



# Creative Solutions FOR Thriving Communities

CENTRALINA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

**REGIONAL CONFERENCE**

## Improving Community Food Systems: Food Councils in the Charlotte Region



Centralina Council of Governments

GROWING Jobs and Our Economy | CONTROLLING Cost of Government | IMPROVING Quality of Life

# Improving Community Food Systems: Food Councils in the Charlotte Region



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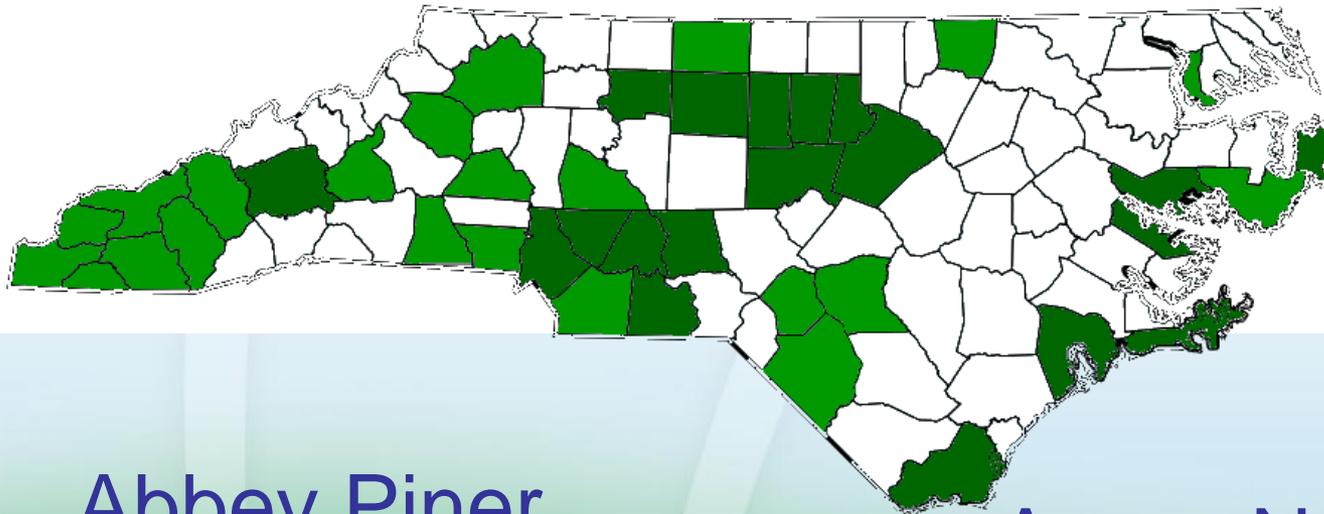
**Community Food Strategies**  
*Strengthening Partnerships, Aligning Results*

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**Abbey Piner**

Community Food Strategies  
[apiner@ncsu.edu](mailto:apiner@ncsu.edu)

**Erin Brighton**

Charlotte-Mecklenberg Food Policy Council

**Aaron Newton**

Cabarrus Farm and Food Council

**Shawn Hatley**

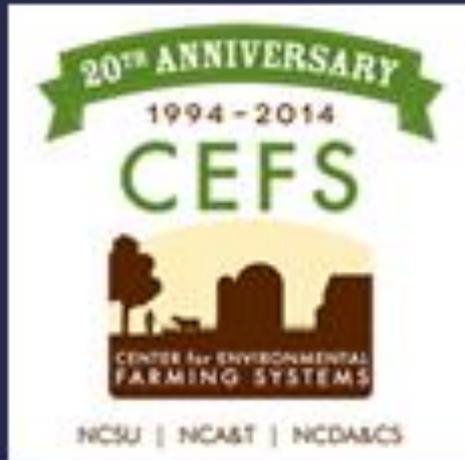
Upper Pee Dee Food Council

# Session Take-Aways

- Food councils are examples of the importance, opportunity and benefits of **cross-sector collaborations**.
- **Best Practices** for Food Councils – 5 years in:
  - Diversified leadership is essential for a sustainable food council.
  - Food council best practices include having at least part time paid coordination.
- **Intentional networking as successful action:**  
Successful food councils create and enliven a space for collaboration. (And sometimes food councils take action).

# COMMUNITY FOOD STRATEGIES

Strengthening Partnerships & Aligning Results



# What is a food council?



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=occe8dURgHsA>

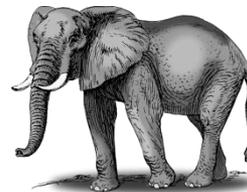
Food councils are community organizations that help promote stronger local food systems. They assess the current food situation, make recommendations on how to improve it and communicate recommendations to policymakers and organizations that can take action.

# WHY

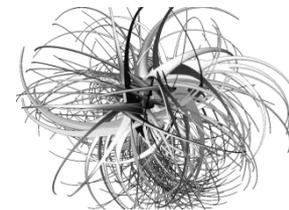
...are food councils needed?



