A Food System with Deep Roots

The Historical Precedents and Future Opportunities of Grant County’s Food System

2010

A Collaboration between Oregon State University Extension, Oregon Food Bank and Resource Assistance for Rural Environments
Acknowledgements

We would like to convey our sincere gratitude to the people of Grant County for opening up your homes, grocery stores, restaurants, food pantries, churches, and community halls to tell your stories that invaluably informed this assessment.
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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
Grant County, Oregon is a designated frontier area by the federal government given its population density of 1.8 people per square mile (National Center for Frontier Communities). The county is 4,528 square miles in size containing the nine incorporated cities of Canyon City, Dayville, Granite, John Day, Long Creek, Monument, Mt. Vernon, Prairie City, and Seneca. John Day is the largest city with the most amenities and a population of 1,483 according to the 2009 U.S. Census Population Estimates. Highways 26 and 395 are the main avenues for transportation into and about Grant County. Both the east-west and north-south highway routes require a trip over mountains to enter and leave the county. Given its sparse population density and distance from other, larger communities Grant County surpasses rural; it truly is the western frontier.

Grant County was originally settled by a group of miners who came west in search of gold. They found what they were looking for in 1862 in Canyon City, which quickly became a bustling mining town. At one point Canyon City was one of the largest cities in Oregon and was a serious consideration for the home of the Oregon state capital. As the population grew there were increased agricultural operations to supply the food consumed by these early settlers (Oliver, 1961). The county continued to grow with the added industries of timber and ranching.

Ranching remains a primary industry with $16,229,000 in annual livestock sales and $2,113,000 in crop sales, which is likely hay sales (2007 Census of Agriculture). Ranching is a cultural fixture of life here in Grant County. As described by one Grant County rancher, “Ranchers are ranchers through and through, they are not farmers.” This is important in thinking about the future of the county’s agriculture and food production. There may not be an entire shift to rows of beets and carrots in lieu of fields of hay and cattle. However, ranch operations are an agricultural resource that provide the community with a connection to the land at the least. As one Grant County resident said, “Ranching is a wonderful way of life here, but we can’t just eat beef.”

Government jobs are currently the main source of employment in the county (Oregon Employment Department). The median household income is $34,846 (2008 U.S. Census). As of May 2010, 12.7% of the county’s population was unemployed (Oregon Employment Department). According to the 2008 U.S. Census 15.2% of the population live below the federal poverty level. The 15.2%, plus many more, who face additional burdens that are not accounted for by the census, cannot provide all that they and their families need.

This assessment is intended to tell the stories of the producers who are trying to make a living while providing food to their community, the grocery store owners who are attempting to do the same, and the consumers who are striving to put nutritious foods on their table. By telling these stories the goal of this assessment is to shed some light on the question, Is food available and affordable in Grant County? as well as, Where are there opportunities to further strengthen the food system?
Chapter 2: Supplying Grant County

It’s Been Done Before: The History of Food Production in Grant County

Historically the people of Grant County lived and ate locally. From the early days of the county’s settlement until the mid 1900s there was very little food transported into the county and the people of Grant County did not travel elsewhere to buy their food. This food independence is demonstrated by the described life style of the Oliver family in Gold and Cattle Country. The Oliver family was among the first families to put down roots in an agricultural operation in Grant County (Oliver, 1961). Most of the food consumed in Grant County at this time was produced in Grant County. A presentation developed by the John Day Resource Center provides information demonstrating that, during the early 1900s there were 40 to 50 thousand acres of fruit trees in the county. There were 5 to 6 thousand acres of grain being produced. Until the 1950s 140,000 gallons of milk were produced annually. There were also 20,000 dozens of eggs being produced annually at this time. This presentation also quotes one Grant County Rancher as saying, “Grant County is a ‘bread basket’ … we have the ability to be self-sufficient with food production” (An Illustrated History, 1902, p. 387). For similar reasons, such as the cost of transportation, Grant County’s food system today faces comparable instabilities. This lesson of producing food locally, which was learned early on by residents of Grant County, seems to have been forgotten in the last 50 to 60 years.

Agriculture that was centered on supplying food locally was quite profitable at one point. The Oliver Ranch was developed and expanded using the profits the family originally made supplying the other residents with food produced on their ranch. “It was built solidly upon milk cows and hand tended rows of peas, beans, and carrots” (Oliver, 1961, p. 7). As this historic perspective demonstrates, local food production in Grant County truly has been done before. Given this historic precedent it reduce their cost of living by producing and growing food right here within the county. These realizations are demonstrated in An Illustrated History of Baker, Grant, Malheur, and Harney Counties. “During the early days perhaps nobody in the county had any idea of permanently settling here…. Agriculture they considered out of the question entirely. … Provisions of all kinds, including potatoes and other vegetables, had to be imported from without, and as freight from The Dalles was 16 to 24 cents per pound, it may be imagined that the price of living was very high. The enormous profits to be reaped from the raising of vegetables, should experiments in that direction prove successful, early induced a few men to plant small patches of potatoes and garden vegetables” (An Illustrated History, 1902, p. 387). For similar reasons, such as the cost of transportation, Grant County’s food system today faces comparable instabilities. This lesson of producing food locally, which was learned early on by residents of Grant County, seems to have been forgotten in the last 50 to 60 years.

