



ACTION TOOLKIT



**FOOD & FARMING
NETWORK**

Building NW Michigan's
Agricultural Future



The Northwest Michigan Food and Farming Network (FFN) coordinates efforts to build our region's agricultural economy. We've been connecting the dots in the food system here for over a decade.

The Food and Farming Network operates on a volunteer basis with dedicated participation from dozens of individuals and organizations. We serve to connect regional food and farming change makers through regular meetings, engaging events, valuable information and resource sharing.

Everyone is welcome to attend our monthly meetings. Please visit our website and subscribe to our email newsletter to stay up to date. Our five Network task forces are active throughout the region coordinating work to address the needs of our food system.

Each task force has provided one core question below designed to help you participate in solutions to the challenges facing our regional food and farming system. We've also provided a set of online resources to help you take action in your community.

FOOD ACCESS

What can I do to improve food security in my region?

- **Understand why and how food insecurity affects rural communities.**
- **Contribute to organizations working to creatively alleviate hunger by donating nutritious foods or volunteering your time.**

RESOURCES

- Healthy Harvest www.goodwillnmi.org/food-2/healthy-harvest
- Northwest Michigan Food Coalition www.northwestfoodcoalition.org
- Feeding America www.feedingamerica.org
- FFN Food Access Resource Guide

LOCAL FOOD SALES

What can I do to support and encourage the sales of high quality local food in my region?

- **Try to purchase your food as close to its source as possible by joining a CSA or shopping at farmers markets, farm stands and cooperatives.**
- **Encourage stores and restaurants to source specific items locally. Instead of 'please source locally' try 'please source carrots locally' or 'please source ground beef locally.'**

RESOURCES

- Taste the Local Difference www.localdifference.org
- Edible Grande Traverse ediblegrandetraverse.ediblecommunities.com
- Michigan Farmer's Market Association mifma.org
- NWMI Food and Farming Network Website foodandfarmingnetwork.org



FARMLAND RESOURCES

What can I do to support farming and farmland resources in my region?

- **Participate in education efforts by attending farm tours and learning about farming demonstration sites.**
- **Donate to or volunteer with organizations that support the preservation of our farmland resources.**

RESOURCES

- Heart of the Lakes; Find your Local Land Conservancy www.heartofthelakes.org
- Crosshatch Center for Art and Ecology www.crosshatch.org
- Michigan Natural Resource Conservation Service www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/national/home
- NWMI Food and Farming Network Website foodandfarmingnetwork.org



AGRIBUSINESS GENERATION

What can I do to contribute to the generation and growth of sustainable agribusiness in my region?

- **Become involved in your city or township planning and zoning process to insure that local food production is given proper emphasis.**
- **Talk to friends about the importance of local producers to our region's economic, environmental and cultural vitality.**

RESOURCES

- Michigan Good Food Charter www.michiganfood.org
- Vermont Farm to Plate Strategic Plan www.vtfarmtoplate.com
- MSU Extension Product Development Center productcenter.msu.edu
- NWMI Food and Farming Network Website foodandfarmingnetwork.org



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FARM TO INSTITUTION


What can I do to increase the amount of regionally grown whole food served in my local school?

- **Explore what your school is already doing, starting with their wellness policy.**
- **Implore decision makers to provide healthy and local food at fundraisers, concessions, cafeterias and special events.**

RESOURCES

- Community and Parent Advocate Toolkit farmtoschool.tbaisd.org/community-and-parent-advocate-toolkit
- FarmRaiser farmraiser.com
- Union of Concerned Scientists; School Lunch and Beyond www.ucsusa.org/food-agriculture/expand-healthy-food-access/school-lunch-and-beyond-better-food-policy-healthier-kids
- NWMI Food and Farming Network Website foodandfarmingnetwork.org





OUR GOAL is to build Northwest Michigan's agricultural future by identifying areas of need throughout the region's food system and coordinating action to address them.

OUR STRENGTH is in facilitating synergies and communicating among the many people and organizations already at work changing our regional food system.

OUR FIVE ACTION AREAS:

1. Local Food Sales: Increasing Direct and Indirect Sales
2. Farm to Institution: Institutionalizing Local Procurement
3. Agribusiness Generation: Building Local Production and Processing Capacity
4. Food Access: Healthful Food for All
5. Farmland Resources: Preservation of Farming and Farmland

These action areas are addressed by volunteer task forces assigned to influence food system change by creating new or supporting existing projects in the community.

Visit the Network's website for more information and tools foodandfarmingnetwork.org

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