Collaboration

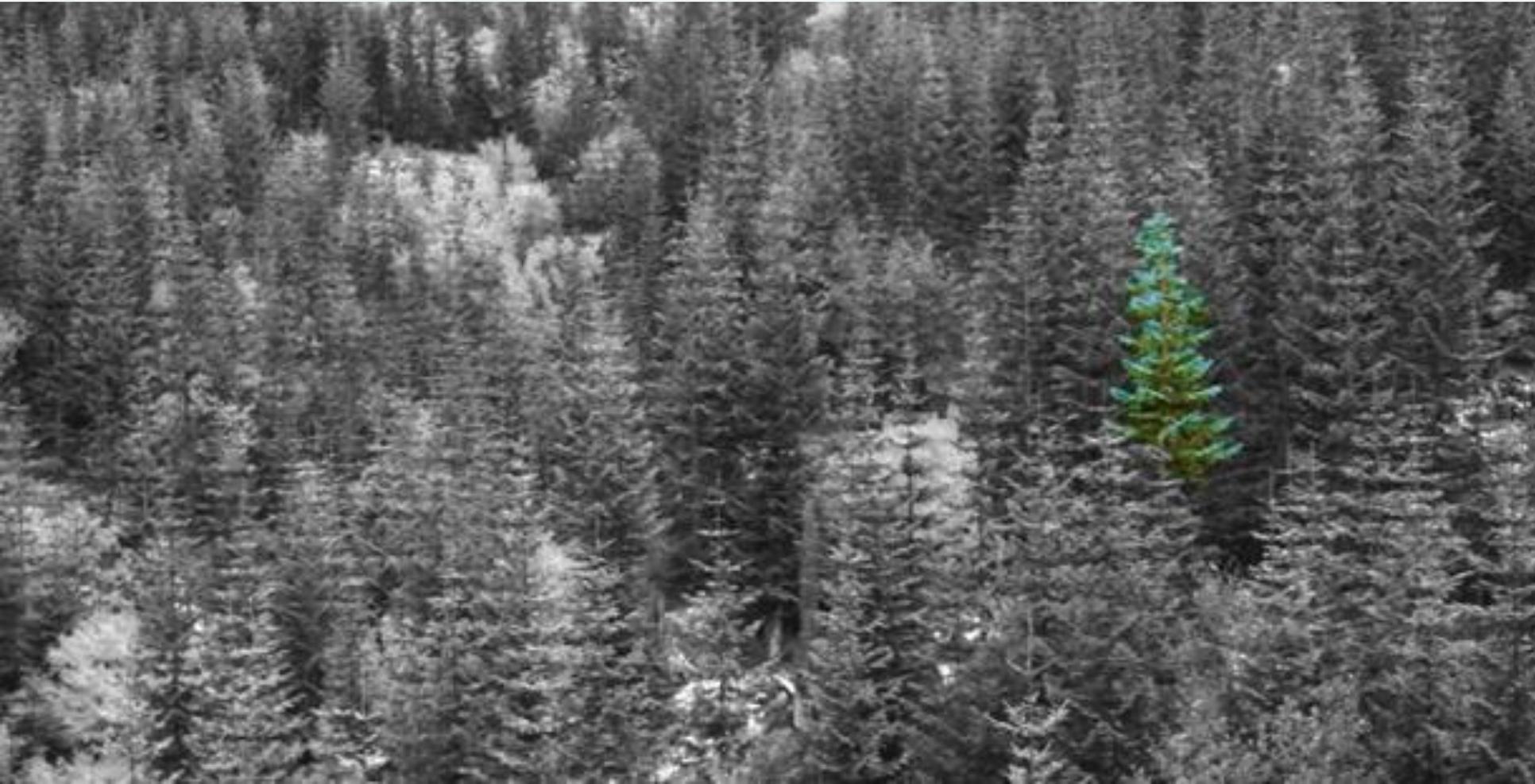


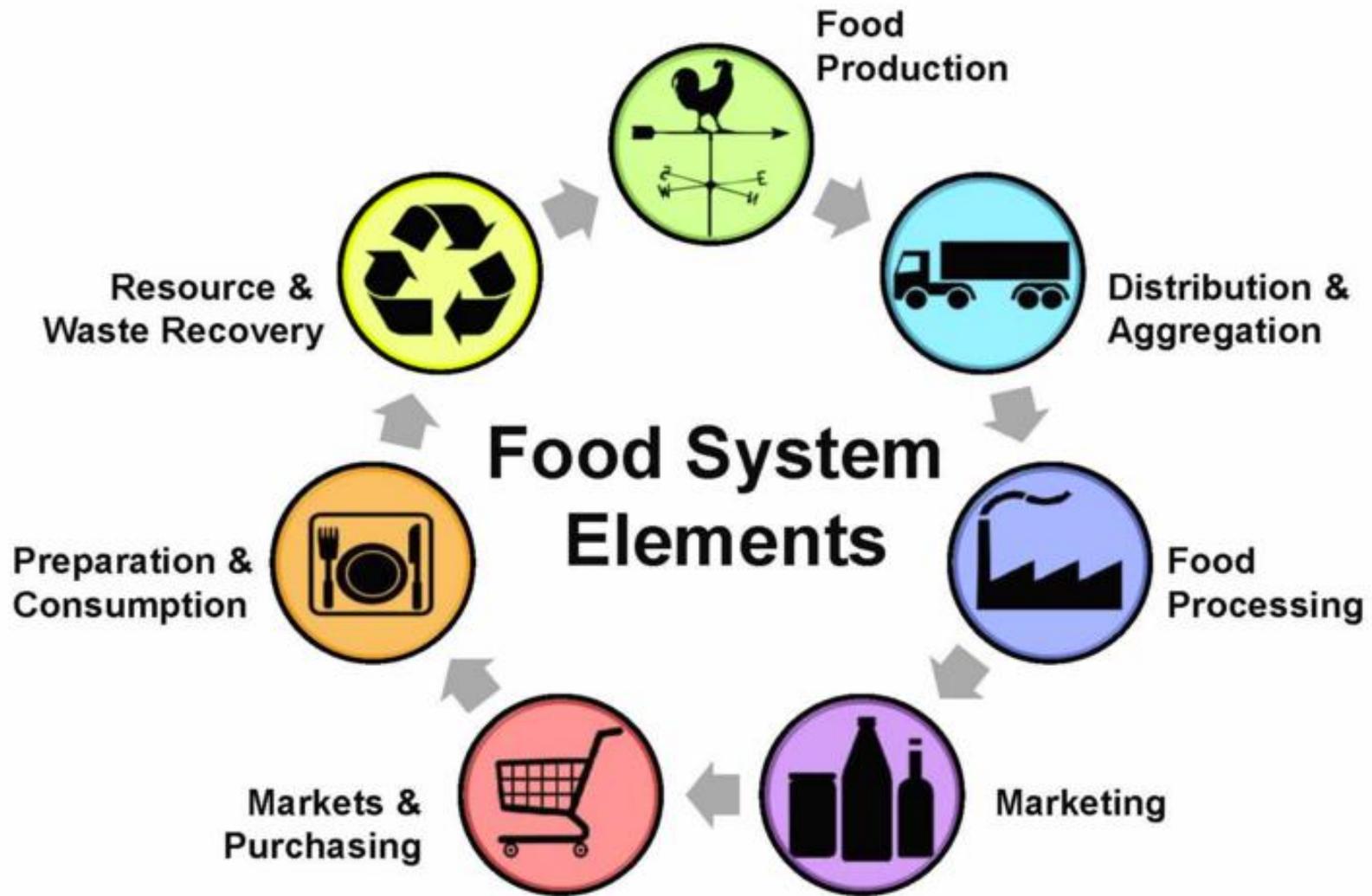
Shared View

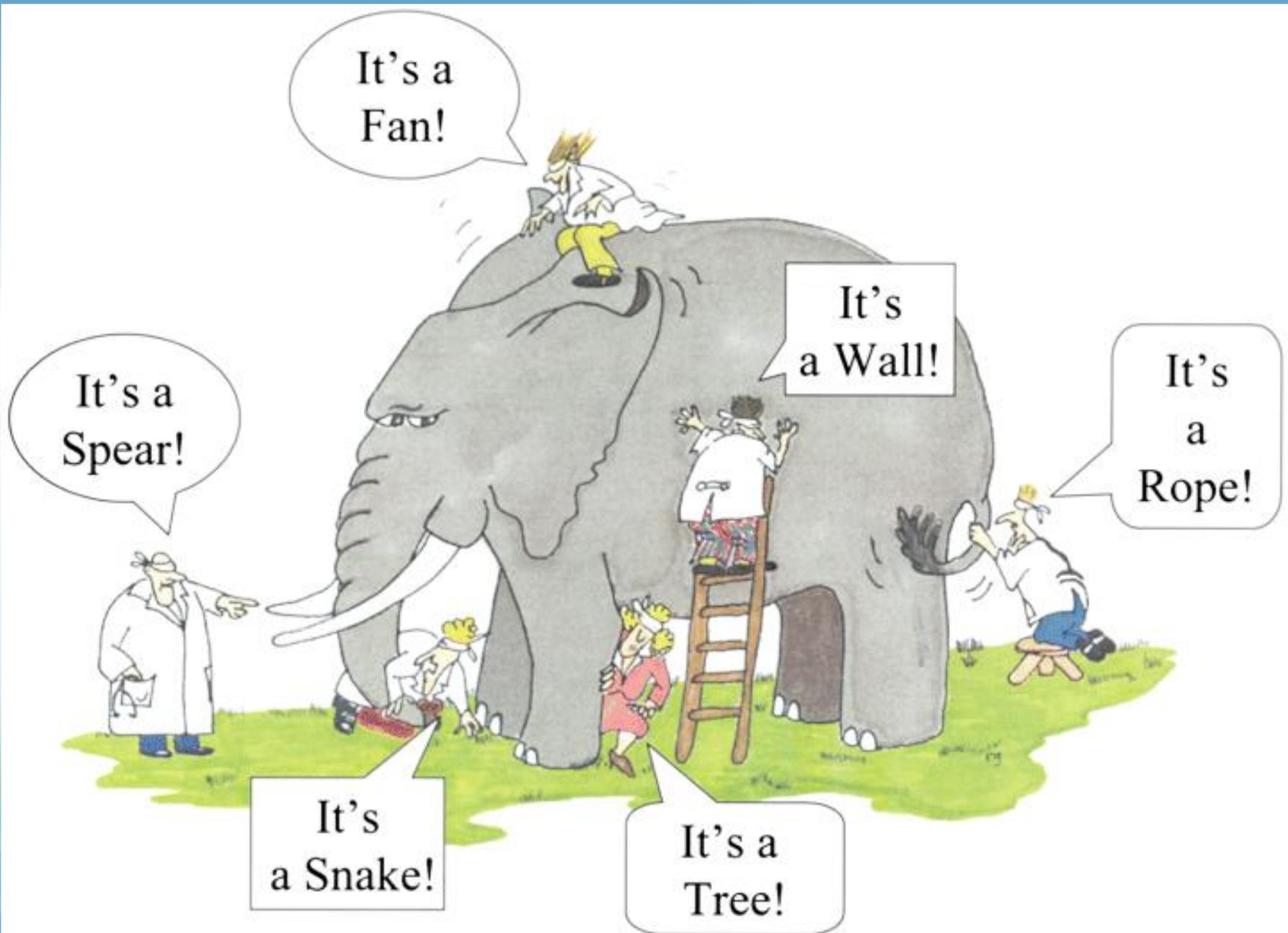


What Works?

