Clatsop County Food Talk
A Report on the Food System of Clatsop County

2010
Clatsop Community Action Regional Food Bank
In cooperation with Oregon Food Bank and Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE)
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOOD ASSESSMENT TEAM .......................................................................................... I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ................................................................................................ I
TABLE OF CONTENTS ................................................................................................... II
FOREWORD ................................................................................................................... 1
INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................. 2
BACKGROUND – THE EARLY STAGES ..................................................................... 4
FEAST ........................................................................................................................... 4
  Food Roots .................................................................................................................. 6
  North Coast Food Web ............................................................................................... 7
RECOMMENDATIONS ................................................................................................. 8
COMMUNITY FOOD ACCESS AND ASSETS ......................................................... 10
  Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) ............................................................ 11
  Farmers Markets ...................................................................................................... 12
  North Coast Food Guide .......................................................................................... 14
  Community Gardens ............................................................................................... 14
  Seafood Center ........................................................................................................ 15
COMMUNITY FOOD ASSISTANCE ........................................................................ 17
  Clatsop Community Action Regional Food Bank ................................................... 19
  Youth, Poverty and Food ......................................................................................... 20
  Back-Pack Program .................................................................................................. 23
  Summer Youth Meal Program ................................................................................ 23
  Community Education ............................................................................................. 24
AGRICULTURAL SYNOPSIS .................................................................................... 26
DEMOGRAPHICS OUTLOOK OF CLATSO COUNTY .......................................... 30
WHAT ABOUT SEAFOOD? ....................................................................................... 34
MORE OBSERVATIONS ............................................................................................ 35
  Retailing .................................................................................................................... 35
  Distribution .............................................................................................................. 36
  Farm to Retail .......................................................................................................... 37
Foreword

When the first settlers came to Oregon they were amazed by the rich soil, abundant water supply and even the islands of productivity in Oregon’s deserts. They were thrilled with the crops, fruits and berries they were able to raise, the rich pastureland as well as the streams teeming with fish and the bounty of wild game available to feed a growing population. It would have been impossible for them to believe that anyone could be hungry or food insecure in this land of plenty. It is incredible that hunger and food insecurity abound in Oregon nearly two centuries later. In fact, many of the areas that seemed so bountiful to those early settlers have the least access to food today.

Two years ago the Oregon Food Bank in partnership with University of Oregon RARE program began to conduct community food assessments in some of Oregon’s rural counties. Very few community food assessment efforts have been undertaken in rural America with a county by county approach. The report you are about to read is a result of conversations with the people who make Oregon’s rural communities and their food systems so very unique. These reports are also a gift from a small group of very dedicated young people who have spent the last year listening, learning and organizing. It is our sincere hope, that these reports and organizing efforts will help Oregonians renew their vision and promise of the bountiful food system that amazed those early settlers.

Sharon Thornberry
Community Resource Developer
Oregon Food Bank

Picture 1: Brownsmead dairy operation (Photo: John Dean, 2010)
Introduction

For most in Clatsop County, a strong disconnect exists between consumers and their food. Not much thought is ever put into where their food comes from or how it was raised. The role of Clatsop County Food Talk is to determine what needs to happen in the future to make Clatsop County a more food sustainable region. The assessment is intended to function as a living document utilized by all stakeholders and organizations that share a concern about the future of Clatsop County. This assessment does not offer concrete solutions, only ideas and recommendations that can be built upon by others in the county and the entire North Coast region.

“I hope this assessment can bring a high level of awareness within the production and distribution systems that excess, or less than perfect food should no longer be discarded, but rather salvaged to use in through the work of CCA Regional Food Bank in Clatsop County.” –Marlin Martin, Food Program Developer, CCA Regional Food Bank

Residents of Oregon’s North Coast recognize the fragile location of the region in relation to the rest of the state. Many will recall the storm of 2007 when first discussing food security. During the aftermath of the 2007 storm, much of Clatsop County became completely cut-off from the more populated areas west of the Coast Range. Distribution lines for retailers ceded, while many local residents, for the first time, had to rely on the resiliency of the food bank in attaining food for their families. Due to the experience of 2007, the term “food security” resonates with Clatsop County residents more firmly than almost anyplace in Oregon. Unfortunately, for many, the winter storm of 2007 became lost in history, and the traditional ways of food distribution and consumption once again became the norm. With increasing gas prices and an increasing local population, the time is now to solidify the food system throughout Clatsop County and the entire North Coast of Oregon, making 2007’s disaster an event that the area is more prepared to handle when it occurs next. This report demonstrates that the region’s fragile geographical location, along with its high unemployment and persistent poverty, makes food security in Clatsop County an issue of extreme importance and in need of immediate action.

“I want to help make it easier for other aspiring farmers in this county. The challenges are huge, the issues are complex. We need to begin to work together.” –Teresa Retzlaff, local farmer and North Coast Food Web board member
"With the completed food assessment we will now have a comprehensive tool with which to help others in our community (as well as outside of it) better understand our North Coast food system and the weaknesses, strengths and challenges that are encompasses within it. With (Clatsop County Food Talk) in hand, community food advocates can better work with local government, businesses and individual community to make informed and sound decisions to improve and support our North Coast region’s food security and to continue to find ways to nurture and monitor our regional food health.” –Kristin Frost
Albrecht, Oregon State University Extension, Clatsop County

To complete the food assessment of Clatsop County, the local fishing industry needs to be assessed in detail.

It is important to note that this is the first community food assessment ever conducted in Clatsop County. This is only the beginning, and much more work is needed to truly “assess” Clatsop County’s food system. This document is intended to provoke thought and conversations with the intention of solidifying Clatsop County’s current and future food system.
Background – The Early Stages

FEAST

“At the FEAST we were able to begin community discussions about, and in some cases define, such topics as "food systems", "food security", "food insecurity", "hunger", "local foods", "culturally-appropriate foods", "emergency foods", "farmers markets", "community gardens", "small farms" and sustainable agriculture" to name a few. I think that the community awareness that came from this initial gathering instigated the incredible positive energy necessary to move forward towards the completion of a regional food assessment.”
–Kristin Albrecht, OSU Extension of Clatsop County

Perhaps the most important piece within the community food assessment in Clatsop County took place in September of 2009. This was the Clatsop County FEAST event in Cannon Beach. FEAST stands for Food Education Agriculture Solutions Together which acts as a community food organizing workshop for the whole community. FEASTs are a common method of community action throughout rural Oregon. Clatsop County’s FEAST event had never been attempted on the North Coast before and was attended by over sixty people, most of which were North Coast residents.

The FEAST is a day-long workshop focusing on the needs of the community from within the community. For most, it was the first chance for community
members to express their opinions and desires regarding Clatsop County’s food system. Participants were asked to list three of the most pressing issues regarding food in Clatsop County. After each participant made their lists, each issue was posted on a wall and then placed into one of five ‘working groups’, or focal areas. These groups include:

- Processing and distribution
- Land use
- Enterprise development
- Community engagement
- Education and outreach

Participants included concerned citizens, interested residents, policy advocates, local producers, and government officials. Their individual concerns are highlighted within each focus area, where participants formed small discussion groups in which they outlined strategies for solving many of the food security, economic, community, and environmental issues that were identified as important needs for the North Coast. Participants within each focal area identified the following pressing issues:

**Processing and distribution**
- Encourage the public to buy more locally
- Increase access to year-round local produce and meat
- Increase amount of locally-produced food at local grocers
- Create opportunities for mobile distribution and delivery of local produce

**Land use**
- Increase offer of zoning/tax incentives for small farms
- Maintain land use planning that supports ecosystem services and encourages sustainable food production
- Each community will have its own community garden(s)

**Enterprise development**
- Utilize food as an economic development initiative for the North Coast
- Create a regional USDA meat processing facility for local producers
- Pursue micro-enterprise options or individual development accounts in helping to boost local producers
- Create a regional food center with a commercial kitchen and production capabilities
Community engagement
- Nurture and grow existing farmers’ markets
- Network within the county and with adjacent counties in establishing a secure food access link

Education and outreach
- Institute farm-to-school programs throughout the North Coast
- Increase community access to education classes
- Improve health quality of school lunches
- Identify and advertise local Community Supported Agriculture programs
- Increase emphasis on youth education and involvement in local food system issues

It is clear that many of the priority issues that came out of the focal area discussions are interchangeable among working groups (i.e. community education and education). Therefore, when addressing the issues, it is important to consider what issues are pertinent to different situations. For example, Cannon Beach currently offers a thriving produce-only farmers market, whereas many Knappa-Svensen residents simply want a roadside space to sell their local produce in a much more informal fashion. To address such issues, each priority “need” should be placed in the appropriate context.

September 2009’s FEAST served as the beginning of an eleven-month Clatsop County community food assessment.

Food Roots
When discussing the priorities of each focal area, most participants agreed that leadership is needed in order to solidify the regional food system. Many participants pointed towards Food Roots in Tillamook County as an example of this leadership. Food Roots (www.foodrootsnw.org) is a 501(c)3 organization whose mission is “to cultivate a healthy food system in Tillamook County.”

