CAN Community Fair Food System Summit

Local Food Value Chains: Creating Health and Wealth

Thursday July 28, 2022

Local Food Value Chains through an Equity Lens

Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin
Community Farm Alliance

Heather Fuston
Snowville Creamery

Shelly Keeney
The Wild Ramp
CAN’s Footprint

- **Five states**
  - Kentucky
  - Ohio
  - Tennessee
  - Virginia
  - West Virginia

- **Over 170 counties**
  - 39% distressed
  - 28% at-risk
  - 32% transitional
  - 1% competitive
  - 0% attainment

2015-2019 data sources

Created by the Appalachian Regional Commission, June 2021
Data Sources:
Income data: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, LAPI, 2019
Poverty data: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015–2019

Effective October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022
CAN’s MISSION

Advance the equitable, just, and sustainable economic transition of Central Appalachia
CAN’s STRATEGIES

Connect regional organizations and community-based practitioners
CAN’s STRATEGIES

Synergize local efforts to develop and grow key economic sectors
Maximize the impact of collective work to create resilient, diverse, and inclusive communities throughout our region
Our Core Work

Working Groups
1. Investments
2. Workforce
3. Policy

1. PAD
2. Healthy Food Access
3. Beginning Farmer
Our Core Work

**Think Tanks**
Understanding and analyzing local and regional needs, trends, and gaps in sector capacity

**Strategy Hubs**
Build sector capacity and connectivity across the region

**Peer-Learning Spaces**
Build organizational and leadership capacity for community economic development efforts

**Clearinghouses**
Provide resources and technical assistance
CAN’s Processing, Aggregation and Distribution Working Group

- **Strategy**: Strategic deployment of regional infrastructure
- **Creative Use**: Multi-use facilities
- **Growth**: Build the pipeline
- **Peer Learning** & Support Group!
- **Relationships**: The key to trust and resilience
- **Transparency**: Real conversations
Engagement Opportunities

- Join the Food and Agricultural Systems Working Group
- Attend a training or peer-learning event
- Review research and reports on cannetwork.org
- Network with CAN folks during the Summit
- Apply for CAN Mini-Grants
Join us in CAN!

Atlas Charles
Rural Support Partners
atlas@ruralsupportpartners.com

Kathlyn Terry
Appalachian Sustainable Development
kterry@asdevelop.org
Connecting regional organizations and community-based practitioners

Core Work
Grow Sector-Based Working Group

- Connect organizations, practitioners, R&D, & industries
- Create peer-learning spaces
- Center justice, equity, inclusion, diversity, and accessibility

Short-Term Outcomes

- Stronger relationships partnering organizations in the region
- Trusting collaborations are enabled between sector actors
- A bench of emerging leaders build capacity for local work
- Public, Private, & Nonprofit partnerships are developed
- Increased Understanding, Tools, and Knowledge To Advance Equity
Synergize local efforts to develop and grow key economic sectors

Core Work
Support Sector-Based Working Groups
- Provide resources and technical assistance
- Create peer-learning spaces
- Share promising practices and lessons learned
- Create Space: leadership cohorts and affinity spaces
- CAN Tanks and Convenings
- Provide small grants

Short-Term Outcomes
- Common regional analysis and vision developed
- A bench of emerging leaders build capacity for local work
- Promising practices, lessons learned, and replicable models shared
- Innovations from research and development are shared and field-tested
- Peer support and learning opportunities developed
- Increased funding and resources for collaborative work
- Increased alignment of efforts across regional sector work in public, private, and nonprofit efforts
Maximize the impact of collective work to create resilient, diverse, and inclusive communities throughout our region

Core Work
Resource Sector-Based Working Groups

- Resource on-the-ground work of sector actors
- Capture and spread common analysis, tools, innovations, lessons learned, and replicable models
- Inform public and political dialogue on key issues
- Intentionally include historically marginalized groups

Short-Term Outcomes

- Policy recommendations made
- Public and political education and awareness created
- Learning influences CED practices and policy-making for the region
- Historically marginalized groups are resourced and empowered to build new, more sustainable systems
- Cross-sector learning, strategizing, and collaboration opportunities created
- Innovations drive more sustainable and inclusive solutions
Case Model of a Healthy Food Value Chain: The Appalachian Accessible Food Network
Appalachian Accessible Food Network

AAFN Presenters

Tom Redfern
Rural Action Sustainable Ag Director

Molly Sowash
Rural Action Sustainable Ag Manager

Leslie Schaller
ACEnet Director of Programs

Maribeth Saleem-Tanner
CFI Executive Director
The **Appalachian Accessible Food Network** (AAFN) is a partnership formalized in 2014 to accelerate the distribution of local foods into low wealth and underserved Appalachian Ohio communities.