**Food councils provide a shared way of thinking about the whole community food system.**

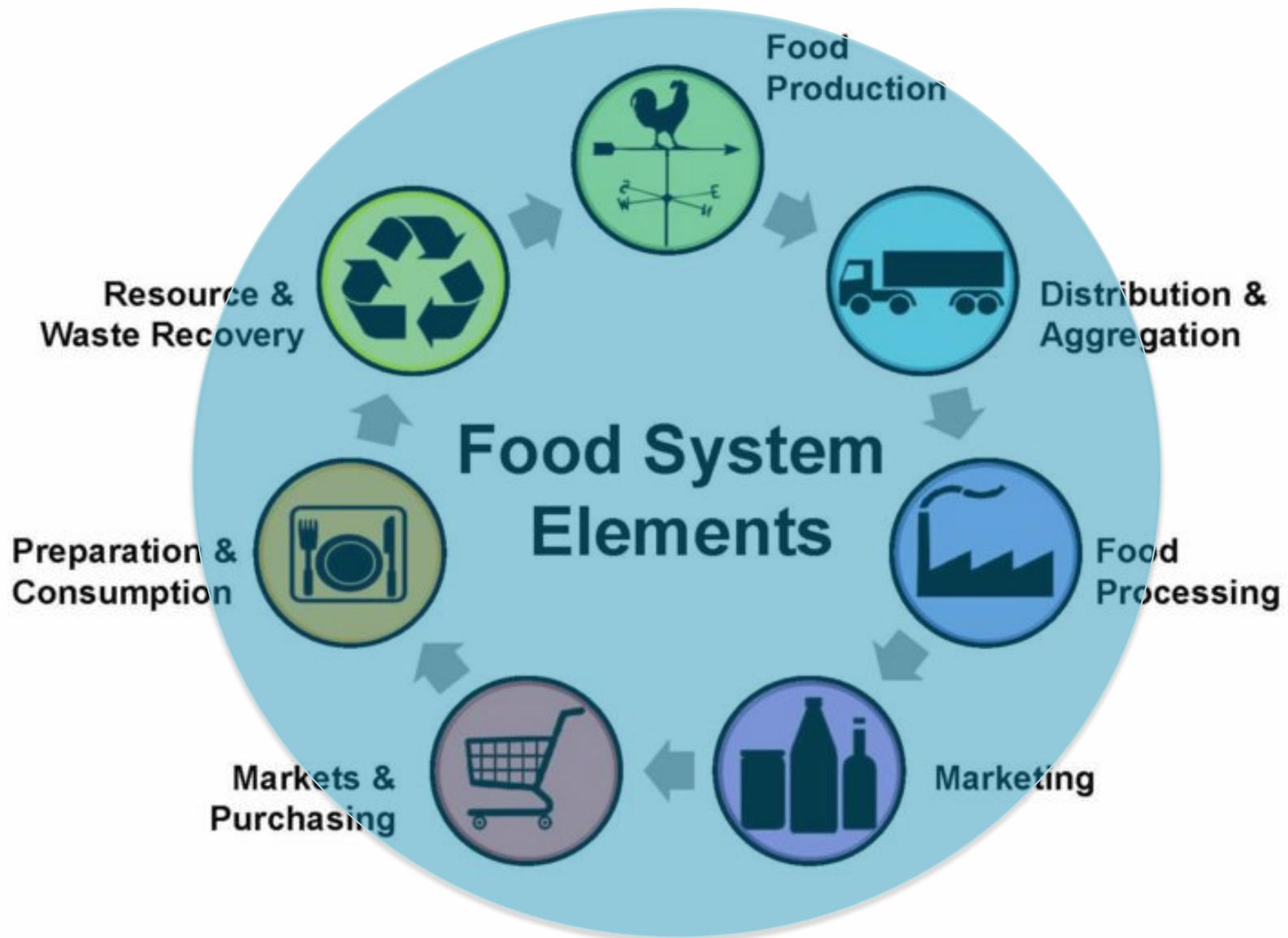






Blind Men and the Elephant By John Godfrey Saxe (1816–1887)





The image features a row of stylized trees against a light blue background. The trees on the left are faded and light blue, while the tree on the right is solid dark blue. The text is centered over the trees.

