



Key Themes of the Food Summit

The following information is formatted to provide the results of the Café discussion held at the end of the day and some of the content of breakout sessions and the notes that were collected. This document is a simple collection of the summit, not an in depth analysis. It is shared out in much the same way one might visit a garden. Lots of variety and things to try, a few weeds but it rests in the rich soil of the community. It can now be harvested for lots of hearty ideas and interesting *and nutritious* information!

Under each theme, are the **questions in red**, from the Café and under the titles of the break out are the corresponding notes from the sessions. Some of it aligns very clearly, some of it is broader and less specific.

I. The Power of Community

Good food has a local story and the community is very enthusiastic about the conversation and the energy around this issue. There seems to be a tremendous commitment to community and a synergy in the comments from the Café question:

What did you (the participants) hear today that changed your perspective or inspired you?

- Bring back the milkman and the CO-OP!!
- The community is bigger than the problem: let's find a hybrid solution that provides economic value on a large scale to promote local vibrancy.
- Discovering community.
- All the people here today (new & veteran)
- We gathered, we talked, we collaborate – we will act
- Humility but willingness to learn and be open to new ideas.
- All the people – it clicked, new understanding and connections!
- The opportunity to share and learn
- Great turnout for the event, diverse interests, lots of passion
- Everyone has to work together
- We ARE a thriving food system! Every time we come together we have new ground to gain, literally and figuratively.
- Local = fresh = better for the community
- Community benefits community
- Loved the networking!
- Networking – invest in good ideas – connect the \$\$ to the dream



How might we address issues like homelessness through small farming and food related projects?
How might we do political bridge building through localized food production? i.e. Libertarians, evangelicals, environmentalists all share ecological concerns from different angles.

- Harvest of the month
- Prioritizing and coordinating
- Smaller and new farms
- Processing
- Vital communication

Neighborhood Gardens

- Affordable local foods for all socioeconomic groups
- No kid no person should go hungry in SW Washington
- We need to change our cultural mentality
- Micro gardens
- Closing off streets to cars and de-paving to create spaces – (over-come the car culture) to space parking out.
- Mom and pop businesses in Europe – cheese in cheese shop, meat at the butcher, bread at the baker,
- Pride in service and product
- Builds community
- Building community gardens is greater access to whole foods.
- Joining a small community garden for fresher food
- We want fast, easy quick – not slow, grown in local gardens

II. Policy and Decision Making At the County level and the local level.

There are multiple stakeholders that need to be a part of the decision making and there seemed to be a renewed and perhaps, increased awareness of the issues that support the food economy. There are policy issues but there are also localized, community level issues that seemed relevant to the participants.

- Current number of farms
- Acreage
- Viability
- Production Capacity
- What is grown
- More regulation about what is 'organic'



- Over-all what are the fresh food and AG products in the county
 - What is consumed vs what is produced
 - Dollars spent vs dollars remaining in CC?
 - how many jobs supported by Ag in CC?
- Licensing startup costs and a lack of options for new business loans makes growth development very challenging.
- Community Gardens required for new housing development – requires statute
- Policy: some of it restricts who can compete, and it helps the environment but it makes it so only the ‘Big Business’ can do it.
- I was not aware of all the red tape small businesses encounter in this county, state, nation.
- Immense regulation that may inhibit growth in the community

What did you discover today? Is there something we should know that we don't know?

- Many different angles to solve issues involving food sustainability, nutrition, availability
- Clark County Food Policy council was founded on AG first, food second
- If we captured all the local market demand, how much money would that make available for local economic and small business development?
- How much of the county demand could local farms supply?
- Loss of infrastructure
- Land trusts that preserve farm lands forever – and community gardens
- Loss of infrastructure that helps local food production in favor of larger multi-national companies.
- How challenging it is to be providing local foods
- In Vancouver – 5,000 people come in to work, 15,000 leave for work
- Clark County has 5 restaurants for every 10,000 people
- Multnomah County has 15 restaurants for every 10,000 people

III. Food Hubs – Creating a nexus point for economic action.

Overwhelming support and conversation about food hubs. There was a large number of comments about the need for and possibility of food hubs as a solution – particularly with regard to the restaurant and food supply chain break-out sessions.

What did you (the participants) hear today that changed your perspective or inspired you?