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is not too farfetched to think that it could be done again.

Producers

Background: This section provides an in-depth perspective of what goes into producing food in Grant County. The producers that are profiled in the following pages demonstrate how unique each agricultural operation is and yet how many challenges are shared across varying agricultural sectors. The 2010 Grant County Local Food Guide provides a more complete list of the producers in Grant County (reference appendix D). The local food guide was created as a RARE AmeriCorps project in partnership with OSU Extension, the Oregon Food Bank, and Grant County Economic Development in order to connect local consumers to local producers.

Happy Hens Egg Farm

Dan Horgan has owned his 19 acre property since 1980. He and his wife Grima have been raising hens on the property for almost two years. Their egg production is just supporting itself, and at times it barely does that.

Happy Hens Egg Farm at the John Day Farmers’ Market.

They have approximately 150 laying hens that are fed all natural feed and compost material. Their largest production expense is the feed, especially during the winter months when the chickens consume more feed than compost. Another large expense is the cost of fuel to sell and deliver the eggs and to go buy the feed.

They are licensed by the Oregon Department of Agriculture to sell directly to the consumer. Their customers are made up of people locally who come by the house or ask them to bring eggs when they come to town. They have some drop locations in John Day where people can buy their eggs. Some of the challenges they encounter with trying to sell directly to consumers include: the transportation to town, access to customers, and having a convenient location to sell from. It is expensive to transport small amounts of eggs on a regular basis. They find that people are not inclined to make a special stop just for eggs. They really need a convenient place for people to buy their eggs.

They would like to expand to 500 hens in the near future, but only if there is the market for it. In order to create a larger market to support their business they need to have more avenues in which to sell their eggs. This may mean they need to become USDA-certified so they can sell to stores and restaurants. Dan and Grima fear that it would be too expensive for them to become federally inspected because of the cost for new equipment, washing stands and sinks, and flooring for their egg shed.

Dan and Grima have joined the John Day Farmers’ Market for its first season. They have done rather well selling at the market. They had some concerns about selling at a Farmers’ Market given that in the past they have looked into going to the Bend Farmers’ Market and with the cost of gas and the booth fee they would barely have broken even. The John Day Farmers’ Market is a much shorter trip and the booth fees are set for the scale of producers in Grant County. Attending the local farmers’ market seems to be supplying Happy Hens with sufficient access to consumers for now.
and may be their avenue for future expansion and creating a sustainable customer base.

**Field’s Grass-Fed Beef**

Before he started his 260 acre ranching operation Dick Field sat down to think about how to make an agricultural operation work without subsidies. One thing that Dick realized is how important it is to maintain ownership of the product throughout the process from birth to slaughter and everything in between. In thinking about the productive agricultural industries in Grant County Dick realized that basically “We grow grass here, that’s about it!” Grass does grow fairly well, so he settled on grass-fed beef. He was also sure that he wanted to produce a top quality product.

He discovered the Piedmontese, an Italian breed of cattle that are genetically more tender and have less harmful fat and more Omega-3 fats than any other breed. He uses Piedmontese bulls to cross with Hereford cows. This allows for grass-fed beef that is also tender. The nutritive analysis that Dick has done on his beef provides him with the potential for a niche market within a niche. He currently runs a 60 head cow herd.

In 2009 Dick started a locker beef program. One challenge that Dick faced in looking for relatively local retailers to sell his product is that chain stores purchase and sign contracts at the headquarter level and not at the local branch location. With this being the case Dick found that it is much easier just to go through independent stores if you can find them. For this coming year he has two retail grocers to sell to, one locally and one outside of the county that captures a more select market. Dick will transport one animal a week to Butcher Boys, the USDA processing facility in Prineville, where it will be dry aged. He will then transport the ribs, strip loin, tenderloin and some trim to the store outside the county; and then he will bring the rest of the meat, including ground beef and other steaks, back to Grant County to be sold locally. This way he is able to sell the whole carcass. It would be easier for Dick to sell more of his product locally if he were able to process it here in Grant County rather than having to take it to Prineville.

Currently Dick is growing all of the grass that his cattle are raised and finished on. He gets two cuttings each year. The second cutting has almost no stem in it and is very high in protein. His cattle gain 1 1/4 lbs per day on grass. If he is going to expand his operation and raise even more cattle he will need to find growers to grow grass for him.

Dick and his son Jeremy produce, market, and distribute their product themselves. Except for the processing they, like other small scale livestock producers who want to sell locally, are the whole system.