**We See The Forest . . .**

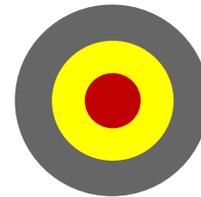
**And The Trees.**

# WHAT

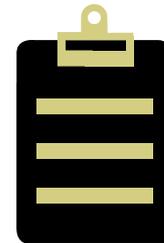
...do food councils DO?



Facilitate Connections



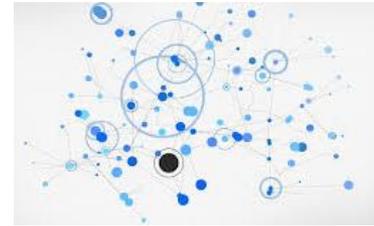
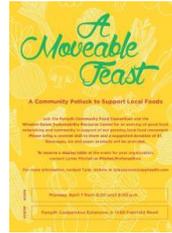
Provide Focus



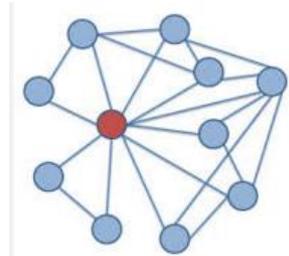
Drive Action



Facilitate Connections



Provide Focus



Drive Action



# HOW

...do food councils succeed?



Attend to People



Attend to Purpose



Attend to Process



Food councils hold themselves and the community accountable to the question:

*What does a vibrant community-based food system look like for our community?*



Attend to People



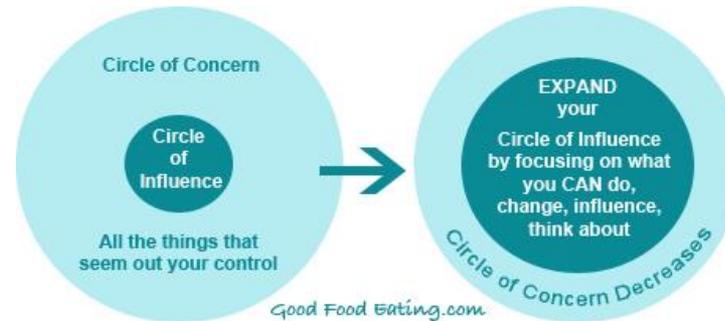
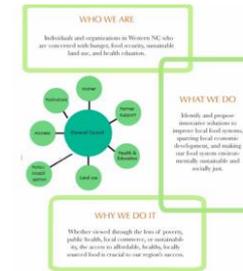
Attend to Purpose