Food Roots specializes in community and school gardens, community education, outreach, and small farm economic development; however, Food Roots focuses almost exclusively on Tillamook County, leaving Clatsop County without a leadership entity focusing on regional food security and development. Since the FEAST event, Food Roots has often been mentioned as an asset lacking in Clatsop County.
North Coast Food Web

The North Coast Food Web (NCFW) was created in February of 2010 as a way to provide leadership in solidifying the regional food system. The North Coast Food Web is Clatsop County’s Food Roots equivalent; however, it does focus on different aspects within the food system. It was deemed from a food assessment of Tillamook County that an organization was needed to provide educational and technical support for the public, such as in helping to create community gardens and helping with a farm-to-school program. In Clatsop County, however, there are different aspects within the food system that need attention. For example, as Clatsop County already has a community garden organization (Friends of Clatsop County Community Gardens), the NCFW will not be focusing on aspects that already exist in the region, only on lacking assets, as well as strengthening current assets. The North Coast Food Web will take the recommendations outlined in this assessment as the future direction for the organization.

The NCFW currently operates an online mailing with the same name. This list serve operates as a means of communication for those involved within the food system throughout the North Coast region, including both Pacific (WA) and Tillamook counties. It is important that the North Coast Food Web focuses on the entire North Coast region, including southwest Washington, as it is all included within a regional food system. This also means working closely with Food Roots to close the gaps that may still exist, even with Food Roots’ existence.

By fall 2010, the North Coast Food Web plans to be a certified 501(c)3 organization, with a board and at least one part-time staff member in place to offer leadership and support for the entire North Coast region.

APPENDIX A, towards the end of this report, is a logic model highlighting some of the future goals of the North Coast Food Web.

"The Community Food Assessment is a crucial step towards identifying what foods our county is capable of producing and how or if these foods make it to the end consumer. For our local food business, it is a lack of education concerning the growth and production of local foods that limits access and demand. The assessment will only enhance our communities understanding of the challenges local producers face and the added value they bring to the food that nourishes us everyday." –Matthew Stanley, General Manager, Astoria Cooperative
Recommendations

The following recommendations are generated from year-long discussions and observations throughout Clatsop County’s food system. It is hoped that these recommendations are viewed as opportunities across the food system, generating discussions and action throughout the North Coast.

**Recommendation 1:** Create and support a coalition of regional stakeholders focusing on solidifying the current and future local food system of the North Coast.

1. Continue to work and build upon the needs and assets identified in *Clatsop County Food Talk*
2. Coalition should include representatives from all facets of food system, including producers, distributors, consumers and retailers.
3. Coalition will focus on community/regional needs that are not being currently addressed by other organizations.
4. Serve as an incubator to help initiate regional food system projects.

**Recommendation 2:** Increase communication and partnerships between all involved in food system.

1. Hold quarterly community gatherings to discuss food system updates and networking.
2. Solidify regional partnerships within the entire North Coast region (Tillamook, Clatsop and Pacific (WA) counties).
3. Increase communication between existing food-oriented organizations (Friends of Clatsop County Community Gardens, Slow Food Clatsop, local granges, etc.).
4. Hold a food forum bringing together local producers, retailers and restaurants.

**Recommendation 3:** Increase community education and awareness of local food system concerns and opportunities.

1. Develop a series of events that highlights the North Coast’s food system (public farm tours, film screenings, public discussions and presentations relevant to local food issues, etc.).
2. Increase public opportunities for food and agricultural education classes.
3. Focus on marketing successful new food-related projects.
4. Continually update and distribute the North Coast Food Guide.
Recommendation 4: Support North Coast fisheries.

1. Conduct a thorough assessment of local fishing industry, identifying ways to improve communication and engagement between fishers, local government and the public.
2. Improve access for fishers to local and economically viable resources.
3. Support educational opportunities for the public to learn more about the local fishing industry.
4. Work to keep fish caught along the North Coast on the North Coast for local distribution.
5. Build a program to bring underutilized fish species to CCA Regional Food Bank.

Recommendation 5: Improve local producers’ access to new processing and distribution outlets.

1. Increase outlets for local producers (i.e. produce-oriented farmers markets, farmer cooperatives, mobile markets, etc.).
2. Create partnerships between local producers and local distributors and retailers.
3. Develop ways for local meat producers to process locally in USDA-approved processing units (mobile processing unit or permanent north coast slaughter facility).

Recommendation 6: Support local retailers and grocers.

1. Conduct a thorough grocery store survey of all grocers in Clatsop County.
2. Examine ways to improve distribution of products to rural grocers.
3. Increase amount of local produce and meat in North Coast grocery stores.

Recommendation 7: Utilize local food system in helping to revitalize rural economy through enterprise development and government support.

1. Advocate for local government cooperation in North Coast agricultural initiatives.
2. Ease access to farm and land loans for aspiring producers.
3. Cooperatively create methods for farmland preservation.
4. Reliable liaison/advisor(s) between coalition of stakeholders and local government.
Community Food Access and Assets

The vast majority of agricultural production in Clatsop County includes small-scale farming, and many avenues currently exist to help local producers. From Community Supported Agriculture to community gardens, consumers are able to gain access to local and fresh produce. Many of the local assets can be improved upon. Clatsop County is in a strong position to improve upon its current assets. Within the last few years, many small groups and events have sprung up in an attempt to solidify the current food system. An issue that confronts Clatsop County for the future is exactly how to utilize and improve upon those current assets to improve the existing regional food system.

Access is incredibly important for both farmers and consumers. Through interviews, surveys, discussions, and focus groups, it is clear that consumers want more local produce, and local producers want more extensive access to the local market. The results of a recent online consumer survey are indicative of the current lack of available local produce (Figure 1):
There are currently a variety of ways local food is made available to Clatsop County consumers. The following are the primary ways for the community and local producers to work together in keeping local food in Clatsop County’s food system.

**Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)**

Currently, there are only a handful of Community Supported Agriculture operations available to consumers throughout the North Coast. Community Supported Agriculture is a fairly recent phenomenon whose goal is to keep produce and money local, in a way that wholly supports local producers. According to one Nehalem producer, “Community Supported Agriculture is why my farm exists” (Feb. 27th). Community supported agriculture is a partnership between producers and consumers. With a CSA, community members buy a ‘share’ of the farm’s harvest, enjoying fresh, local produce. Consumers agree to pay monthly or annual shareholder fees, while, depending on the CSA, the produce is sometimes delivered to their front door.

As the Nehalem producer mentioned, CSAs are a valuable asset to producers, as they help to minimize the farmer’s financial burden. It is important to educate local consumers about CSA options, as well as increasing and supporting CSA operations throughout Clatsop County.
Farmers Markets
The North Coast of Oregon is fortunate enough to be home to multiple farmers markets. Farmers markets are a useful resource for small, local farmers, entrepreneurs, and retailers. It can be difficult for small-time producers to find consumers to buy their produce. Just as CSA’s offer a marketing outlet, farmers markets also offer a platform for direct market options.

Clatsop County currently offers one produce-only market within its boundary (with another one in Manzanita, in northern Tillamook County). During the 2010 season, the Cannon Beach Farmers Market has been hosting eighteen local produce-only vendors; while in 2009, Manzanita hosted nine vendors. It must be noted that the Astoria Sunday Market has the reputation of an arts and crafts market, focusing on tourists. Within a few weeks, only one vegetable producer from within one hundred miles of Astoria will vend their produce on Sundays in Astoria, this due to higher vending fees and the arts and crafts reputation.

There is considerable room for the growth of farmers markets in Clatsop County. In talking to local small producers, many are constantly looking for new ways to sell their produce. With no weekday market available to consumers (and local producers) of northern Clatsop County, there is strong interest within the local producing community to open a weekday producer-only farmers market. Market proponents have identified up to thirty producers who are interested in selling at a weekday farmers market in Astoria.

Farmers markets offer incredible opportunities for economic development within smaller rural communities. According to Kristin Frost Albrecht, 2008 and 2009 manager of the Cannon Beach Farmers Market, the local food producer-only market had a substantial effect on the local economy. Says Albrecht.

“Our first year, we had 24,000 customers during the 16 week season on Tuesday afternoons (seen as a slow tourism time) between 2PM – 6PM. According to the local hoteliers, there was a bump in their Tuesday night stays and the restaurants that were open also noticed how busy they were. The second year, several of the hotels ran special overnight rates for Tuesday nights during market season! Our second year, customer count went up 10,000 customers for a total of 34,000 over a 16-week season.”
In economic terms, Albrecht calculates that “if every one of those (farmers market) customers spent $25 at the market or in town at a shop or gallery or going out to eat, that would mean $850,000 coming into our small town over a 16 week period on what is considered a ‘slow’ day. If each of those customers spent $50 – that would mean nearly 2 million dollars coming into our little town whose population is only 1700.”

