

From Global to Local: Developing Strategies for System-Wide Change

An educational session at the 2007 Southern SAWG Annual Conference

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Presenters

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Summary and Highlights

Where are the opportunities to create community-based food systems? This session highlighted two groups developing more local food systems in rural Tennessee and the Kansas City area.

Steve Hodges described the process that led **Jubilee Project** to develop a community kitchen – Clinch Powell Community Kitchen – and a marketing cooperative – Appalachian Spring Cooperative. Early on they were faced with three challenges:

- Processing takes expensive equipment and facilities (Clinch Powell Community Kitchens Startup Costs - \$385,285).
- Marketing packaged foods is very different than marketing other foods, involves a big learning curve.
- Wholesale process for value-added foods leave small producer little to no room for marketing costs.

Their solution was to create a local food system where each link is accountable to the community and there are fair returns at each link in the value chain, as well as quality for the consumer. They have been building it slowly. Advantages of building a regional food system by the piece-by-piece approach (we discovered by accident):

- More affordable
- More manageable
- Builds community assets and wealth

Their next step is looking at the feasibility of developing a local foods retail store. Some of the challenges they are facing:

- No other local models like it
- Store needs to carry enough different kind of products to attract customers
- Store needs to develop year-round supply relationships
- Need education for customers about seasonality

- Poultry processing and regulatory barriers

Diana Endicott described the story of the **Good Natured Family Farm Alliance**. There are about 200 farms in their alliance in Kansas and Missouri. Although they may look similar, they are very diverse in experience and faith traditions. For the most part, they sell farm fresh, naturally produced foods to locally owned mainstream supermarkets in the Kansas City area.

Their farmers provide products in 25 categories, including:

- Beef (this is their anchor product)
 - Dry aged
- Value added meat products (ie: hotdogs - all natural beef)
- Produce
- Poultry
 - Air chilled product
 - Quality System Verification Program started via SARE grant
- Heritage turkeys
- Glass bottled milk
- Eggs
- Goat's milk
- Honey
- Native fruit jelly
- Tofu
 - Hard to sell in Midwest, but new product on their line
- Salsa
- Chestnuts

Endicott explained some of the things that make them successful. They own their own processing plant to control the quality of their meats. They developed their own quality standards for all their products. They find strengths in themselves and their partners, and don't worry about weaknesses.

Marketing is their forte. Endicott explained some of the ways that they market their products and their alliance, including:

- Use some simple but effective market analysis tools
- Customer "rewards card"
- Farmers table in store during summer
- Extensive sampling of products in stores (Endicott does this herself to eliminate the cost of the store doing it – about \$135 per day)
- Road show for meat - cart to front with specials
- Farm tours (\$50 per family)
- Use of Growers stories (hand book of information about growing process)
- In-store signage
- Computer check-out with pictures of local farmers
- Rewards card with monthly info on local purchases (also helps with tracking marketing data)

- Earth day festival and promotion
- Chefs promote local foods
- Retailer recognition
- Constantly telling their story
- Recognition: Home Grown Heroes (applies for awards to get producers recognition)
- CSA Connection via supermarket
 - Pay membership fee of \$25
 - Get \$37 of produce for \$25 per week, 2 recyclable bags and how to use product
- Use Media as an ally