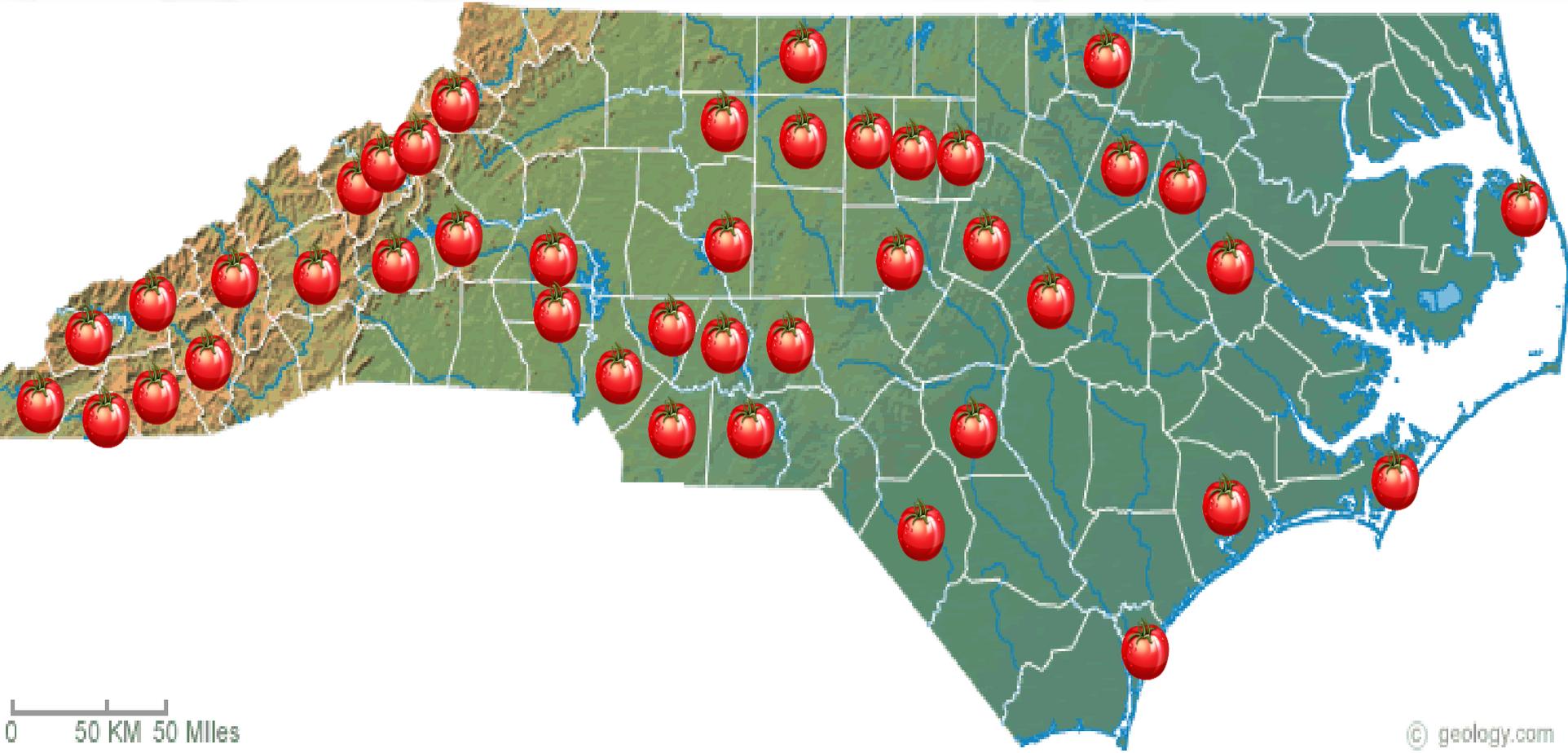
Attend to Process



County	Number of Farms	Value	Jobs
Albemarle	1,200	\$1.2B	10,000
Allegheny	1,500	\$1.5B	12,000
Asheboro	1,800	\$1.8B	15,000
Blount	2,000	\$2.0B	18,000
Cherokee	2,200	\$2.2B	20,000
Clay	2,500	\$2.5B	22,000
Craig	2,800	\$2.8B	25,000
Dade	3,000	\$3.0B	28,000
Dalton	3,200	\$3.2B	30,000
Dawson	3,500	\$3.5B	32,000
Douglas	3,800	\$3.8B	35,000
Franklin	4,000	\$4.0B	38,000
Ga. Total	42,000	\$42.0B	378,000



**35 Councils representing 43 counties are existing or emerging in NC.**



# Some best practices are emerging:

- Strategically cross-sector (whole measures)
- Baseline assessments to set priorities and focus
- Diversified leadership is essential for a sustainable food council
- Champions and relationships in local government *and* in community groups
- Food council best practices include having at least part time paid coordination.

# Three Charlotte Region Food Councils are improving our community food systems:



CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

*ERIN BRIGHTON, MPH, M.ED., DIRECTOR*

# Our Top Food Policy Issues



# CMFPC Structure

## Board of Directors

**Board Chair**  
Young-Sun Roth  
(Bank of America)

**Secretary**  
Elizabeth DeBragga  
(Compass Group)

**Treasurer**  
Marisa Faigen  
(Foodbuy)

**Director**  
Megan Liddle Gude  
(Center City Partners)

*Development*

**Director**  
Victor Romano  
(Johnson C. Smith  
University)

*Research*

**Director**  
Katherine Metzo  
(Winthrop University)

*Research & Experts  
Panel*

**Director**  
Nadine Ford  
(Mecklenburg County  
Solid Waste)

*Experts Panel*

**Director**  
Kate Uslan  
(Alliance for a Healthier  
Generation)

*Marketing &  
Communications*

**Director**  
Karina Gonzalez  
(Mecklenburg County  
Health Dept)

*Marketing &  
Communications*

**Director**  
Reggie Singleton  
(Mecklenburg County  
Health Dept)

**Director**  
Erin Coomer  
(Novant Health)

## CMFPC Team

**CMFPC Director**  
Erin Brighton

**FoodCorps  
Service  
Members**  
Katie McCrea  
Jacob Huffman

**Intern(s)**

**Volunteers**

## Experts Panel Members



# CMFPC Vision, Mission, Focus & Goals

## Vision

Good, affordable, healthy food for all

## Mission

Advocate for policies that build a sustainable, equitable, & healthy local food system

## Focus Areas

### Healthy Food Access Policy

Advocate for policies to increase access to healthy foods for all Charlotte residents, focusing on low-income citizens

### Local Food Policy

Advocate for policies to strengthen our local economy & environment by supporting our local farmers, food producers & entrepreneurs

## Goals

- Enhance health of Charlotte-Mecklenburg residents
- Strengthen local economy & market opportunities
- Reduce hunger & food insecurity
- Strengthen connections & networks between people and groups

# CMFPC's Role in the Community

## Examples of our Work

### Advocate

*Identify food-related policy issues; work with policy makers throughout the community to amend and alleviate.*