Clearly, nearly two million dollars makes a substantial difference for a small community. Although Cannon Beach benefits greatly from the increased revenue, the extra funds are also important to local farmers and producers. It is also important to remember that the Cannon Beach Farmers Market takes place on Tuesday afternoons, generally not considered a traditionally strong tourist day. The potential to make such a profit in a local setting, especially on a weekday, is extremely enticing to local farmers.

A major issue with the Astoria Sunday Market, according to many farmers, is that it is not local producer driven. Many producers feel that the Sunday Market is tourist-centered, with higher vendor fees than the other local markets in the region. It should also be noted that North Coast residents are in need of a market that fits their own schedules and transportation needs. Being a tourist-driven economy, many residents work on Sundays, not allowing them to financially support the only local market north of Cannon Beach. When asking a Hispanic group whether they support the Astoria Sunday Market, they responded that they would, however, “that’s Sunday, and we always work,” (translated). Transportation is also an issue, as Sunset Empire Transit, which offers public transportation throughout Clatsop County, does not offer bus service on Sundays, affecting those without personal transportation options.

Finally, farmers markets must allow for the usage of SNAP (formally known as food stamps). SNAP is currently utilized at the Cannon Beach Farmers Market, and, according to Mrs. Albrecht, is “extremely easy to use.” With only one of three current markets utilizing SNAP, and judging by the potential income that SNAP presents (as noted by the Oregon Hunger Task Force), it is important to institute SNAP at all markets, allowing everyone, no matter their income level, to buy fresh, local produce, and also allow farmers to gain a market share that normally would be difficult to reach.
**North Coast Food Guide**
The first North Coast Food Guide was published in 2005 as a partnership project between OSU Extension Service and the now-defunct Clatsop and Tillamook Community Food Security Coalitions. The food guide is a public directory of locally grown and caught foods in Clatsop and Tillamook counties. As the first and only food guide ever published for the North Coast region, it became out-of-date rather quickly, with a loss of local producers and an influx of other producers. To address the need of an updated food guide, within the last year an effort has been underway with leadership from Food Roots, OSU Extension, and CCA Regional Food Bank to publish an updated version of the North Coast Food Guide. This guide was completed and is currently available to the public for the summer of 2010.

The food guide is a tremendous resource available to the community. It clearly is a resource in need of continual updating, as the state of agriculture is constantly in flux. Perhaps the most efficient way for the North Coast Food Guide to be utilized by the public is online, easily allowing for updates to take place. The current North Coast Food Guide can be found at [www.northcoastfood.org](http://www.northcoastfood.org).

**Community Gardens**
Another community asset that exists is community gardens. There are currently seven community gardens in Clatsop County, each of which is administered by the non-profit organization *Friends of Clatsop County Community Gardens*. Community gardens are a new addition to the national food system discussion, although community gardens have a long American history. Community gardens provide a plot of land for local residents who otherwise would have no option for growing their own produce. These gardens are located throughout Astoria, Warrenton, Hammond, and Seaside. Although many community gardens exist in Clatsop County, there continues to be a steady interest in increasing the amount and access of community gardens throughout the county.
While community gardens most often carry a more urban-centered connotation, many more rural areas are also interested in developing community gardens. For example, many residents within the Knappa-Svenson area, just east of Astoria on Highway 30, have been seeking a community garden for several years. Some of the issues that residents have faced in the creation of a garden include the acquisition of land, financing an elk fence, and leadership for both maintenance and security. In talking to local Knappa-Svenson residents, the skills and knowledge in maintaining the garden are not lacking, as many folks come from a farming or agricultural background; only leadership needs to emerge. It is clear that local leadership can take control in this project, as well as with many similar community garden projects where Clatsop County residents continue to voice concern, including garden spaces in Cannon Beach and the south slope area of Astoria.

**Seafood Center**

A significant partnership which involved local leaders and Congressional members Senator Mark Hatfield and Congressman Les Aucoin along with state funding led to the founding of the Duncan Law Seafood Center which opened in 1998.

The center operated three primary programs, including consumer outreach activities at the Seafood School, product development services with Oregon Sea Grant and the Community Seafood Initiative, a partnership with the Oregon State University Seafood Lab, Coastal Oregon Marine Experiment Station and Shorebank Enterprise Cascadia.
The programs collectively aimed to boost economic opportunities for fishermen, seafood processors and related businesses in the North Coast region.

Unfortunately, the Seafood Center's directors decided to close its school classes and catering operations in 2009 as it would have been running a $50,000 deficit. Though the revenue generated by cooking classes and catering services covered the expense of individual events, it did not fully cover the overhead costs of employing three people full-time and maintaining the facilities.

On July 16, 2010, Columbia Memorial Hospital CEO Erik Thorsen and Seafood Center Director Heather Mann announced the reopening of the Duncan Law Seafood Consumer Center, located on the campus of the OSU Seafood Lab. The partnership will also include local community groups, residents and consumer center supporters such as Senator Betsy Johnson.

CMH CEO Erik Thorsen says the hospital is currently in lease negotiations with Oregon State University to rent the entire second floor of the SCC including the demonstration kitchen and event space. The hospital plans to use the space for office space and delivery of its educational programming but also wants to partner with other organizations to delivery community-based education around seafood and healthy eating. Contributors to restructuring include the Greater Astoria-Warrenton Chamber of Commerce, Clatsop Community College, Oregon State University, OSU Extension, SCC board members, local chefs, entrepreneurs, and area residents.
**Community Food Assistance**

“I know a lot of guys who go poaching, hoping that they get caught, so that they can eat three times a day.” (Focus group participant, July 17th, 2010)

Poverty is a serious issue in Clatsop County. In 2009, over 13% of Clatsop County’s population fell under the poverty level. Most startlingly, 20% of children in Clatsop County were considered impoverished (Northwest Area Foundation, 2009):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Population: 37,695</th>
<th>Children 0-18 years: 8,074</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People in Poverty: 5,127 (13.6%)</td>
<td>Children in Poverty: 1,615 (20.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People living at or below 185% of Poverty: 12,401 (32.9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: 2009 Clatsop County Poverty Summary (Source: Oregon Hunger Task Force)

Not only is the poverty level in Clatsop County apparent through these numbers, when asked how serious hunger is throughout Clatsop County, online survey respondents overwhelmingly (84%) thought this was an extremely or somewhat serious issue:

"In your opinion, how serious is hunger in your community?"

![Pie chart showing the responses]

Figure 2: Q8 on 2010 North Coast Consumer Survey
Poverty, as many Clatsop County residents and government officials realize, is an issue that needs to be addressed. Poverty becomes more apparent when discussing food availability and access. There are many resources available to low-income residents in helping them gain access to healthy, local food that many thought was only available to those with more money to spend. These resources include the food bank, school lunch programs, and summer food meals. This discussion, however, needs to begin with SNAP.

Throughout this assessment, SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) is discussed as a way to include healthy food in the diets of low-income residents, as well as helping local producers sell their produce. SNAP benefits can be gained by anyone who qualifies. In 2009 the guidelines were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Size</th>
<th>100% FPL</th>
<th>130% of FPL</th>
<th>185% of FPL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$903</td>
<td>$1,173</td>
<td>$1,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$1,215</td>
<td>$1,580</td>
<td>$2,247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$1,526</td>
<td>$1,984</td>
<td>$2,823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$1,838</td>
<td>$2,389</td>
<td>$3,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For each additional person added</td>
<td>+ $312</td>
<td>+ $406</td>
<td>+ $577</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: 2009 Federal Poverty Guidelines (Source: Oregon Hunger Task Force)

Clearly, SNAP benefits are a great resource that can be used by many within the area. It is important to reach out to all who qualify. How efficient is Clatsop County in reaching out to qualified residents? In short, not very. According to the Oregon Hunger Task Force, in 2008 Clatsop County could have received $1.6 million more dollars per month if all qualified residents used the SNAP benefits. In 2008, 4,413 people received SNAP per month, while Clatsop County received $4.8 million/month in federal dollars throughout the year. Over 2,000 residents who qualified did not receive deserved SNAP benefits.

SNAP benefits are received through the Department of Human Services (DHS), which has a county office in Astoria. If SNAP outreach is increased, through education programs and greater material support, Clatsop County would greatly benefit economically. Many community resources, including
Clatsop Community Action Regional Food Bank, Oregon State University Extension, and Clatsop County Department of Human Services will need to take the lead role and work together in increasing SNAP outreach.

**Clatsop Community Action Regional Food Bank**
The Clatsop Community Action (CCA) Regional Food Bank distributes food and household products throughout Clatsop County. The items are distributed to Partner Agency members; including local food pantries, emergency shelters and hot meal sites, as well as other supplemental feeding programs, such as Meals on Wheels, back-pack programs and senior meal sites. Food is distributed through the main Distribution Center in Astoria to 26 Partner Agencies throughout the county. The CCA Regional Food Bank has seen a sharp increase in food distribution in recent years. According to Marlin Martin, CCA Regional Food Bank Director:

“In our 2008-2009 fiscal year, CCA Food Bank distributed a record-breaking 949,587 pounds of food through our Local Agency members. That food accommodated the production of 14,664 emergency food boxes.