- Cascadia region for locavores
- Production -----Food System -----consumption continuum
- We all have to eat – let's make good sustainable choices



- Access to quality food
- Healthy, low cost and convenient is not easy!

Cascadia Region Food Hubs: the intersection of farmers, eaters, transportation and land use.

- Value chain of the bioregion
- What farmers need
- What chefs need
- Sourcing – e.g. April Joy farms
- Watershed issues
- Energy
- Needs are: lack of infrastructure and access to capital

Clark County Food Hub

- FT Vancouver HS – all of VPS
- City of Vancouver “FPF”
- BV
- CC – PH
- Restaurant Buyers
- Clark College
- CSA
- Lack of infrastructure
- Storage
- Kitchen
- Community Financing
- Moving beyond the system that current residents are used to
- Demand in Clark County

Micro Food Hub: More people are talking about food topics, not just the people in the know.

- Distribution sharing
- Food Production
- Excess goes to food bank

Food Hubs 101 – What do buyers and eaters need?

Need more restaurants that will commit to local purchasing

- Remember, restaurant needs to minimize transactions – single order, single delivery



- Vancouver Farmers Market has office / drop off space – is that adequate for a system?
- Convenience

Farmer's need:

- To match / produce price
- Institutional buyers to commit to purchase
- School Districts can use commodity money to buy local; Ridgefield and Battleground are attempting.
- Needs to be GAP certified (Good Agricultural Practices) to ensure food safety

How to deal with inconsistent size of vegetables from smaller farms?

- Enforce consistency from farmer
- Train chefs on how to utilize
- Partnering with larger growers
- Can local food hub get more margin for big farmer?

What did you discover today? Is there something we should know that we don't know?

Each part of the food chain has to make a profit from farm to restaurant

- Clark County = lower end dining and no emergent chefs
- Portland = fancy dining and good chefs
- Money drains to Oregon
- Regulations about opening new places, carts, products
- Can neighborhood places to go, survive?
- Clark County is more residential
- Portland is more business
- Permits, fees and red tape in Clark County
- Small farms matter – Eat Organic
- Cheaper permits, easier regulations in Oregon/ Multnomah county
- Supply and demand issues are at the middle

We need resources

- Laws and permits
- Need more summits like this
- Networking with people of like interests to help them overcome issues when starting a business

Small producers need a team

- Cooperation
- Community development
- Financing



- Clark Business
- Networking and sales leads
- Lack of premium product market in SWWA
- Complexity of the supply chain

Ten Point Plan

- Burgerville runs school cafeteria
- All public entities agree to purchase 15% 'Clark County grown'
- Friends of Clark County manage the department of Ecology
- Every household is required to implement a compost program
- CPU will finalize inventory of aquifers
- 50% of Conservation Futures fund will go to support AG
- Neighborhood Associations starts composting in each block
- Start community land trust to conserve farmland and community gardens
- Develop water infrastructure in parks to support community gardens
- Transform Vancouver Mall into a food hub and makers space

The Distribution Dilemma

Self-directed distribution, 3rd party (distributor food services, institution) and wholesale

Channels: On-line, Mail order, direct pick up, food hubs, farmer's markets

Opportunities

- Half of all food is consumed outside the home
- Self-distributing = more control
- Third party is lower cost, lower exposure
- Negotiators are people, relationships are always good

Challenges

- 'I don't know you' syndrome
- 3rd party is cost of order, size, logistics, marketing, sales, administrative
- Institution – has compliance issues and is slow to pay.
- Negotiators – paperwork, samples, insurance, policy procedure, guarantee or allowance,
- label and packaging

The business of good food - panel of restauranteurs

- Difficult to get enough supplies from one or two vendors
- Flexibility is key – both restaurant and farmer – get creative together, in advance!
- Not enough connection between farmer and restaurant – difficult to do, time factor
- Local foods drive cuisine