**North Fork Ranch**

Jim Bahrenburg grows certified organic vegetables in Kimberly, OR. The valley of the North Fork of the John Day River provides his farm with fertile soil and an excellent growing climate that allows Jim to grow a variety of
vegetables and grains. Currently he is selling most of his produce to Azure Standard and Whole Foods. He would really like to be selling the majority of his product locally. He wants to “feed the county” as he puts it. He supported the development of a farmers’ market in Grant County and is going to participate in the first season of the John Day Farmers’ Market. He thinks that there is enough of a market right here within the county for producers to make a decent living. As Jim says, “you just have to be creative.” His largest challenge right now is the cost of transporting food outside the county. Reducing the cost of transportation is one of the many reasons that he would like to sell locally. Jim has recently purchased an efficient refrigerated truck to make the transportation of fresh produce around the county even easier.

Jim Bahrenburg overlooking the Nort Fork of the John Day River from his field.

**Wish Poultry**

Wish Poultry is no longer in operation, however the experiences that the Wishard family had with their business provide important insight as to the realities of food production in Grant County. The Wishard family started Wish Poultry in 1945 raising turkeys and chickens in Prairie City. They processed a small number of turkeys and chickens on a weekly schedule and then a larger number during Thanksgiving and Christmas. They were able to employ several local people on a part time basis. They sold their poultry at local stores and at stores outside of the county. They also sold their eggs at local stores. As more and more “restrictions” were set by the Federal and State Government it became harder and more expensive for them to run their operation. The overhead expenses were so high that they had to charge more than the local market could bear, which is why they had to sell a portion of their product elsewhere. The distance to markets posed a challenge, as well as the fact that there was no grain for feed being produced here. “It’s just not sustainable economically … given what you have to haul in and out, the distance is a real problem. I always thought that if we sat on the edge of Bend or Portland we could have made a good living,” says Bard Wishard. The high operational costs and the loss of family members caused Wish Poultry to close in 2005.

**Producer Conclusions:**

Several producers shared the same challenges that they face being small operations. One in particular is trying to meet regulations and standards for certification that are set with larger producers in mind. Federal and State regulations are set to protect the consumer, yet small producers really do feel they are
“restrictions” on their businesses. It is hard to grow your business to the point that it can withstand the burden of the regulations when the regulations make it difficult to operate on a day-to-day basis.

During interviews a common topic local food producers often talked about is the need for a local processing facility. This is an issue for all producers, from vegetables to beef. Vegetable and fruit producers need processing in order to offer local food year round and meat processors need federally certified processing so that they can sell their product indirectly.

The majority of Grant County producers interviewed expressed they have a difficult time accessing enough consumers. Given Grant County’s distance from larger population centers it is expensive to try to send local products to these larger markets. Most of the producers would much rather sell to local consumers, however as it stands now they are not able to make a living this way. There is a large need for more avenues of sale for local food. This is where, as quoted above, Jim Bahrenburg says, “You just have to be creative.”

A Market for Local Food

Grocery Stores

Background: There are fourteen stores in Grant County where food can be purchased including both grocery stores and mini markets. The Rural Grocery Store Owner Survey developed by Kansas State University was completed by a total of seven stores including the five “grocery” stores in the county and two mini marts.

Here and Now: Of the local grocery stores surveyed three out of seven are currently buying locally produced foods, most just during the growing season. Chester’s Thriftway in John Day is the largest grocery store in the county and is currently buying some locally produced foods. In some cases it is as simple as growers bringing in their extra and the produce manager gives them a price. Chester’s Thriftway is interested in continuing to source some of their products locally. The store currently receives four deliveries from outside the county that include produce every week. That is a lot of demand that could potentially support a large amount of local production.

Several of the smaller stores indicated they cannot make a profit off local foods. If they mark up the price customers will just go straight to the source to get the same goods for a lower price. Small stores have also expressed concerns about buying too much of the products they carry locally because they need to spend all of their purchasing dollars with their distributor to meet the minimum buying requirements. They need the distributor for the items they cannot buy locally and for the winter months when there is very little to buy locally.

Chester’s Thriftway in John Day.

Conclusion: The local grocery stores, right here in Grant County, are an excellent avenue for getting local food to local people. Grocery stores provide one possibility to try to utilize the avenues that are already in place.
rather than creating a new system for food distribution. There are some evident challenges for stores when it comes to buying locally produced foods, however there may be some compromises that can be made by both the stores and the producers so the exchange can work for everyone. Consumers also have some responsibility to encourage stores to carry local products by asking for them and by purchasing local products. It may mean consumers will have to be willing to pay a little more for local foods to start out. Ideally local foods should not be any more expensive, because the cost of transportation is significantly reduced.

**The John Day Farmers’ Market**

**Background:** Farmers’ Markets provide an excellent opportunity for the sale of locally produced foods during the growing season as well as a way for producers and consumers to build a face-to-face relationship. This relationship is important because it allows the consumer some insight as to how their food is produced and the producer a chance to find out what their customers would like and to secure a following.

**Here and Now:** In 2010 the John Day Farmers’ Market opened its first season. A group of Grant County residents who saw the need for a place for local food producers to sell their products and for a place for Grant County residents to be able to buy fresh, local, nutritious, and affordable foods developed the market. The farmers’ market board recognized the small scale of producers that the county has to offer and therefore has structured the market and market requirements to fit producers’ needs and capabilities.