“In addition, 155,003 hot meals were served in emergency shelters and hot meal sites.

“25% of the residents of Clatsop County qualified for emergency food assistance.

“Of those who received emergency food in Clatsop County last year, a staggering 40% were children, and 20% were seniors.

“Last year’s increase in the distribution of emergency food was 23% above the prior year, and we are now nearly 50% higher than three years ago. The distribution of emergency food in our County is increasing at disturbingly high rates. The downturn in the local economy has brought many new faces to receive services for the first time in their lives.”

CCA Regional Food Bank operates throughout the county in helping to serve residents’ food needs. Other programs administered through the food bank include Thanksgiving and Christmas food programs, nutrition and cooking workshops, and plant-a-row programs. Many efforts have been made to
increase the outreach to local residents, helping ease access to food, as well as obtaining healthier and even more local food options.

CCA Regional Food Bank is beginning to implement more educational options for the community. For example, CCA Regional Food Bank became the first satellite Operation Frontline educational project in Oregon. Operation Frontline is a national program through Share Our Strength, of which Oregon Food Bank is a partner agency. The Operation Frontline educational program consists of six classes, one per week, teaching low-income residents healthy eating and cooking habits. Clatsop County’s first class was held at a cooking school in Cannon Beach and was attended by a handful of residents. The next set of classes are scheduled for, at the latest, early 2011. The new classes will be held at Clatsop Community Action Regional Food Bank’s new Distribution Center and warehouse in Warrenton.

The food bank’s new warehouse will be a tremendous asset to the community. The space will not only make food distribution throughout the county much more efficient, but will allow for greater food storage capabilities. Another important community aspect of the new warehouse is the educational component. The building will house a commercial kitchen that will be available for community educational use. The site will include outdoor garden spaces and, eventually, greenhouses. The gardens will allow food box recipients to view and be involved in the entire fresh food process, from the planting of seeds to harvesting, cooking, and eating.

**Youth, Poverty and Food**

The number of impoverished youth in Clatsop County continues to increase, and are annually above national and state levels:

![Poverty rate for children under age 18](image)

Figure 3: 1979-2008 Child Poverty Rates (Source: Northwest Area Foundation)
If the county is truly committed to fighting poverty and bettering the future of the community, then youth meal programs need to take precedence in fighting hunger. According to the Oregon Hunger Task Force, “46% of all students were eligible for free and reduced price meals in Clatsop County.” Just as with SNAP outreach, Clatsop County is failing to reach all youth who qualify for federally-discounted meals. Below is a glimpse of the current state of youth and summer meal programs throughout Clatsop County:

![Graph: School Lunches, Breakfast, & Summer Meals](image)

**Figure 4:** Total number of students and subsidized meals in Clatsop County
(Source: Oregon Hunger Task Force, 2009)
Table 1 offers a better understanding of reduced meal eligibility for youth in each school district in Clatsop County:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Astoria</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewell</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knappa</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seaside</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrenton-Hammond</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Oregon</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Annual reduced meal eligibility rates for Clatsop County school districts (Source: Northwest Area Foundation)

School administrators, with the help of local government agencies, must combat this issue of youth poverty and lack of participation within federally-funded meal programs. Whether it is a simple matter of lack of parental knowledge or inefficient outreach programs within educational institutions, each school district will need to reexamine efforts to keep Clatsop County’s youth from being hungry.

Perhaps most telling of the outreach and lack of help offered throughout Clatsop County is that in 2007-08, zero after school meals and snacks were provided in “high need areas” (Oregon Hunger Task Force).

Clearly Clatsop County can improve upon its current outreach and assistance efforts. What is currently in place throughout the county to address some of these issues? The following descriptions give a glimpse.
Back-Pack Program
Two back-pack programs do exist in Clatsop County, one in Cannon Beach and one in Warrenton, through the Warrenton Builder’s Club Back-Pack Program. Neither back-pack program is officially affiliated with Feeding America, a national low-income food service program, but both are affiliated with the Oregon Food Bank and Clatsop Community Action Regional Food Bank. The back-pack program is utilized during weekends throughout the school year.

According to food bank records, the Cannon Beach Back-Pack program, serving the Cannon Beach grade school, filled an average of nearly 110 backpacks each month beginning in August of 2009 through May of 2010. In talking to Marty Harris, the manager of the Cannon Beach Back-Pack Program, about 35 children receive weekend meals each week during the school year. The filled backpacks consist of six meals for normal two-day weekends and more meals for longer weekends, with each child receiving diverse portions of food, including at least three pieces of fresh fruit per back-pack.

In talking with Ms. Harris, what is most striking is the fact that the back-pack program serves nearly 30% of the Cannon Beach grade school population. Although there are no eligibility requirements for children to be a part of the program, no child has ever been signed up who does not qualify for the federally reduced lunch at school. And this program is certainly appreciated among the local residents, as proven by a recent comment made by Ms. Harris, “It makes them feel like they’re as good as everyone else.” This is a tremendous resource that is being utilized in only a few sections of the county.

Summer Youth Meal Program
While, during the school year, every school is mandated to offer federally funded school meals to those who qualify, summer is often a time when youth food issues are completely neglected within the local communities. Currently, there are two different summer meal programs throughout Clatsop County, with one program representing Seaside and Cannon Beach, while the other represents mostly Astoria, with a site in Warrenton. According to the Food Service Director of the Astoria and Warrenton-Hammond School Districts, the summer lunch program served free lunches to nearly 200 youth a day in 2009 at the five sites in Astoria and the one Warrenton site. Currently, Jewell and Knappa school districts do not offer free summer lunches to youth. As demonstrated in Figure 4, only 22% of eligible children participated in the Summer Food Program.
Community Education
Throughout this report, many educational opportunities for Clatsop County residents have been discussed. Some organizations emphasizing education include CCA Regional Food Bank and Friends of Clatsop County Community Gardens. Oregon State University Extension, however, is in a valuable position within the community and situated to take the lead in educating local residents about food opportunities and resources.

Oregon State University’s Clatsop County Extension office focuses on education and public service. The 4-H Youth and Master Gardeners programs are two well-known traditional community outreach programs within the organization. OSU Extension also offers nutrition education to families and youth of varying means throughout the county, according to Kristin Frost Albrecht, a Nutrition Education Specialist from Oregon State University Extension- Clatsop County:

“The OSU Family Community and Health Department offers educational opportunities to help Clatsop County families meet the practical challenges of daily life. Their educational programs address critical issues for individuals and families and help Clatsop County residents become healthy, financially secure, and responsible members of society. A major part of the FCH program in Clatsop County includes the Oregon Family Nutrition Program (OFNP). OFNP serves limited resources to children, youth, adults, parents, and senior citizens and helps program participants acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and changed behavior necessary to improve their diet by teaching basic nutrition, practical food preparation, food budgeting, and food safety.”

Also, according to Albrecht, “OSU Extension delivered 533 programs in Nutrition Education through classes in Clatsop County elementary schools and middle schools, after-school programs, homeless shelters, senior centers, and food pantries. All of the delivery that we did was to an audience that was at least 50% SNAP eligible.”

OSU is a wonderful resource for the North Coast community and hopefully will continue to form a significant education partnership with other organizations within the North Coast. The Clatsop County Extension office is continuing to expand and offering more programs. One program is canning. There is a growing interest, especially apparent in interviews and community
discussions, in learning about different food preservation methods, including canning and smoking. Taking the lead in instituting educational food projects for the community is the primary role that OSU Extension can play in solidifying Clatsop County’s food system.

A proposal for a North Coast Food Center, operated in partnership with OSU Extension and the North Coast Food Web, would serve as a significant community educational resource. The North Coast Food Center would focus on nurturing the North Coast’s food system, and is currently being reviewed by OSU Extension of Clatsop County staff. The center would utilize vacated spaces within OSU’s Seafood School building in Astoria. The proposal for this project is included as APPENDIX B of Clatsop County Food Talk.

According to an internet consumer survey, many residents are interested in education opportunities, and OSU Extension offers the leadership to take a significant role within the North Coast. The following graph demonstrates the interest in educational opportunities among the fifty respondents to the question, “In which of the following education opportunities would you be most interested?”

![Pie chart showing the percentage of respondents interested in different education opportunities: 44% for Gardening, 26% for Cooking, 16% for Preservation, and 14% for Nutrition.](image)

Figure 5: Q18 on 2010 North Coast Consumer Survey
Agricultural Synopsis

Clatsop County is situated in a unique geographical location, where human ingenuity and natural forces often collide. Many find it difficult to perceive a strong agricultural presence in Clatsop County; however, the North Coast area has an abundance of food tradition, including traditional farming itself. In fact, Brownsmead, just east of Astoria on Highway 30, was nationally known to be a “breadbasket,” and home to, according to one resident, “scores of chicken farms, scores of beef farms… along Hillcrest loop alone there used to thirty or forty cattle farms and chicken farms; I mean three-or-four-thousand bird chicken farms in this area.” (Focus group participant, May 17th, 2010).