Appalachian Ohio local food systems have become a driving force in the region’s economic revitalization. AAFN makes sure that the growing demand for local, fresh and affordable food reaches everyone in our rural communities. AAFN has leveraged donations, sponsorships, revenue generation and grants to implement a detailed work plan grounded in an equity framework. Inclusion and resilience are integral to our shared vision.
AAFN Investors in Healthy Food Access

★ The Osteopathic Heritage Foundation of Nelsonville
★ The Athens County Foundation
★ The Sisters Health Foundation
★ Sugar Bush Foundation
★ The Catholic Campaign for Human Development
★ Farm Aid

Philanthropic investment leverages USDA support

- Community Food Program
- Farm to School
- Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program
- SARE
- Specialty Crop Block Grant
- Farmers Market Promotion Program
- Rural Business Development Grants
AAFN Objectives:

1. Coordinate actors and stakeholders all along the supply chain to increase **DEMAND** and make local, healthy food available for all.

2. Grow the **VOLUME** and variety of fresh, healthy foods in order to ensure that all consumers in the region have access to local food.

3. Expand and improve the needed **INFRASTRUCTURE** to grow, process, and distribute local and healthy foods.

4. Ensure equity to healthy, local food in all communities through new **DISTRIBUTION** strategies and food access initiatives.

5. Increase **EMPLOYMENT** and ownership opportunities for underserved individuals to create sustainable livelihoods in low wealth communities.
Let’s First Hear from the Partners

➢ Rural Action
➢ ACEnet
➢ CFI
• Serving Appalachian Ohio since 1994.

• Our **Mission** is to build a more just economy by developing the region’s assets in environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable ways.
Program Areas

- **Sustainable Agriculture**
- Sustainable Forestry
- Environmental Education
- Watershed Restoration
- Zero Waste
- Sustainable Energy
- Leadership & Service
- Resilient Communities
- Social Enterprise

Processing, Aggregation, Distribution, and Education
Processing

Farm to Institution:
Procurement, processing, and distribution of fresh, local produce to K-12 schools, universities, and healthcare providers. Training for K-12 employees.
Aggregation

- Built and expanded a rural food hub, called the Chesterhill Produce Auction.
- Over 200 producers, 50 wholesale buyers, 900 retail customers.
- Estimated $400,000 in annual sales from 200,000 lbs of specialty crops.
Distribution
Distribution

- Southeast Ohio Food Bank
- Country Fresh Stops
- Produce Prescriptions
- Buying Club
Education
Education

Whole Farm Project

- Annual Whole Farm Planning & Mentoring series
- Site visits
- Forest management plans
- Forest & Farm management plans
- Legal & accounting consultations
- Educational workshops
- Business plan support
- Access to capital (Kiva loans)
- Access to land
- Silvopasture support
- On-farm solar support
- Tree plantings for riparian buffers
ACEnet Focus on Food Sector

BUILDING networks
SUPPORTING innovation
FACILITATING collaboration
with Appalachian Ohio's businesses
to create a STRONG
SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL ECONOMY.
Processing Infrastructure
Aggregation & Distribution
Increasing Market Access
Farm Entrepreneurs
Local Food Entrepreneurs
Food Workforce Development

CAREER PATHWAYS

29
Serv Safe Food Protection graduates trained between January 2021-April 2022

68
STAR residents working with our clients including: Butcher’s Bites, Crumbs, Ted’s Pepper Butter, Pork and Pickles, Selis Foods, Farm on The Ridge, and To-Go Packs

86
Internship slots across all ACEnet campuses

522
Hours STAR residents have worked with our clients
Community Food Initiatives (CFI)

Our Vision:
A resilient region in which everyone in our community has access to an equitable, inclusive, and thriving local food system.
Building Long-Term Community-Based Food Security

**Bottom Up Approach:**
- Address the Root Causes
- Provide Relief & Create Long Term Change
- Purchase & Donate Local Food from Local Producers
- Invest in the Local Food Economy

**Community and School Gardens**
- Donation Station and Veggie Van
- Food Access Mapping and Community Engagement

**Top Down Approach:**
- Address the Symptoms
- Invest in Commodity Foods

Building Long-Term Community-Based Food Security
Equitable Access
Inclusive Education
EASTSIDE

COMMUNITY GARDEN

Please respect our garden – we’re growing food for ourselves and our community!