So far this first market season seems to be a success for everyone involved. A wet and cold spring lasted much later into the early part of summer than usual. This caused some producers to have a delay in produce availability. What produce they have brought to market has sold by the end of the day.

The vendors have been making an average of $150 a week, which is more than most expected to make in the early weeks of the market. The majority of the fruit and vegetable vendors can accept USDA Farm Direct Nutrition Program checks and WIC Fruit & Vegetable vouchers. Several local participants of these programs have already taken advantage of this alternative option for redeeming their checks and vouchers. This provides participating families with fresh, nutritious foods and expands the market for producers to sell locally, therefore increasing the dollars in their pockets.

As stated in a letter to the Editor of the Blue Mountain Eagle in the June 30th, 2010 edition, “If you missed the opening of the John Day Farmers Market on Saturday, June 19th, you missed a beautiful day in your neighborhood. . . . The music was playing and people were crossing the street in front of us with bags filled with herbs, fresh eggs, and artisan bread.”
artisan bread.” The John Day Farmers’ Market takes place Saturday mornings from 9am to noon right in the center of downtown John Day, thus bringing people to the downtown business district on the weekend and providing vendors with an ideal location to sell their products.

**Conclusion:** The John Day Farmers’ Market has so far provided a successful avenue for direct local food sales during the 2010 growing season. The large volume of customers in this small community demonstrates a demand for local foods. The market is scheduled to run through October 16th for the 2010 season. After this date producers will again be on their own for finding consumers to sell to until the market opens again next summer. Most of the fresh fruits and vegetables will be disappearing by the time the market closes, however there are still producers with products throughout the winter months. There are still eggs, meat, dried and canned fruits and vegetables, and bread that could be sold locally. This creates the need for year-round sale outlets that are convenient for both producers and consumers.

### A Produce Exchange

**Background:** There are existing local food networks that allow producers and buyers to connect and arrange for sale, such as FoodHub (Ecotrust, 2010). This network is an excellent model for larger buyers and producers who are interested in conducting many sales in a year.

**Here and Now:** In Grant County there are many people who grow a large garden who may have extra produce during the growing season. Most of these gardeners are not interested in having their own booth at the farmers’ market but they don’t want their produce to go to waste. Some of these gardeners find they have too much of one sort of vegetable, but they can’t seem to grow another. Several residents have expressed an interest in having a place to exchange produce with other gardeners. There have been some suggestions of this taking place at the farmers’ market or the community garden and some have suggested it take place in a more virtual space like a website.

**Conclusion:** If there were an exchange site that was more than just a table at the farmers’ market it could also serve as an avenue for local sales between producers and restaurants, grocery stores, or schools. Having a place to post current supply that could be constantly updated would allow buyers to get fresh products. Such an exchange network would allow buyers and producers to participate no matter their buying or selling volume.

### Restaurants

**Background:** There are about 15 restaurants and cafes in Grant County that could be potential avenues for local food sales. According to the U.S. Census Bureau food services is one of the larger industries in Grant County in terms of number of establishments, number of people employed, and in transaction dollars (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).

**Here and Now:** Currently none of the restaurants in the county indicate they are using locally produced foods on their menu. The Squeeze In and the Outpost restaurants would both be interested in considering the possibility of buying local food to supply their kitchens. With more information other restaurants may be interested as well.

**Conclusion:** The Grant County Local Food Guide can provide the restaurants with a resource list so they know what is available for local food and who to contact. This will hopefully increase the connections between local buyers and local producers.
**Schools**

**Background:** A farm-to-school program provides school cafeterias with fresh, local, and nutritious foods while at the same time supporting local producers. Schools provide an excellent avenue of sales for producers because they have a constant demand for food during the school year. The farm-to-school program has received tremendous support at the state level. Both the Oregon Department of Agriculture and the Oregon Department of Education have a dedicated staff person to provide support to farm-to-school programs across the state. Some of the benefits realized from farm-to-school programs are: they support sustainable community food systems; they strengthen small, local farms; they make children aware of where their food is coming from; they provide kids with healthy food; and they connect a variety of community members (Occidental College, 2006).

*Teacher, Gene Russell, looking into a cold frame at Long Creek School.*

**Here and Now:** The Long Creek School, through their Agriculture Science and Technology Program directed by Gene Russell, has several projects started to supply their cafeteria with local food. The horticulture classes are working on projects to extend the short growing season that poses a challenge in Long Creek.

They are making use of cold frames that were constructed by several students and youth volunteers. They are experimenting with using donated hay bales to insulate the cold frames. Mostly cold tolerant plants have been grown in the cold frames, such as cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, kohlrabi, radishes, spinach, and salad greens. The students have started plants in the greenhouse that are transferred to the garden in the spring. The greenhouse is also used to grow flowers for a fundraiser.

*Chicken tractor built by the Long Creek FFA.*

The garden is set up with compost bins, which breakdown the food waste that comes from the school’s cafeteria. This compost, combined with other organic materials, is put back on the garden to aid the production of more fresh edibles for the cafeteria, thus completing a micro-food system.