One often wonders why has Clatsop County’s agriculture, if it used to be so strong, seemingly slipped so far off the map? Unfortunately, Clatsop County is not alone in this aspect. All over the country, agriculture is increasingly becoming the forgotten industry. Before one answers for the reason of the downward trend in agriculture throughout Clatsop County, along with the rest of the country, it is important to understand what the current state of agriculture looks like.

Size and Numbers
What makes Clatsop County agriculture unique is that it is mostly on a small scale. The average size of a Clatsop County farm, according to the 2007 USDA Census, is 93 acres, nearly a quarter of the size of the average farm (425 acres) throughout the state of Oregon. The following chart demonstrates the number of farms by size in Clatsop County:
The size of farms actually saw a three percent increase (from a 90 acre average) since 2002; however, the number of farms has decreased by eight percent within the same time frame. This is also demonstrated in the amount of Clatsop County land actually being farmed, which decreased by five percent between 2002 to 2007, resulting in 21,198 acres in 2007.

Farmland in the state was lost at about the same rate (4%) as Clatsop County, while the average size of a farm in Oregon stayed about the same (USDA Census, 2007).

Clatsop County also experienced an 8% decline in the number of farms in the county between 2002 and 2007, from 248 to 229. This trend parallels the current agricultural landscape throughout the state of Oregon. According to the Northwest Area Foundation, the state of Oregon was the only state in the West, and one of only eleven nationwide, that saw a decline in the number of farms (for Oregon, a 4% decline). It is troubling to see that Clatsop County has lost farms within a recent five year period at twice the rate as the rest of state (USDA Census, 2007).

**Finances and Ownership**

With smaller farms often comes a smaller profit for farmers. The 2007 average per farm in reported sales in Clatsop County was $41,801. This number is an increase of 41% from 2002 ($29,745 per farm). Agricultural profits in Clatsop
County lag behind the rest of the state, however. The average in 2007 per farm in reported sales in Oregon was $113,769, a 43% increase from 2002, when it was reported at $79,822 (USDA Census, 2007)

As compared to all other counties in the state of Oregon, Clatsop County ranks next to last in terms of total market value of agricultural products sold.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>State Rank</th>
<th>Counties in State</th>
<th>U.S. Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total market value of agricultural products sold</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2,614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of crops including nursery and greenhouse</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2,779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of livestock, poultry, and their products</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2,141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: 2007 Clatsop County agricultural market value state and US rankings (Source: USDA Census of Agriculture)

As for government payments, Clatsop County received $35,000 in 2007 from the federal government, with an average of $5,037 per farm. This compares to an average of $14,954 per farm throughout the state of Oregon. When comparing by the acre, Clatsop County received only about $1.65 per acre in government assistance, while the state of Oregon received an average of $4.66 an acre (USDA Census, 2007).

It is clear that small farmers are receiving less assistance from both local and federal government. In talking to many area farmers, being a full-time farmer is only a dream. While Clatsop County reportedly has 229 farmers, for only 48% (118) is farming considered a “primary occupation” (USDA Census, 2007). Most telling was one Lewis and Clark farmer who wants to be a full-time farmer, however, he does not know of a reliable outlet to sell his meat and produce to make a profit. Unfortunately, it is not profitable for most to choose a farming lifestyle, although most interviewed would prefer farming as a full-time venture.

It is difficult for new farmers to own their land, as well. According to one local farmer, “There is nothing so deafening as the silence of bankers when they hear the word ‘farm’” (The Daily Astorian, 9/25/2010). It is difficult for beginning farmers to persuade lenders to loan money for a farm. As prime agricultural land prices increase, government officials, as well as local banks, need to make
a commitment to help aspiring farmers gain access to land if the local food system is to improve.

Production

As Figure 7, above, illustrates, the vast majority of farmland in Clatsop County is split evenly between three sectors: woodland, cropland and pasture. This demonstrates that much of the agricultural land in Clatsop County is limited. As Dave Ambrose, Watershed Technical Specialist with Clatsop Soil and Water Conservation District, states, “Clatsop County’s agriculture is climate based, not soil based.” While cut Christmas trees are still considered cropland, small-scale logging operations continue to be a mainstay in Clatsop County, shown by the strong ‘woodland’ presence in the above graph.

When looking at growing possibilities in Clatsop County, there is a great diversity of what can grow in the area. If judging by the 2007 USDA Census, Clatsop County produces very little when compared to the rest of the state. Floriculture crops, in which Clatsop County ranks 7th out 29 producing counties, is the most competitive agriculture product produced in the county. It is well-known throughout the residents of Clatsop County, however, that Clatsop County’s agriculture capabilities are “terribly underutilized,” as Mr. Ambrose bluntly puts it.
When discussing with farmers and officials the lack of more production within Clatsop County, it is apparent that much of the farming here takes a commitment and effort that is hard to fathom for those not familiar with farming on the North Coast. Growing produce in Clatsop County is an arduous process, taking commitment and knowledge that many do not have. According to Mr. Ambrose, there is incredible “potential, but will take some time” for agricultural production in Clatsop County to reach its potential.

Picture 5: Clatsop County pasture (Photo: John Dean, 2010)
Demographics Outlook of Clatsop County

The following is an overview of the general demographic characteristics of Clatsop County:

Population

The 2008 estimated population of Clatsop County, according to the U.S. Census, is 37,404, ranking Clatsop County 19th out of the 36 counties in Oregon. Much of this population is focused within the urban areas. In 2000, 41% of the population was considered rural, which constitutes living in communities of less than 2500 people or in open country. The largest community in Clatsop County is Astoria, with a 2000 population of 9,813. Other major communities within Clatsop County (including 2000 Census populations) are Seaside (5,900), Warrenton (4,096), Cannon Beach (1,588) and Gearhart (995).

Clatsop County’s population grew at an estimated rate of 4.5% between 2000 and 2009 which ranks 16th in Oregon. Oregon’s overall population grew at a rate of over 11% between 2000 and 2009.

Today, the average age of a Clatsop County resident is 42.6. This compares to Oregon’s average age of 38.

In comparing ages within Clatsop County and the state, the numbers are similar, with the largest difference being a higher rate of seniors in Clatsop County:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Clatsop County</th>
<th>Oregon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-64</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 or older</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: 2009 Poverty rate by age in Clatsop County and Oregon
(Source: Northwest Area Foundation)

Clatsop County’s population has increased at a steady rate since 2000, due to a net migration gain of 4.7% (Table 4):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Clatsop County</th>
<th>Oregon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population 2008</td>
<td>37,404</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population change 2000-2008</td>
<td>1,774</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net migration rate</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural change rate</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Clatsop County population change by percentage since 2000
(Source: Northwest Area Foundation, 2009)
Diversity
Clatsop County is not a racially diverse county. As demonstrated by the following graph, the great majority of county residents are considered White. However, nearly seven percent of the residents consider themselves Hispanic:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: Clatsop County population by race (Source: Northwest Area Foundation, 2009)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian &amp; Pacific Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic (may be any race) 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employment and Income
The 2008 median household income in Clatsop County was $44,307. The state of Oregon’s median household income was slightly higher than Clatsop County, at 50,165

As demonstrated in Table 6, Clatsop County’s 2008 unemployment rate was 5.1%, which is one of the lowest in Oregon (33rd out of 36 counties):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6: 2009 Clatsop County employment rankings among 36 Oregon counties (Source: Northwest Area Foundation)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-employment rate 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average wage per job 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total jobs 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment by industry:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry, fishing &amp; mining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail &amp; wholesale trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation &amp; utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, insur., &amp; real estate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care &amp; social assist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in # of jobs 2000-2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*“1” is the highest rank and “36” is the lowest
This unemployment number has risen recently, however. The Figure 8 demonstrates unemployment trends in Clatsop County and the State of Oregon:

![Unemployment Rate (seasonally adjusted)](image)

**Figure 8: Clatsop County and Oregon Jan. 2008- July 2009 unemployment rate**
(Source: Oregon County Monitor)

In the above graph, the lowest unemployment claim count occurred in June, 2008, with 96 new claims. The highest occurred in December, 2008, with 573 claims. Clatsop County is slightly below the claims average throughout Oregon.

Much of the employment in Clatsop County occurs in the summer months, where the influx of tourists creates more job opportunities throughout Clatsop County. This trend is especially apparent in the following graph:

![Number Employed](image)

**Figure 9: Number of people employed, Jan. 2008- July 2009 in Clatsop County**
(Source: Oregon County Monitor)
Poverty
The poverty issue in Clatsop County is discussed in depth in the Community Food Assistance section of *Clatsop County Food Talk*.

What about Seafood?