For a garden plot call 740-593-5971 or gardens@communityfoodinitiative.com
Questions for the partnering organizations or their individual work?
Regional networks provide a structure for linking people and places with shared values to design and support the relationships imperative to shift big systems. Networks empower us:

- To accomplish together what we could not manage on our own
- Engages and empowers all stakeholders & welcomes diversity
- Enables collaborator to be wise stewards to all investors
- Strengthens peer learning and risk taking
- Lift a shared voice for a just transition in the food sector
- Models nature to build healthy and resilient ecosystems
Demand Channels as Access Points

The **Donation Station** collects and purchases local food to increase availability of fresh foods at regional food pantries and agencies.

**Food Hubs** collect, distribute and market local foods into our communities and educate farmers, food entreprenuers, and consumers.

**Farm to School** educates school stakeholders, facilitates purchases from farmers and coordinates processing and freezing at Hocking College and the SEO Foodbank and Regional Kitchen for year-round use.

**Country Fresh Stops** partner with corner stores, colleges, and health providers to sell fresh produce to serve customers in places with low food access.

**Farmers Markets** create direct sales opportunities for regional growers and access to local foods for consumers.
Athens FOOD VENTURES CENTER & Nelsonville FOOD AND FARM ENTERPRISE CENTER

- Leveraged $380,524 to build-out 10,100 sq. ft. of food sector space
- Built 3 additional walk-ins to expand refrigerated storage space
- Launched 60+ new food businesses and farmers creating value-added products
- Opened the first Ohio Department of Agriculture licensed, artisanal meat processing facility in the state & a new room for vegetable processing, dehydration and flash freezing
Chesterhill Produce Auction

- Grew auction sales by 56%, grossing $385,273 in 2021
- Served about **200 producers** each year who sell through the auction
- Launched and expanded Buying Club, which delivers **115 weekly shares** of fresh produce to **7 sites in 2022**
- Launched the Incubator Farm
- Built livestock barn & expanded the CPA store to sell more goods and crafts
- Hired an auction manager with leveraged funds
- Purchased refrigerated van in 2019 to expand distribution
Farm to School

In the past 7 years...

- Distributed over **65,000 lbs.** of food to **30 schools in 8 districts**
- Processed food with over **200 volunteers**
- Hosted over **600 second graders** annually for “School Day at the CPA”
- Fed-Hock summer food bus
- Delivered about **5,000 apples to 12 schools** annually for Apple Crunch Day
- Professional development trainings for cafeteria staff
- Hosted re-entry employment training in food processing
- Participated in CCMEP program for at-risk youth, employing individuals to assist with Farm to School processing
Donation Station

- Distributed **614,748 lbs.** of food, equaling **513,123 meals**
- Served **216,781 food insecure individuals**
- Grew to serve **59 pantries in 7 counties**
- In 2020 alone, we **invested $51,856** in our food system

Donation Station Pounds of Food Distributed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pounds of Food Distributed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>51,457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>79,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>86,991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>84,011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>90,411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>66,601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>75,536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>132,746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>82,895</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School and Community Gardens

- Managed 101 community garden plots
- Supported 12 school gardens
- Taught 607 lessons in school gardens
- Led 310 Discovery Kitchen educational cooking events
- Reached 8,991 individuals through Discovery Kitchen tasting tables, workshops, and recipes promoting local, seasonal food
Expanding Access

VEGGIE VAN
- Launched the Veggie Van!
- Distributed 3,866 lbs of food
- Served 382 Veggie Van customers

PRODUCE PRESCRIPTIONS
In 2022...
- Purchasing, packing, and delivering 325 weekly shares of fresh produce
- Partnering with 2 federally-qualified health centers
- 5 counties in West Virginia, 4 counties in Ohio

COUNTRY FRESH STOPS
- Distributed over 68,796 lbs. of fresh produce
- Established and supplied 11 Country Fresh Stops
- Served 6 counties
Ability to Pivot for COVID Response

COVID-19 created challenges and opportunities for AAFN. Relationships, a track record of trust, and a willingness to pivot allowed the network to serve our constituencies without interruption.

In 2020, two initiatives were launched with healthcare and community partners: Rural Action’s Produce Prescriptions, distributed through Federally Qualified Health Centers; and Community Food Initiatives’ Veggie Van, a mobile market designed to increase food access in underserved communities.
Collaboration is Key

The Appalachian Accessible Food Network continues to evolve and expand as a network of networks. No one stakeholder can do this work in isolation.

Working with other regional CAN members and funders is essential to strengthen networks. AAFN will continue to connect with like-minded organizations, agencies and institutions to build a just, local food economy.
Q&A

Questions about the AAFN and collaborative work?
Links to Resources

Appalachian Accessible Food Network

- Rural Action
- ACEnet
- Community Food Initiatives
Thank You