The Long Creek Future Farmers of America (FFA) program hosts 24 laying hens on the school’s property. Several chickens at a time are housed in what is known as a “chicken tractor” created by the FFA students.

The chicken tractor is a bottomless coop that sits on the school’s upper field, allowing the chickens full access to bugs and weeds in the ground. As a result of the chickens scratching for bugs and weeds to eat, the ground is tilled and fertilized. The chicken tractor therefore serves the function of tiller, fertilizer, herbicide, and pest control all in one. The chicken tractor is moved every couple of days.
to give the chickens new ground to work on. The eggs produced by these busy hens are used in the school’s cafeteria. Growing your own is certainly a great way to source food locally while at the same time educating about various methods of food production.

The Long Creek School is an obvious starting place for a farm-to-school program, given the programs they already have in place. The school cafeteria serves 60 meals a day and is already accustomed to dealing with whole, unprocessed foods, such as what is currently coming out of their garden. The Long Creek School does have a home economics program, which could assist the cafeteria in preparing whole, local foods. There are also seven other schools around the county that could participate in a farm-to-school program creating a significant amount of demand for local food.

**Conclusion:** The Long Creek School has identified several needs that would have to be met in order to make local purchasing work for them. They need to have a constant supply they can rely on in order to still have a functioning cafeteria. They need to make sure that they, and the producers they buy from, are following all federal and state regulations. The producers they buy from must carry insurance. The shift to local food has to be economical in addition to supplying the school with higher quality food and supporting local farmers. A couple of challenges they face are figuring out what form to take local food in and how to process the food so that it will keep. They must also determine a schedule for receiving local food that fits their uses and the producers’ supply. Another is having space to keep large quantities of food that is perishable. They may need a large walk-in freezer, which is an expensive purchase.

There are certainly some challenges to be figured out, but some form of the farm-to-school program in the Long Creek School and other schools in the county is a realistic possibility. This program does not have to be limited to schools. Any facility that has a food service could become connected with local food sources. This could include the senior citizen centers and the hospital. These programs would be a natural fit given their interest in health and the importance of fresh, nutritious foods.

### Processing

#### Fruit and Vegetable Processing

**Background:** Local produce is really only available in Grant County for five months out of the year, at the most, and some of those months are fairly sparse. Therefore, one of the keys to supply Grant County’s food system locally is processing.

**Here and Now:** This is where long time traditions of preserving food come in to play. Many people in Grant County still can, dry, and freeze their own food. The skills of home preserving are an excellent contribution to a strong local food system. However, not everyone has the time, desire, equipment, or skills to preserve their own food. Several attempts at creating a commercial food processing facility have occurred in the Monument and Kimberly area. As of now there is no such facility.

**Conclusion:** There is a need for a centralized commercial processing facility in Grant County that would provide a certified space were foods could be cooked, baked, canned, dried, and frozen. Such a facility could foster the growth of new small businesses as well as contribute to the supply of local foods year round.
**Meat Processing**

**Background:** In order for local meat to be sold through stores, restaurants, schools, or anywhere that it is not being directly sold to the consumer, that meat must be processed in a USDA certified facility.

**Here and Now:** Russell's Custom Meats provides a valuable resource to Grant County. Russell's is not USDA certified to process meat to be resold, however they can do custom exempt slaughter and processing. This allows local livestock producers to sell their animals live to consumers and then the consumers can have the animal processed by Russell's. Russell's does provide the option of going out on to the field for the slaughter, thus reducing the stress on the animal. Russell’s service makes it possible for local people to have access to local meat. Kathy Moss, the co-owner of Russell’s, says that, “If it wasn’t for the local ranchers, we wouldn’t be here.” Kathy’s statement shows that local livestock producers are taking advantage of the opportunity to follow their product through the processing and to sell directly to the consumer.

There is still a large need for meat to be processed in a USDA processing facility so it can be resold to stores, restaurants, schools, and so on, expanding the market for sales. There are approximately 350 ranches in Grant County averaging 1,913 acres in size (2007 Census of Agriculture). According to Grant County’s OSU Extension Agricultural agent, ranches are running anywhere from 10 to 500 head of cows. It is the small operations that are going to be most likely to sell their product locally. For the larger operations being able to process their animals locally and then sell them elsewhere would enable them to keep track of their product until the sale much more easily than when it has to go to Idaho to be processed.

A mobile slaughter unit was looked into for Grant County. It was found that the unit would have to be very large in order to serve large producers who want to kill hundreds of cattle at one time. Such a large unit would then not be able to serve the smaller producers at the same time. Once the animals are killed they still have to go to a USDA facility to be cut and wrapped.

It was then thought that it would be better to have a central facility that ranchers could bring their cattle to for the kill, cut, and wrap. Most ranchers already have a trailer to transport their cattle from the field to the processing facility. This led to the creation of Strawberry Mountain Natural Beef.

Strawberry Mountain Natural Beef in John Day.