According to one fisheries owner in Clatsop County, in 1984, there were 17 major fish processing plants along the Oregon Coast; today there are only five. Still, commercial fishing provides 900 to 1000 jobs in Clatsop County. Although this number is a reduction from the past, commercial fishing remains a meaningful industry in Clatsop County.

While there are still ten fish processing plants in Clatsop County, only two would be considered “major” (The Daily Astoria, 9/25/2010). Astoria was once considered the “Cannery Capital of the World,” yet Clatsop County is now struggling to keep commercial fishing as an economic centerpiece. It is also extremely difficult for commercial fishing operations to stay in business. According to Steve Fick, owner of Fishhawk Fisheries, commercial fishing operations have a one in ten chance of making it beyond the first year.

The commercial fishing industry needs to be thoroughly examined in the future to complete a food system assessment for the North Coast. In discussions with fishers, it is clear that much of their catch is not staying local, while the demand for fresh seafood remains high. One fisherman claimed that it is too difficult for most fisherman to sell their catch locally, as it is not economically viable for them to sell their catch on the North Coast. Most of their catch is shipped to other areas, including the East Coast.

Through discussions with Clatsop County fishers, the North Coast commercial fishing industry can be strengthen by taking some of the following actions:

Create ways to help new commercial fishers to stay in operation
• Open new avenues for fishers to sell their catch to local North Coast consumers, including restaurants and retailers
• Educating the public of the various commercial fishing retail opportunities on the North Coast
More Observations

Retailing
Due to Clatsop County’s relative isolation compared to the rest of the state, it is more difficult for distributors to reach the county’s small retailers. According to a small Astoria grocery manager, “Our off-the-beaten-path location makes it somewhat difficult to work with the ever-growing number of local producers and small distributors that call Portland home. These distributors don’t often find making a coast route to be a profitable venture.”

With retailers paying higher prices for their products, consumers must pay more at the stores. For this reason, many Clatsop County residents are willing to drive outside the area to buy their groceries and other goods. When asked about local food prices during a Seaside focus group, a translator described the issue for a few Clatsop County Hispanic residents:

“OK, so it is very expensive to buy food here so they go all the way to Hillsboro to WinCo… what I asked them was…, ‘Is it worth going all the way to Hillsboro and buying your food there because of the gas?’ But what they do is they get together, at least once a month, and a whole group of them will buy their food or something else that they need.”

Many Clatsop County residents are also crossing the bridge into Washington to buy groceries, despite the state’s sales tax. According to one Knappa-Svenson resident, “My daughter and I run once a month up to WinCo in Longview because it is the cheapest.” As this evidence demonstrates, Clatsop County needs to examine methods to keep local consumers in the area.

Opportunities do exist if Clatsop County is to improve options for both consumers and retailers. These include:

- A thorough regional grocery store survey, examining the needs of all small-scale grocers on the North Coast
- Improve distribution options for retailers
- Create ways for retailers and grocers to work together in making acquisition of products more efficient, such as a cooperative purchasing network
Many local residents are also concerned about their small, more residential retailers. As one Knappa-Svenson resident describes, “I buy at Hunt’s (local grocer) because I want him to keep going. I don’t want him to run out because then I’d have to go (to Astoria). It’s real handy if I am out of something and I can zip over.” And not only because of convenience are local residents concerned for their small retailers. “…A couple of years ago we had that storm, and Tubby was open for as long as he could… He is part of this community, and I’ve tried to support him. Like every small store owner, he is probably struggling to stay in business.”

Distribution
Throughout the North Coast, many producers, during interviews and surveys, identified distribution as a primary concern with farming in this region. It is difficult for small producers to distribute their food throughout the North Coast region, where customers reside. As one small-scale producer states, “We have the equipment to transport our product, but do not have time to drive up and down the coast to deliver.”

Multiple methods could produce opportunities for distribution. The most discussed option among North Coast producers and consumers is a ‘food distribution van’ or mobile market.

Mobile markets have been successful in other areas in the country, as nearby as Hood River, Oregon. Hood River’s Mobile Farmers’ Market, as it is called, is managed by Gorge Grown Food Network, a non-profit organization working on food systems issues within the Columbia River Gorge areas of both Washington and Oregon. Gorge Grown’s mobile market runs through the summer months, with weekend stops in a number of small, rural communities.

In speaking with a group of Brownsmead farmers, a cooperatively-owned small distribution van would suit their situations extremely well, as most producers in the Brownsmead area are extremely small-scale. The same goes for Manzanita farmers, who have customers in Astoria and Seaside and need to find ways to improve distribution capabilities. As one Tillamook County meat producer mentioned, “We live near Tillamook, but have many customers in Cannon Beach, Seaside, and Astoria. It is difficult to get our meat to them during winter, especially.”
Farm to Retail

Increasing the direct connection between producers and retailers also needs to be addressed in Clatsop County. Not only beneficial for the farmer, having local produce on the shelves can be beneficial to a retailer. Some barriers that need be overcome for farmers to sell to retailers include:

- Consistently high-quality produce
- Consistent quantity
- Farmers must sell at least at wholesale prices

According to an online poll, over 60% of North Coast respondents indicated that the main reason they do not buy locally grown or raised food is that they consider it “unavailable” in this area (Figure 1). And retail numbers back up this data. According to Matthew Stanley, General Manager of the Astoria Co-op, overall sales at his store increased 42% from 2008-09 and have increased over 20% since the beginning of 2010; this, with the increased offering of local produce. Even with an economic recession, local buyers are committed to more local, fresh food if it is available.

As Mr. Stanley states, “We know the merits of small-scale production done by people we can meet in person. Food safety concerns alone are all the more reason to decentralize our food production. If a product quality issue does arise, it is easy to trace the source and minimize widespread exposure.” Clearly, the Astoria Co-op has benefited from working with local producers, and other retailers should see this as an opportunity as well.

One small barrier for a strong farm to retail connection is the consistency of foods and the knowledge of rules and regulations. To improve upon Clatsop County’s farm to retail connections, the following opportunities must exist:

Picture 6: Clatsop County retailer (Photo: John Dean, 2010)
• Educate both producers and retailers about partnership opportunities
• Make information for legally selling produce to retailers easily available
• Host a forum bringing together North Coast producers, retailers, and restaurant managers

Increasing the amount of fresh, local food in retail markets would clearly improve the options for quality meals for local consumers. According to an online consumer survey, Clatsop County residents understand the need for more access to fresh, local foods, and the health benefits associated with them:

![Figure 10: Q9 on 2010 North Coast Consumer Survey](image)

**Farm to School**
Currently there is not a single farm-to-school initiative in Clatsop County, although efforts to change this have sprung up within the last year. Farm-to-school programs allow for healthy, local food in schools, where the food is notoriously unhealthy and institutionalized. At the FEAST event, a farm-to-school program, with more nutritious and healthy food for school youth, was one of the top priorities.

Farm-to-school programs can be as simple as a school garden that supplies some fresh lunch produce or a regional program that supplies farm-fresh produce to school districts. Food Roots of Tillamook County has a strong
school garden program in multiple locations, including educational hoop houses (greenhouses). In Clatsop County, there has been interest and discussions regarding a school garden, including one definite site in Astoria; however, school and community leaders need to come to an agreement regarding the school programs that are needed.

**Processing**

“The main law that affects our production and sales is the requirement of processing chickens at a USDA facility. We have a state facility nearby that does a great job, yet we can’t sell this item to restaurants or the public. Plus no USDA chicken processing facility exists in Oregon.” This quote, from a small meat producer near Manzanita, sums up what is often heard when talking to meat producers.

Throughout the North Coast, from Tillamook County to Pacific County in Washington, processing is at the forefront of regional and local food systems discussion. At the FEAST event it was determined that processing was one of the five most pressing issues in Clatsop County.

As currently situated, the closest USDA-approved meat slaughtering facility is over a two-hour drive away, in the Willamette Valley. If producers want to sell their meat in individual packaging (versus whole, half, or quarter live animal sales) locally, they must first have it slaughtered at a far-away facility and then pick it up at a later date when it is ready. This is cost-prohibitive for small-scale producers.

Fortunately, there is currently an effort underway to bring a slaughtering facility to the North Coast, whether it is a mobile unit or a permanent facility. In Tillamook County, two community meetings of local meat producers have been facilitated by the Economic Development Council of Tillamook County, in partnership with Food Roots. Numerous feasibility studies from other areas shared with those attending these meetings, along with a mobile slaughter facility cost calculator. There has been no formal feasibility study yet conducted in the county. The Tillamook group felt that the feasibility of meat processing needs to be looked at regionally. So far, these discussions have taken place solely among Tillamook County meat producers.