- Need to charge a fair price to payee: farmers and self.
- Connecting farmers/ growers, and restaurants – **could create a ‘mecca’ for this.**
- Need to educate the community to stay on this side of the river
- Price per meal per person (dinner) is less than what it would pay farmer fairly.
- Creative ‘shoulder’ seasonal foods are needed.
- Research farm / WSU will house new seed scientist to develop seeds /foods suited to this region.
- Traceability – is an opportunity, smaller producers can prove more easily where food came from vs larger companies.
- Fine dining (fast) casual counter service. Restauranters can tell story because they have the relationships with farmers ..BUT everyone in society has responsibility to know and tell the story – this is a **more immersive experience.**
- Mandatory visits (to farmers/ producers) by all staff, so that everyone will be advocates
- Hudson’s Bay HS horticultural program was successful with growing.
- Side – end eater/ venue not available at alternate prices. Discomfort with the food that really should be on the table, They’re familiar with convenience store foods.
- Training needed on how to cook.
- High end restaurants and food carts are the future, unless something changes with the system.
- Labor shortage for all the work around food.
- Need farmland: Clark County is more focused on development, not enough on AG. County is missing **master planning for food**
- Federal subsidies reward the big farms – need to level the playing field for all farmers.
- Clark college wants to be a convener bringing all sectors of food system together. Operating in silos is happening now- there is a **need for a food hub**, or centralized business hub for connecting buyers to farmers.
- Total utilization – including waste stream – needs to be taught.
- Restaurants need to **menu to season** smaller farms sell to them because they can supply just a few months a year.

What is your dream, your story, of the future for a thriving, robust local food economy that sparks your passion?

- What is the food culture of Clark County – separate from Portland
- Attracting small business and local business, strengthening local economies and preventing vulnerability of job losses.
- Regional issues, opportunities specific to Vancouver/SW Washington, that are different than Portland, Seattle and Spokane
- Building the mom and pop businesses – like in Europe
- Make Clark County Great Again!
 - No bad hombres from P-Town
 - Break the bridge: Portland ban



- Specialization – Vancouver is known for what? NADA – let’s change that and market something we do best! E.g. Hermiston Melons – Walla Walla Onions.

IV. Education – Agriculture, Ecology and new learning.

Some of the comments collected included; *Great to see a community college asking for community input on what is needed, thank you for hosting the summit!* and *how much is Clark College management team bought in to regional food potential?*

There is a great deal of commitment to the work ahead for Clark and a sincere belief that the future success of our students is closely tied to effectively working with the community.

What did you (the participants) hear today that changed your perspective or inspired you?

- Education about food, food systems should be passionate and fun, vs traditional institutional education.
- Teaching the next generation: Erin Harwood and Kathleen Perillo are awesome!
- Educate where food comes from
- Education is needed on how to connect with local food between farmers and consumers.
- Soil Testing is an important new field.
- Weeds tell us what soil has in it, compost weeds back in to the soil they grew in.
- Fermentation: chew 30 times before you ingest, middle of the tongue is bitter, sour is on the side, tip of the tongue is sweet.
- Using other things for fermentation, could I make better beer?
- Wasps eat Aphids
- Broccoli must be further apart and requires good soil
- Whey to ferment!!
- Taste is on different areas of the tongue
- I know we still don’t know exactly in how many ways *humus* enhances the nutrient value of soil.
- Gardening, cooking and nutritional knowledge is good food for all
- Four month growing season in Clark County makes it hard to keep it fresh.

What is your dream, your story, of the future for a thriving, robust local food economy that sparks your passion?

The new model of AG in the middle

Small to medium farms to supply locals with quality, sustainable food

- Local Economic development -----leads to more jobs
- Lower food Costs -----leads to better quality food for less money



- Increased revenue -----funds expansion
- Local economic stability -----reduction in welfare

A good locally sourced meal is in the center

- Great ideas create it
- Balance of cost vs quality
- Education
- Farmers, restaurateurs and chefs
- Local sourcing is difficult to make it happen

ECO-DYNAMIC AGRICULTURE

Key AG issues: loss of species diversity and loss of habitat. Eco dynamic AG includes:

So the question becomes; How do we create a bridge through native (species/plant) and AG?

Restorative: Ecosystems re-establish species, resilience, stability, connectivity across the landscape.

**See Heritage Farm – Boschma Farm Native Plant propagation center.*

Native Flora: Adapted to the area, come with co-evolved fauna, more diversity in plants and micro habitats.

Land sparing, land sharing is incorporating native ecology. Biodiversity – we tend to work against biodiversity. Natural pest control, soil health (reduce erosion)

Ecosystem services want equality – no one is dominating the other. Restoration takes time, three years, probably at least 10 years.

Organic is not necessarily better in AG practice. Depends on what they are willing to do for restoration purposes. There is still a large spectrum with the organic AG.