Strawberry Mountain Natural Beef is currently closed, however the USDA certified cut and wrap facility is established in John Day. The facility does not have the crucial USDA certified kill floor, but the facility did receive permission from the City of John Day and the county planning department to build one. The construction of the kill floor would be a large expense and would require a serious investment. There were several factors that inhibited the successful operation of Strawberry Mountain Natural Beef; however, this modern facility site that is developed is a huge asset to Grant County’s local food system.
Conclusion: The successful completion of this facility would provide livestock producers with a local avenue for processing their livestock and therefore an avenue for selling their product. This facility would also support a number of living wage jobs, providing the need to educate local people in a skill they could use here in Grant County.

Standard Food Distribution

Grocery Stores

Background: The ability of grocery stores to get and supply affordable and nutritious foods ultimately determines the availability and affordability of nutritious foods in a community. To assess the ability of stores in Grant County to supply their community, information was taken from the Rural Grocery Store Owner Survey developed by Kansas State University and conducted here in Grant County as well as from informal interviews.

Here and Now: The smaller grocery stores in Grant County are having a hard time getting distributors to deliver to them because of their size and location. Of the stores surveyed, six out of seven stores say they do have difficulty getting products delivered because of their location. One store responded specifically that, “Suppliers don’t want to come out, they charge higher minimums or larger fuel surcharges.” Another store owner said, “Bread vendors do not come into our area. We have a limited selection to pick from.” Some stores also have a hard time getting distributors to come to them because they cannot meet the minimum buying requirements (see Figure 1). One store indicated they cannot afford to meet requirements for trucks to deliver and they also do not have enough space to receive full truck loads in the first place.

When they can get deliveries, the smaller stores are paying higher prices than larger stores because they cannot buy in large quantities. One store owner explains that, “When purchasing in large quantity, you get

| Figure 1. Rural Grocery Store Owner Survey Results |
| Which of the following are major challenges for your store? Check all that apply. |
| (The number indicates how many stores see that category as a major challenge.) |
| 1. availability of satisfactory labor | 1. lack of community support |
| 4. competition with large chain grocery stores | 2. low sales volume |
| 1. debt and/or high payments | 3. narrow profit margins |
| 2. government regulations | 3. required minimum buying requirements from vendors |
| 3. high inventory costs/ low turnover | 3. shoplifting/bad checks/internal theft/unpaid accounts |
| 2. shortage of working capital | 2. taxes |
| 2. high operating costs (utilities, building lease, repairs/maintenance, etc) | 0. other (specify) ____________________________ |
a large discount. In our small community we find it hard to compete with those discounts. With smaller purchases there is a larger ‘up charge’ or smaller discounts.” Many of the smaller grocery stores in the county find the most economical of all their options is to drive to Redmond or Pendleton to buy from outlet stores to stock their shelves.

Another challenge for the local grocery stores in Grant County is the loss of business to chain stores outside of the county. Of the stores surveyed four out of seven noted that competition with large chain grocery stores is a major challenge for their business (see Figure 1). Refer to chapter two for consumer purchasing information.

The majority (six out of seven) of grocery stores surveyed in Grant County do have an interest in collaborating with other independent grocery stores for at least one of the following purposes: Cooperative advertising/marketing; grocery distribution purposes; sharing concerns and/or ideas; in order to achieve minimum buying requirements.

**Conclusion:** All of these challenges the grocery stores face make it very hard for them to supply affordable food to the residents of Grant County.

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**Food Pantries**

**Background:** When times are tough and the little or no income a family or individual is receiving is not enough to afford the food at the grocery store, local food pantries prove to be an invaluable resource. Food pantries are intended to be there to provide support as long as a family or individual needs assistance.

Ideally a food pantry should only have to provide support for a short while to allow someone to get back on their feet. This however can be as short as a couple of weeks or as long as several months or even years. There are many factors that affect a person’s ability to provide for themselves or their family. This is a lesson that can be learned by talking to most volunteers at one of Grant County’s food pantries who so generously offer their time to help provide for those who are currently struggling to provide for themselves.

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**Prairie City Food Bank**

The Prairie City Baptist Church started their food pantry in January of 2009. They hold their food distribution the 3rd Tuesday of every month from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Their food comes from the Regional Food Bank in La Grande that is 110 miles from Prairie City, private donations, and from local businesses. They receive and distribute perishable and non-perishable goods. They serve roughly 30 families (70 people), and follow a no-questions-
asked policy. The pantry is held at their teen center at the in downtown Prairie City. One community group hosts the food pantry and has about 20 volunteers, adults and kids. Another group is responsible for their “Soup’s On” program where they serve a meal at the same time that the food pantry is open.

The food pantry is set up as a shopping system where they let people go around and pick out what they want. They have found that people actually take less if they can choose items they want. This way they will use more and not waste as much.

The volunteers have also found that this way they have more one-on-one time to chat with the recipients in order to find out what is going on in their lives and what other assistance they might need. It may be they need help with heating their house or any number of things that the church has resources to help with. The church has a program called Helping Hands that is available when people need extra hands to do anything from moving a couch to getting firewood.