There is an organic beef producer in Nehalem (Tillamook County) who has expressed strong interest in developing a permanent processing facility. However, zoning and flood zone designations at his location have proved
problematic. Discussions have centered on a permanent processing facility that would cater to many meat producers throughout the region. This permanent facility could be located in Tillamook County, a central location for all meat producers on the North Coast. As Shelly Bowe, director of Food Roots says, “If it’s not economically viable, it’s not sustainable.” This sentiment is echoed at the national level, as well. Dr. Temple Grandin, an animal processing facility expert and professor, stated during the keynote address at a recent national Food Alliance benefit in Seattle, “Mobile slaughter is a good trend, but it’s too expensive….It’s more viable to set up a docking station…and bring animals a short distance. This will really work.” (Capital Press, July 25, 2010)

Another simultaneous discussion currently taking place in Tillamook County is examining the processing of carcasses and other byproducts of the meat industry. This discussion is in the forefront of all the regional processing talk and is already in the pre-design study phase. The study has received funding from the federal and state levels, as well as from the Tillamook County Creamery Association.

From discussions and interviews with producers and stakeholders, the following opportunities must exist to bring a processing facility to the North Coast:

- Incorporate all areas within the North Coast in the discussion, including Clatsop and Lincoln Counties
- Educate producers and stakeholders about various processing options
- Thoroughly examine funding options for either a mobile or permanent processing facility
Development of the Study

Data Source
Data for this study was collected from multiple sources. The economic and demographic data came from the Northwest Area Foundation Indicators website, Oregon Department of Human Services, Oregon State University Rural Studies Program, Oregon Food Bank and the U.S. Census Bureau. Agriculture data came from the United States Department of Agriculture Census of Agriculture.

Empirical data was collected from a series of informal interviews, conversations and focus groups in communities throughout Clatsop County.

Methodology
*Clatsop County Food Talk* used a mixed methods approach that combines the use of quantitative and qualitative data. Qualitative data (focus groups and interviews) and quantitative data (census data) were collected simultaneously to create an integrated analysis that explored a wide range of food system issues. This approach provided a broad regional analysis of the existing food system and used interviews and focus group discussions as empirical evidence to identify assets and needs in Clatsop County. The simultaneous collection and analysis of different data types provided a comprehensive examination of food-related issues. This method proved effective in involving diverse stakeholders across the food system, leading to the creation of suggestions for a more food secure region.

Limitations and Value of the Study
Due to the limited understanding of the existing food system on the North Coast, *Clatsop County Food Talk* was used to gain better understanding of the existing structure and identify potential solutions to create a more food secure region. While this knowledge helps to identify many assets and needs in Clatsop County, it is limited in its depth and scope. *Clatsop County Food Talk* is meant to be a working document as many perspectives and questions remain unknown.

*Clatsop County Food Talk* is the first project in the region to take a broad, community-based approach to examining Clatsop County’s food system in its entirety. Specifically, *Food Talk* explores socioeconomic and agricultural trends in Clatsop County. By using numerous stakeholder interviews and focus groups the assessment identified issues and needs in the food system not
readily apparent. The intent of this report is to increase awareness and understanding of these issues, engage diverse stakeholders in the process and collectively begin working on potential solutions for a more food secure region. This work is important because everyone should have access to healthy food regardless of their location or socioeconomic status.
References and Resources


APPENDIX A
North Coast Food Web Logic Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Short-term Outcomes (Year 1)</th>
<th>Intermediate Outcomes (Year 2)</th>
<th>Long-term Outcomes (3 – 5 years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| -Create food system incubator  
-Increase access to local food producers  
-Provide leadership in solving regional food system issues | *Have:* -Community Food Assessment results -OSU-Extension -Clatsop Community Action Regional Food Bank -Oregon Food Bank -Food Roots -Friends of Clatsop County Community Gardens  
*Need:* -North Coast farmers -Local consumers -Local retailers -Local schools -Local government support -Local economic development agencies’ support | -Act upon Clatsop County community food assessment recommendations -Help with management of North Coast Food Center -Help to spur food-related economic development initiatives | -Increase in food oriented business opportunities -Increase number of food-related educational opportunities -Add at least one more farmers market to North Coast | -Work with local partners in developing a weekend farmers market in Astoria -Sponsor a community food forum in early fall of 2010 to discuss Clatsop County community food assessment findings and actions -Obtain 501(c)3 status with leadership | -Determine feasibility of running a mobile market throughout the North Coast during the summer of 2011 -Coordinate value-added facility for local food producers | -Provide leadership for other groups and activities that the NCFW has created in past -Coordinate efforts to bring a USDA processing facility to North Coast -Establish North Coast Food Center (NCFC) -Create South County satellite office for NCFC |

Mission: The North Coast Food Web cultivates a thriving regional economy and healthy communities through food and agriculture.

Assumption: A thriving food system is an anchor of a vibrant regional economy which provides abundant local food for regional communities.
APPENDIX B
North Coast Food Center Proposal

The establishment of The OSU North Coast Food Center would nurture and contribute to the success of local food growers and producers, strengthen the food economy and serve as a community gathering place. It would allow local residents and visitors alike to purchase farm-fresh produce, baked goods, meats, cheeses, seafood and other specialty foods representative of the North Coast. It would also serve as an incubator for emerging businesses, a leader of the local food movement, a source of education, a culinary focal point in the community, a cultural destination and be a billboard for the North Coast’s sustainability movement.

The OSU North Coast Food Venture Center would provide a wide array of services for starting or expanding a food business. It would maintain close working relationships with food scientists at OSU and the OSU Seafood Lab and operate in conjunction with a culinary arts program at Clatsop Community College. The OSU North Coast Food Center would be committed to helping clients access the most comprehensive science to produce foods of the highest safety and quality. It would operate as an entity for programs that provide food business development services.

The ONCFC 3 year plan would include development of:

1. **Food Venture facility** with shared-use kitchen production capabilities
2. **Business Development Service Center**
3. **Retail store** to sell value added products and Seafood
4. **A Café** using local products and in partnership with local Culinary Arts program
5. **Seafood and Farmers Market** - open June – October
6. **Mobile Food production** and distribution services
7. **Special Events Center** with Seafood School partnership

THE FACILITIES:

THE CURRENT SEAFOOD CENTER BUILDING on Marine Drive, Astoria, Oregon with possible additional building annexes

**Shared-use Kitchen and Food Production facilities (Food Venture Center)**
The OSU North Coast Food Center would be a shared-use kitchen incubator for value added and specialty food producers who can rent the kitchen on an hourly basis or arrange for co-packing at the facility.
Product Capabilities to include but not limited too:
• Jams, jellies, marmalades
• Salsa, sauces, dressings, marinades, mustards, chutneys and other condiments
• Baked goods of all varieties, candies
• Juices, beverages
• Seafood, meat and poultry products
• Artisan cheeses (goat’s and sheep’s milk)
• Herb products
• Mushroom products
• Farm fresh eggs

Business Development Center

The ONCFC staff would provide a wide array of food and agricultural business consulting services to aspiring entrepreneurs, existing food businesses and organizations looking to promote food businesses as an economic development tool.

Retail Local Food Store

Located in the center would be a year-round retail food store to showcase fresh local products and value added ones. A fresh seafood market would also reside here allowing local fishers to directly market their products.

Farm and Ocean to Fork Café:

Adjacent to the retail store would be a café featuring seasonal local products that would be open for breakfast and lunch and staffed by the Culinary Arts students at CCC. Catering services for private events could be provided from here as well. During the Farmers Market season, the CA students could run a booth at the market offering ready made food to market customers.

THE OUTDOOR COURTYARD:

OSU Seafood and Farmers Market

The OSU North Coast Food Center would be home to an “edible only” (plus cut flowers and nursery stock) Farmers Market (the OSU Seafood and Farmers Market) in the adjacent south facing courtyard. This would allow local producers to showcase the North Coast’s bounty and service the food needs of local residents and visitors alike. In particular, this would be the first real outdoor Seafood Market in Oregon -- allowing fishers the ability for direct sales to the public. A Thursday night market (4 - 7) would encourage the visiting public to extend a possible weekend from a Friday - Sunday stay, to a Thursday to Sunday stay.
THE SEAFOOD SCHOOL

Special Events and other educational activities

Partnering with the Seafood School for Market Dinners held inside the school and/or classes using market fresh produce, seafood and artisan products to help educate the public on how to cook seasonally using local products. The Seafood School could also provide nutritional education classes partnering with OSUES staff and Columbia Memorial Hospital. Seasonal courses on canning and preserving fresh produce or smoking, canning seafood and meats could also be provided.

MOBILE

Mobile Food

A USDA approved Mobile Meat Processing vehicle would allow local farmers to process animal harvests in a timely way. Currently, there are too few facilities available for butchering to allow small farmers the ability to commercially sell their products.

A Mobile Farmers Market would be aimed at small communities within our region to bring fresh foods to “food deserts”.

A two-year timeline would establish the OSU NORTH COAST FOOD VENTURE CENTER, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER and the OSU SEAFOOD AND FARMERS MARKET

Why Value-Added Opportunities For North Coast Agriculture?