- 2010 Food Assessment identified areas of need
- 2013 discussion with City Council Economic Development Committee
- 2015 new zoning ordinance allowing Mobile Farmers Markets access to under-served neighborhoods

### Educate

*Engage and empower through communities with information about nutrition, cooking and local agriculture. Key groups include:*

- West Blvd Neighborhood Association
- Stratford-Richardson YMCA
- Barringer Academic Center
- Reid Park

### Convene

*Bring together the right people at the right time to recognize and address the need.*

- 2013: Health Department nutrition educators, teachers and gardeners came together from Friendship Gardens to launch the School Garden Network
- CMFPC Experts' Panel

# CMFPC Audiences

## Who We Influence



**City, County, & State Government Representatives** - County Commission Health Committee, City Manager, County Manager, City Council, City Cabinet



**Health Dept**



**Public Health Practitioners**

### Who We Serve



**Charlotte-Meck Residents**



**Farmers**



**Gardeners**



**Chefs & Restaurateurs**



**Food Retailers** – grocery stores, restaurants, markets



**Local Food Entrepreneurs**



**Local Food Producers**



**Business Advocacy Groups** – Chamber of Commerce



**CMS Schools** – focus on low-income



**Local Independent Schools**



**Institutional Food Buyers** – hospitals, colleges, hotels, retirement communities



**Corporate Leaders**



# CMFPC Roadmap Summary

In Progress

Where We Are Going

2014

Strengthen our Foundation,  
Refine Focus Areas

2015

Strengthen Advocacy,  
Build Momentum

2016

Go-To Food Policy Influencer

## Key Activity Categories

### Small Food Businesses/ Start-Ups

- Hosted Local Food Entrepreneurs Panel (May 2014)
- Design & conduct survey/interviews to explore barriers for small food businesses & outline 2015 scope of work based on findings
- Partner with Queen City Forward on Innovation Challenge FOOD

### Farm-to-School

- GAP certification for small, local farmers
- Partner with CMS to apply for a feasibility grant to purchase local foods for cafeterias
- Leverage FoodCorps Service Member for research & planning

### Advocacy

- Lead annual Charlotte-Meck State of the Plate – food assessment
- Design system for leveraging Experts Panel & members in advocacy
- Create “knowledge hub” – digital research archive on the local food system

# CMFPC History & Accomplishments

Year	Notable Achievement
<b>2010</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Volunteer group began formal operations</li><li>• Meck County Community Food Assessment Phase 1</li><li>• Saved Barbee Farm</li></ul>
<b>2011</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Charlotte-Mecklenburg Food Policy, Inc formed as 501(c)(3)</li><li>• 1st Mobile Produce Stand with Friendship Gardens</li><li>• Meck County Community Food Assessment Phase 2</li><li>• Mobile Farmers' Markets' Advocacy</li><li>• West End Food Assessment</li></ul>
<b>2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Formed Experts' Panel</li><li>• CATS Transit Center Fruit Stand with Friendship Gardens</li><li>• CONNECT Our Future Regional Plan</li><li>• Public roundtable "Local Foods as a Business Development Tool"</li><li>• Webinar "Local Food &amp; Food Policy in Meck: Primer for Parents"</li><li>• Co-hosted NC Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council</li><li>• Published Mecklenburg Urban Agriculture Guide</li></ul>
<b>2013</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Burt's Bees Grant to form the Charlotte School Garden Coalition</li><li>• Participated in Funds to Farms</li><li>• Charlotte City Council Economic Development</li><li>• On Community Leadership Council of Toxic-Free NC</li><li>• Bank of America Environmental Group</li><li>• Self Help Credit Union Open Meeting: Healthy Food Financing</li></ul>

# CMFPC History & Accomplishments (cont)

Year	Notable Achievement
<b>2014</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advised on City Mobile Markets Policy</li><li>• Presentations to Health Dept, City Staff</li><li>• Helped shape state-wide FPC network</li><li>• Launched CMFPC Membership Program</li><li>• White Paper: Food Insecurity</li><li>• Outreach &amp; Community Building</li><li>• Healthy Kids, Healthy Families program in 5 CMS schools</li><li>• Secured first FoodCorps Service Member in region</li><li>• Local Food Entrepreneurs Forum</li><li>• Partnered with Queen City Forward on Innovation Challenge FOOD</li><li>• Partnered with AARP on Hunger Forum</li><li>• 2014 Food Day event</li></ul>
<b>2015</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2015 Food Day event</li><li>• Connected CMC Northeast to help establish an onsite Farmer's Market</li><li>• Second FoodCorps Service member began service year</li><li>• GAP certification of the Garinger High School Urban Farm begins</li><li>• Teacher workshops on cooking with students</li><li>• Presentations to community groups</li><li>• Queen City Forward THINKPLENTY</li><li>• State of the Plate food assessment &amp; Action Council</li></ul>



Thursday December 3rd, 2015  
Centralina Council of Governments

# Cabarrus County Farm & Food Council

Aaron Newton  
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association  
[aaron@carolinafarmstewards.org](mailto:aaron@carolinafarmstewards.org)