The volunteers have found most of the families coming to the food pantry want prepackaged, prepared foods. They are currently not taking items like rice that require cooking. This could be for multiple reasons. They may not know how to cook or have the time or energy to spend cooking. The volunteers have thought that it would be worth offering cooking classes as part of the program. It would be possible to make it part of the “soup’s on” program given there are already volunteers cooking in the kitchen.

**Grant County Food Bank**

The Grant County Food Bank is located off Main Street in John Day. The food bank is open for distribution once a month on the 4th Wednesday of every month from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Food bank customers wait in a line that often extends a ways outside the building to be checked in before they can go through to fill their boxes with food. Once in the food distribution line they move their boxes along one side of the long table stopping at each food group to make the selections of the food items they would like to take home. The Grant County Food Bank serves an average of 130 households a month.

The Grant County Food Bank receives the majority of its food from the Oregon Food Bank. Same as the Prairie City Food Bank, the Grant County Food Bank has to go pick up the food from the regional food bank in La Grande. Given that these two food pantries are only open once a month and are a significant drive from the regional food bank in La Grande they have a hard time getting some of the foods they would like to have. It is especially hard for them to get fresh produce from the regional food bank for those reasons. Locally produced food is a far better source for fresh produce than trying to transport from outside the county. In the fall of 2009 the Grant County Food Bank received 800 lbs of donated apples, 400 lbs of squash, and 200 lbs of beets from here in Grant County. As evident by these donations, there are farmers in the county who are willing to donate what is left over from their crops or their seconds, both of which they can give away without much detriment to their bottom line. The food pantries are also able to purchase produce from stores in the county at a reduced rate, which helps provide another source for fresh, nutritious foods.
**John Day Methodist Church Food Pantry**

The John Day Methodist Church Food Pantry gives out food boxes that are made up ahead of time for a specified number of people in each household. The contents of the box are altered if there are special dietary needs or if the family needs baby food. This food pantry serves an average of eight households a week. They are getting some families from outside the John Day area, such as Monument, who are not able to be in town the one day that month when the Grant County Food Bank is open. The pastor at the Methodist Church will put a food box together for someone if they need it outside of the normal distribution hours.

The Methodist Church Food Pantry does receive food from the Oregon Food Bank. They do find they have some people who come to get food just at times when they are having difficulty getting by for whatever reason, but they are over the income requirements to receive USDA commodity foods that come from the Oregon Food Bank. The Methodist Church tries to make sure that people know they should still come to get food if they need it because they have other non-commodity food they can give them.

**Monument Trial Food Pantry**

On June 24th, 2010 a trial food pantry was held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Monument Senior Center to assess the need for emergency food services in Monument. The trial pantry was held after school was out for the summer, given that adults often have a harder time feeding their families when kids are not getting at least one meal a day at school. There were 39 households feeding a total of 88 people who came to receive food that day. There was one lady who was extremely glad she was able to get food in Monument this month. She normally drives the 160 miles round trip to John Day to go to the Grant County Food Bank to get food for her large family as well as food for three other families. Most of the people who came to get food had young children. There were some seniors and people with disabilities.

The volunteers who were involved during the trial pantry were so amazed by the turn out that they are very interested in looking into ways to establish a food pantry on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. A possible location for a community garden was identified on the property owned by the senior center. This garden could help supply the senior center kitchen as well as the food pantry. This trial pantry certainly identified a huge need, but it also stirred a huge willingness to work together to address the need from within the community of Monument.

**Conclusion:** There is obviously a large need for the support that food pantries provide in Grant County. It is clearly not sufficient to simply have food pantries available one day a month in John Day and Prairie City. There are people in outlying areas who fall on hard times and cannot afford to drive into John Day. People also need food more than just once a month. It is a burden on these rural food pantries to have enough food and to transport it the significant distance from the regional food bank. Making more resources available from within the community to help supply the food pantries would help to alleviate these burdens. By connecting food pantries with more local producers they will be able to offer their customers more nutritious and fresh fruits and vegetables.
Chapter 3: Consumers

The History of Consumption, Cooking, and Preserving

The people of Grant County have a very strong connection to the history of the place in which they live and hold on to the traditions that convey that history. In some ways the people have not moved very far away from their past. As mentioned by a participant at one of the discussion sessions held February 26th, one of the many strengths Grant County possesses is that people are connected to the land and to where their food comes from. Even if they don’t still preserve vegetables and cure meats themselves, they do remember when their mothers and or grandmothers did. As one food bank recipient stated, “we need to go back to doing things the way we did before … growing a garden, canning, cooking from scratch … all the things our parents and grandparents did to feed their families.”

The practice of growing and preserving food to provide for oneself is described by Herman Oliver about his family in his book Gold and Cattle Country. “Most of the early settlers along the river set out large orchards, and in no time there were more apples than could be eaten or sold. My folks got a cider mill and squeezed out barrels and barrels of cider” (Oliver, 1961, P.5). “Fruit of all kinds was canned in half-gallon jars—at least 1,000 jars each year. In addition we dried enough fruit to fill ten seamless sacks” (Oliver, 1961, P.12). Providing for one’s family all year round by growing and preserving foods enabled these early residents of Grant County to be independent from outside food sources. As Oliver describes, “Merchants didn’t get rich selling to the Oliver Family. We didn’t buy much except coffee, tea, sugar, salt, and spices” (Oliver, 1961, P.12).

