy Steering Committee worked with consultants from Yellowwood Associates in Vermont to identify a set of preliminary goals and indicators based initially on the experience of committee members and later revised to reflect input from other stakeholders. Using the *You Get What You Measure* process, the Steering Committee developed a draft vision and goals and considered policies, programs and activities that could affect positive change in these areas. A handful of actions were identified as “key leverage indicators” or areas that were likely to have the greatest leverage on the system as a whole.

This information served as the foundation for further input from people working in and on food systems in Maine. The Steering Committee identified and interviewed over 20 individuals within their networks to request feedback on the draft goals and indicators. Information from these interviews informed revisions to

the goals and indicators. A second round of input was solicited using an online survey forwarded directly to approximately 150 individuals with an invitation to share the link with their networks.

3. Input from General Outreach

In conjunction with the indicator identification, Maine Food Strategy staff and Steering Committee members presented at over 25 organizational events including to the following list where they also solicited input on what meeting participants wanted to see, or felt would be effective in supporting businesses, food security concerns or sustainable resource use.

- Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments
- Agricultural Council of Maine
- Aroostook Partnership for Progress Diversified Ag Group
- Economic Development Council of Maine
- Envision Maine
- Franklin County Healthy Communities Coalition
- Kennebec Valley Council of Governments
- Maine Ag Trades Show (two years)
- Maine Association of Planners
- Maine Beekeeper’s Association
- Maine Dairy Industry Association (Anne Trenholm)
- Maine Farm Bureau
- Maine Fishermen’s Forum
- Maine Food Producers and Grocers Association
- Maine Migrant Health Program
- Maine Network of Community Food Councils
- Maine Potato Conference
- Maine Startup and Create Week
- MOFGA Common Ground Fair
- MOFGA Farmer to Farmer Conference
- Piscataquis County Economic Development Council
- Portland Mayor’s Initiative
- Threshold to Maine RC&D
- University of Maine Cooperative Extension Maine Food Summit
- Washington County Council of Governments



Jenny Nelson photo, courtesy of Maine Farmland Trust

4. Focus Groups

In January 2015, the Maine Food Strategy engaged in a survey of “harder to reach” (those that have chronic and unique food access issues) populations in Maine’s food system. The survey was done through a series of focus groups, coordinated by Jim Hanna of the Cumberland County Food Security Council.

Historically, populations most affected by food insecurity have not had their voices or needs well incorporated into discussions on these issues. The goal of this survey was to understand the plight of communities facing these problems, and to learn how they cope and what they need to alleviate food access barriers.

By undertaking this survey, the Maine Food Strategy collected input to further inform future strategies. Focus groups were conducted with the Somali Bantu community in Lewiston, Maine; low-income consumers through Food AND Medicine in Brewer, Maine; and migrant workers working in Maine food production through Mano en Mano in Milbridge, Maine.

5. Goal Area Subcommittee Discussions & Review

In 2015, project staff consolidated information from research and outreach into a summary document that included over 150 policies, programs and activities that had been recommended by interviewees and survey participants, in outreach meetings and from past planning efforts.

The Steering Committee divided into four subcommittees organized around the Initiative’s four goal areas and invited other stakeholders to join them in reviewing information compiled during the process and synthesizing the information into a draft framework document. Input from a series of stakeholder meetings was incorporated into the draft document and revised sections were reviewed again by participants at the Maine Food Strategy Network Gathering, a statewide event held at the University of Maine Orono in December 2015.

Appendix V: Individuals Involved Through the Process

Steering Committee 2013-2014

Molly Anderson	Bill Eldridge	Dana Morse	Rosie Vanadestine
Heron Breen	Mark Hews	John Piotti	Daniel Wallace
Deborah Burd	John Jemison	Ted Quaday	Lisa Webster
Robert Dorsey	Penelope Jordan	Anne Trenholm	
Mark Dvorozniak	Ben Martens	Sara Trunzo	

Steering Committee 2014-2015

Deborah Burd	Ben Martens	Ted Quaday	Sara Trunzo
Mark Dvorozniak	Kristen Miale	Joshua Stoll	Rosie Vanadestine
Erica Emery	Hussein Muktar	Nisha Swinton	Daniel Wallace
Mark Hews	Conrad Olin	Ben Tettlebaum	
John Jemison	John Piotti	Anne Trenholm	

Research Committee

Molly Anderson	Robin Alden	John Jemison	Al Leighton
Dana Morse	Timothy Waring	Mark Lapping	

Interim Advisory Committee (2011-2012)

Helped to convene this project, issued RFP and selected the Project Coordinating Team

Molly Anderson	Deb Felder	Russell Libby	Rick Small
Amy Carrington	Barbara Ginley	Ken Morse	Kirsten Walter
Bill Eldridge	Lori Kaley	Andrea Perry	Amy Winston

Phase I Process Design Committee (2012)

Supporting the creation of an effective and participatory planning process for future phases

Molly Anderson	Dave Colson	Russell Libby	Daniel Wallace
Jim Batey	Monique Coombs	Frank Miles	Kirsten Walter
Dave Bell	Barbara Ginley	Dana Morse	
Courtney Bourns	John Jemison	Ned Porter	

Original Project Coordinating Team (2012)

University of Southern Maine	Robin Alden and Monique	Mary Ann Hayes, Maine Rural
Muskie School of Public Service	Coombs, Penobscot East Resource	Partners
Dr. Sam Merrill	Center	Shelley Doak, Maine Grocers and
Dr. Mark Lapping	Amanda Beal	Food Producers Association
Barbara Ives	Lisa Fernandes	Tanya Swain

For information on individuals participating in subcommittees, visit www.mainefoodstrategy.org.



The Maine Food Strategy is an initiative to create a broader and more strongly connected network of organizations and individuals contributing to the food system in Maine.

The initiative is working to advance statewide goals that support a robust and sustainable food economy in our state.