Need species and structural diversity: e.g. don't focus on one pollinator – think about all the seasons' all the options.

Organic	Permaculture	Biodynamic	Eco Dynamic
USDA Cert.	Self-sustaining	Farm as holistic system	Biodiversity
Not More \$	Food forest	Create own fertility	Soil fertility
Approved chemicals	Mimic diversity of forest ecosystem	Have to be certified organic	Soil erosion mitigation
Ground cover	Everything has a role	Diversified system	Natural pest control
Conservation methods	Not just for humans	Closed loop system	Native plants
NO GMO	Don't use natives.	Spiritual elements.	



The Big Buy Supply Chain Dilemma

1. Retailers are increasingly interested in working with local suppliers. Producers still need a good plan when entering in to a contract. Add the cost of distribution now event if you aren't distributing yet.
2. It is challenging for small businesses to distribute to commercial clients, so small distributors (B-Line) are helping to meet this need.
 - Product compliance
 - Label compliance (work with experienced designer) and consider private labeling
 - On-line direct sales can help cash flow.
 - Packaging – attractive, usable, sustainable (increasingly important to consumers)
 - Co packers have a role

Opportunities for Clark College

- Distribution services are needed
- Producers could partner to help each other
- Distribution Co-OP
- Nontraditional channels: on-line, organics to you / specialty distributors
- Crowd-Cow.com
- Blue Apron style programs
- Programs / resources to connect suppliers to retailers
- Access to commercial production space

Healthy Food Starts with good Soil

The science of soil health is paying attention to signals and modifying what is grown in it. It is a dynamic system, actually an eco-system that is a network of relationships working together. Attributes are: physical, chemical, biological, and ecological. Soil health is directly related to soil quality and functionality. Testing soils for PH – can send those to lab for accuracy. Soil is high in minerals and low in organic matter. Humus organic matter is ideal at 2%. Seeds from organic providers in our area is much more likely to be successful in our environment. Organic Farms equally productive to conventional as long as the soil is well managed. Organic has better soil structure, better supply of nutrients, much more microbial activity, and more invertebrate biodiversity. In the long term is more sustainable. The profit per acre can be higher in a drought year. The economics – value of the product and what it is worth, valuing labor and family time, value of the future and the past.

To till soil or not? Cost benefit analysis, sometimes it is necessary to get to a different state. When the soil is good – place perennial crops. Weeds (Third Plate addresses this), reading weeds, will tell you about soil needs, what to put back in – what you pulled out. Natural predators, pests, habitat must be present for insects to remain. Promote native species and wait for the system to evolve to overcome pests. Predatory wasps and aphids are a good example of this.



Nutrient Loss Prevention for a Lifetime of Health.

- Nutrition is gained from what we eat
- Infancy impact: expanding the taste profile, creating habits in early childhood through nutrition. The body craves what it knows.
- Nutrition 'On Foot' is the quick fix.
- The cognitive aging process is highly variable
- Social connections play a role in health
- Adult nutrition includes a balanced lifestyle
- Healthy weight, healthy diet varies for each person, each community, and each region.
- Flavor vs taste: five tastes, but flavor profiles of communities are varied, and flavor is learned.

Fermentation, Probiotics & the Biome

- We are not a body but a system. Microbes that are breaking down fiber = fermentation [FODMAP]
- Nine out of ten cells in our bodies = microbes. Fat slows absorption. We must chew food 30 times to prepare for effective digestion. Diverticulosis develops from low fiber diet. Fiber is good, the higher the fibers the higher the gas. Fermentation is in wine, beer, vinegar, bread, yogurt, cheese, olives, soy sauce, ketchup, Kampuchea.
- Caves are a perfect environment for fermentation. Temperature is ideal at 60 degrees; it slows at 75-80 degrees. Fermenting preserves and enhances nutrient content, producing B Vitamins and enzymes beneficial to digestion.
- Lactic acid preserves healthy flora. Salt is a key fermenting medium. It allows natural bacteria to do the fermenting. Vinegar is an antibiotic. Fermentation can make food you may have problems with more consumable e.g. cucumbers and pickles, cabbage and sauerkraut. To ferment, keep everything under liquid. Salt and starter cultures (whey, kefir grains and freeze dried), promote the fermentation process. Make sure your yogurt says 'live cultures'