# Cabarrus County Farm & Food Council



- **The group charged with continuous improvement of local food economy revitalization**
- **21 Members holding 3 years terms**
- **Diverse group of stakeholders**



# Cabarrus County Farm & Food Council

- **Open meetings every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday**
- **County assistance includes meeting space and other support**



# Locally Grown Campaign

- **CCFFC early achievement**
- **Open for use by local food business**
- **Banner for the cause**



# Cabarrus County-focused Local Food Website & Facebook

- **CCFFC early achievement**
- **Features information regarding multiple components of the food system**
- **<http://www.cabarrusfpc.org/>**



# Collaborative Effort!



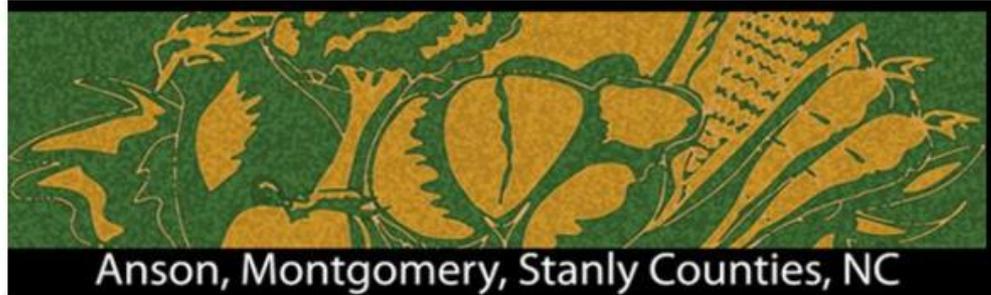
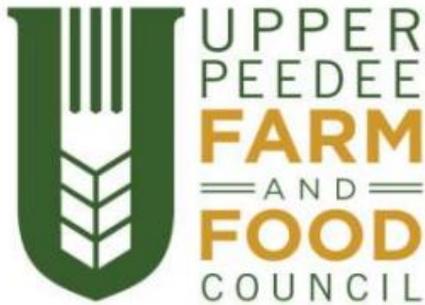
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= **Success**

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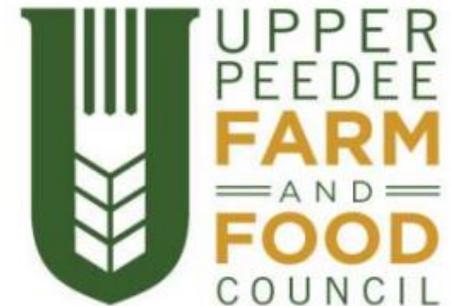


- Vision*** – A sustainable, locally-based, economically resilient farm and food system.
- Mission*** – To encourage, support and coordinate the local farm and food system through: Agriculture, Economic Development, Education, Accessibility and Health

# What are the “5 Bold Steps” ?

- ✓ Establishment of a farm and food council
- ✓ A public awareness and education campaign about our local farm and food system
- ✓ Agricultural business and workforce training, with emphasis on small farms
- ✓ Processing and distribution infrastructure to best aggregate and distribute food to market
- ✓ Farmland preservation and food waste management

LOCAL FOOD  
SUPPORTS  
LOCAL  
FAMILIES



# Who leads the council?

- Five representatives from each county: (Anson, Montgomery, Stanly)
  - **Farmer**
  - **Government Official/Economic Development**
  - **Public Health/Medical Professional**
  - **Education Representative**
  - **Interested Individual**
  - **Plus: One non-voting Union County Rep.**



# Roles and Responsibilities of UPFFC

- **Assess** local farm and food system [health, opportunities]
- **Recommend** improvements based on assessment
- **Communicate** recommendations to community leaders



# Examples of “Action”:

- **Farm Tours** and **Food Guide**
- Farm and **Food Fest** 2014 at Lucky Clays Farm
- **Booths** as local County Agricultural Days and MDI Food Show
- **Presentations** to County Commissioners
- **Farmer tour** at MDI (Merchants Distributors Inc.)
- Drafted **letters of support** for Albemarle Downtown Development Corporation and the Stanly County Department of Health in their efforts to expand the customer bases of their respective farmer’s markets.



# Get Involved! Share your voice.

- ***How can the public be involved?*** – The public is invited to email us to receive monthly farm and food updates around our region, and to visit our website and Facebook.
- Email: [info@upffc.org](mailto:info@upffc.org). Website: [www.upffc.org](http://www.upffc.org). Facebook: [@Upper PeeDee Farm and Food Council](https://www.facebook.com/UpperPeeDeeFarmAndFoodCouncil). Call **704-617-0852** for more information.



# Session Take-Aways

- Food councils are examples of the importance, opportunity and benefits of cross-sector collaborations.
- Best Practices for Food Councils – 5 years in:
  - Diversified leadership is essential for a sustainable food council.
  - Food council best practices include having at least part time paid coordination.
- Successful food councils create and enliven a space for collaboration...and (sometimes) food councils take action.

# Comments and Questions?



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# *Thank you!*

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