For North Coast agricultural producers, margins are thin and enticing consumers to spend a little more for their products as opposed to out of state supermarket products is a challenge. The OSU North Coast Food Center in Astoria can help develop new products, which can expand margins and entice retailers and consumers alike. The Center would be a non-profit facility providing a wide range of business services to the specialty foods and agricultural industry on the North Coast. As a USDA-licensed processing plant with a full commercial kitchen, the Center can help create and modify recipes, develop attractive packages and produce product.

The ONCFC could provide considerable economic development potential for the region, acting as a small-medium size business incubator, and helping local people develop and grow businesses that will help address local food needs and re-vitalize our local economies. That this could happen without local communities being dependent upon non-local corporations or industries to choose to site themselves here, only to choose several years later to move when economics are more favorable elsewhere would be a long-term benefit for the North Coast.
OSU North Coast Food Venture Center Mission Statement:

The mission of the OSU North Coast Food Center is to make available all needed resources for people to start a specialty food business and to help grow an existing business along with a retail distribution center and ongoing educational opportunities. The Center supports strengthening the North Coast agricultural and seafood industries through developing value-added products and providing on-going technical assistance to the region’s specialty foods producers.

Membership in the OSU North Coast Food Center: An annual paid membership would entitle one to a wide range of services.

It would include a half-day food safety and sanitation course conducted by a researcher from Oregon State University and initial product development assistance including recipe, packaging, regulatory and label approval and marketing assistance. The Center could assist in wholesale food ingredient and packaging purchases. Supplier and distributor information available. Production charged on an hourly or piece basis and training and assistance provided in using the equipment.

Commercial Processing Services: The Center would be organized into six production areas, which would be fully equipped with needed utensils and stainless steel worktables. Those areas would include kitchen, bakery, cheese processing, egg handling and packaging rooms. Both frozen, refrigerated and dry storage areas would be available.

The Processing Room:

Basic equipment:

Filling machines, labeler, vacuum packs machines. Product capabilities: acid foods e.g. jams, jellies, salad dressings, condiments, salsa, sauces, marinades, vinegars, mustards.

The Bakery

Basic equipment:

60 and 20 quart commercial mixers, convection oven, proofer with holder, electronic scales, induction cook tops, sheeter, pans, and utensils. Product capabilities: baked goods, e.g. bagels, bread, brownies, biscotti, cookies, croutons, pizza, pies...

The Kitchen

Basic equipment:

Commercial range and oven, food processors and choppers, vapor ovens, 60 gallon steam kettle, mixers, steam oven, microwave ovens, grills, steamers. Product capabilities: prepared refrigerated foods, catering, cake decorating, candy, dry mixes, pasta, granola.
The Cheese Room

Basic equipment:

Kettle cheese vat; cheese molds; Draining table; Dairy panel; Aging cooler; Cooler room (5' X 9') Aging cellar (10' X 22') Product capabilities: Artisan goat and sheep cheeses

The Egg Room

Basic Equipment:

High intensity Candler; cleaning and packaging materials

Storage

Ingredient, packaging, and product storage is available in refrigerated, frozen, and dry areas. Storage space would be rented on a weekly or monthly basis.

PRODUCT CAPABILITY AND FOOD IDEAS FOR NORTH COAST FOOD GROWERS

Meat, Seafood and Poultry producers could create:

- Marinated and vacuum packaged steaks, chops or cutlets
- Soups, stews, and cassoulets. Fully cooked frozen entrees.
- Ready to bake meat pies.
- Pates.
- Smoked, marinated seafood
- Seasoned, oven-ready roasts or birds.

Fruit growers could use the Center to preserve their harvest in many ways:

- Jams, jellies, preserves and fruit butters.
- Ready to bake fruit pies and cobblers.
- Fresh fruit Danish and pastries.
- Individually frozen and packaged berries.
- Fruit-based chutneys, salsas, and other cooking condiments.

Vegetable producers face the dual challenges of the coastal growing season and low seasonal prices for fresh produce in late summer. The OSU North Coast Food Center could produce:

- Frozen vegetarian entrees.
- Vacuum packaged slaws.
- Frozen or canned tomato products, sauces and salsa.
- Fresh or frozen herb spreads.
- Individually frozen and packaged vegetables.
Currently, small egg producers cannot sell their eggs commercially due to the lack of a licensed processing facility. At the ONCFC small egg producers can form a co-op and use the Egg Room to candle, process and package their eggs in a licensed facility allowing them the ability to sell to commercial food businesses.

**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

Business development services include planning, marketing, management, and financing assistance. A revolving loan fund would be available for the financing needs of specialty food companies.

ONCFC staff would seek involvement in state and regional projects to aid and foster rural economic development through food entrepreneurship.

**OSU SEAFOOD AND FARMERS MARKET**

Local residents do not have regular access to fresh local produce except through the few vendors at the craft-centric Astoria Sunday Market. Establishing an “edible only” farmers market that sells local produce, seafood, meats, dairy and artisan food products that would be “farmer and fisher friendly” would allow local residents and visitors the ability to “buy local” and aid the many fishers, farmers, ranchers and artisan food producers in the area with a economically feasible way to sell their product. The market would also accept SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) and WIC and Senior vouchers allowing lower income residents access to fresh fruits, vegetables, meats and seafood not currently available to them. The OSU Seafood and Farmers Market would also be a natural distribution channel for the clients of the OSU North Coast Food Venture center and a place to market and sell their value added products. The site lends itself particularly well to a market due to its southern exposure and the building blocking the north wind.

For more information about this plan, please contact:

Kristin Frost Albrecht

(503) 351-2212
APPENDIX C
Producer Interview Questions

What is the history of your farm/ranch?

Is it full time profession or do you work off the farm/ranch?

Acres farmed/ranched?

Method of farming or ranching?

What do you produce?
   Raw
   Finished

Profitable? Subsidies?

Whom do you sell to?

What is your product volume?

Do you donate product to anti-hunger efforts?

Do you sell locally or directly to consumers?

Do you market locally?

Do you know of any direct sale opportunities?

How would you define your local market?

Do you have any interest in selling locally?

Have you ever considered a farmers’ market, farm stand or website?

Is there any assistance that would help you sell locally?

What are the barriers to the direct sales?

Are there any laws or policies that affect food production, distribution or consumption?

Do you have any transportation issues?

Are there any farmland preservation efforts in your area?

What is the future of your farm/ranch?
Using the scales provided below indicate the degree to which the following factors limits your direct local sales.

Difficult to find, interact, or correspond with retailers or consumers
(low) 1 2 3 4 5 (high)

Unable to produce sufficient quantity to meet demand
(low) 1 2 3 4 5 (high)

Lack of distribution system for local products
(low) 1 2 3 4 5 (high)

Lack of local processing facilities
(low) 1 2 3 4 5 (high)

Requires too much time
(low) 1 2 3 4 5 (high)

Price premiums paid to farmer
(low) 1 2 3 4 5 (high)

Insufficient demand for local products
(low) 1 2 3 4 5 (high)
APPENDIX D
Sample Focus Group Questions

I. Food Availability (*do you have enough?*)
   A. Do you have enough food for everyone in your family each week?
   B. Do you ever worry about running out of food?
      a. How often does it happen?
      b. What do you do if you don’t have enough food?
   C. What foods are difficult to make available?

II. Affordability (*can you afford what’s available?*)
   A. What comes to your mind first when you think of food being affordable?
   B. Are you familiar with various food assistance programs
   C. If I could make one improvement to the food assistance programs, it would be….

III. Food Accessibility (*where do you get it?*)
   A. Where do you get your food?
   B. Are there enough community resources in your area to prevent families from being hungry?
   C. What stops you from getting the food you need?

IV. Local Food Access
   A. Do you buy food from a food producer directly?
   B. Do you know of any food producers that sell their food to the public?
   C. Are you interested in buying any food locally or directly from the producer?

V. How many of you have grown or raised your own food?
   A. How many are still growing or raising your own food?
   B. Are there limits to you growing food?
   C. Is there any knowledge, skills or resources that would help you to grow your own food?
APPENDIX E
North Coast Consumer Survey Questions (on-line)

1. Where do you buy the majority of your food?
2. Where else to you get the food you eat?
3. How much of the food you buy is fresh fruits and vegetables?
4. How often do you buy locally grown or raised food?
5. If you don’t buy food that is grown or raised locally, what is the main reason?
6. Which of the following do you think we need more of in this region?
7. What are the greatest concerns you have about the food you eat?
8. In your opinion, how serious is hunger in your community?
9. In you opinion, how serious are poor quality diets in your community?
10. In the last year, how often did you shop for the cheapest food available?
11. Check all of the following that you or your family uses on a monthly basis (when available).
12. In a normal week, how many of your household’s meals are prepared at home?
13. If most or all of the meals are NOT prepared at home, why?
14. Do you preserve fresh food by freezing, drying, canning or smoking it?
15. How important is hunting, fishing or wild harvesting of food to meet your household food needs?
16. What would help you increase wild food in your diet?
17. Do you grow your own fruits and vegetables?
18. In which of the following educational opportunities would you be most interested?