Across the Socio-economic Spectrum

A Food Related Skill Set

Background: Consumers need a set of skills to optimize their access to food. When asked, “Is food available and affordable in your community?” one Mt. Vernon resident said, “Yes, it’s a mind set. Grow it, pick it, buy it on sale.” As simple as “grow it, pick it, buy it on sale” may seem, there are skills involved with this basic resourcefulness that some may never have learned. Once you have grown or picked food you then have to know what to do with whole foods that have not been prepared and packaged in a box for you. Even buying food on sale requires skills that include meal planning, preparation, and recipe use.

Here and Now: The majority of respondents to the Community and Household Food Survey (64.1%) say they have never taken a cooking or nutrition class.
However, the majority (76.3%) said their skills in cooking from scratch were either “good” or “excellent.” About 60% said they either would or maybe would like to learn how to cook various foods.

Of participants surveyed at the Grant County Food Bank, 78.6% indicated they had never taken a cooking or nutrition class. From interviews with food bank clients and other Grant County residents a pattern has become apparent which shows that younger generations are not learning food preparation skills or nutrition awareness at home. One food bank participant said, “We got too busy and stopped teaching our kids these basic skills.”

Both at the Grant County Food Bank in John Day and the Prairie City Food Bank, volunteers have indicated they often have an abundance of foods such as rice and dried beans that require cooking from scratch. The majority of recipients who come through their doors prefer pre-packaged meals that just need water added and to be put on the stove top or in the microwave. Most recipients just say that it is easier; however it is hard to know if it is a lack of skills, a lack of time, or simply a lack of desire to cook. Food bank volunteers are not sure what the answer to this question is, but several have said they think it would be worth offering some sort of cooking or food preparation class to provide motivation at the least.

Conclusion: Just like teaching someone to fish, you have to give people the skills to help them be self-sufficient. It is important there are opportunities within a community to provide people with the basic skills of meal planning, food preparation, food preservation, and nutrition.

Local Food Consumption

Background: Purchasing locally produced foods is a great way for consumers to get more fresh and healthy foods into their diets. The more consumers support and ask for locally produced foods the more affordable and available these foods will become.

Here and Now: A large majority of survey respondents are currently purchasing at least one type of food that is produced within the county. Many are purchasing foods from more than one category. Eggs, beef, fruit, and vegetables are the most common purchase (see Figure 2). Several respondents indicated that locally produced food is not easily accessible. To the question, “do you buy any food that is produced within the county?” One participant at the Grant County Food Bank answered, “I would if it was only available.” Another said, “I want to!” There is clearly a market for locally produced foods in Grant County; however there are currently barriers to people having access to these foods.

Figure 2. Results from the Community & Household Food Survey.

Conclusion: There is undoubtedly a desire from people of all income levels to have access to more locally produced foods. It is partially the consumer’s responsibility to ask for locally produced foods at their grocery stores and restaurants as well as supporting local food when it is available at the farmers’ market and farm stands. Given there is some interest in
being able to buy locally produced foods it is essential to make sure that consumers know where they can find locally produced foods and that more consumers understand the benefits of buying local foods. The 2010 edition of the Grant County Local Food Guide will hopefully provide consumers with this information and encourage them to take advantage of the county’s local food resources. Continued annual production of the Local Food Guide will be important in keeping consumers informed about the evolving resources in their community.

Shopping at Local Grocery Stores

**Background:** Rural grocery stores are a major lifeline to rural communities. It is very difficult for a community to exist without a place to get food.

**Here and Now:** Grant County residents rely on local grocery stores to be there when they need to pick up a gallon of milk or a missing ingredient to a meal; however, many who can afford to do take their business elsewhere when they have the opportunity. According to the Community and Household Food Survey, 50% of residents who took the survey shop for their food outside of the county. One John Day resident stated, “Food is not affordable, we try to go to Wal-Mart once a month. We only go to Chester’s for the bare essentials.” Other surveyed residents said they go to stores outside the county such as: Costco, Trader Joe’s, Bi-mart, Winco, Safeway, Grocery Outlet, Whole Foods, and Food-4-Less.

**Conclusion:** Some shoppers are choosing to go to stores outside of the county because the prices are cheaper and some are going to stores that offer a different or wider selection of foods. Most likely people will always want to go to larger stores for more variety and cheaper prices at the register, however consumers do need to remember the importance of their local grocery stores and that they need to support them. It may be that shoppers and store owners need to communicate more about their needs. If there is a product that the local store is not carrying, consumers could try asking if they can order it. If there are products that are consistently not fresh or too expensive, consumers should give the store feedback and maybe they can work to address it. The store may not be able to accommodate requests given the reality of being a rural grocery store, but it doesn’t hurt for customers to ask.

Consumers Supplying Their Own Food

**Background:** Rural communities tend to be self-sufficient by nature. This often means residents are supplying a portion of their food themselves as a way of providing for their families and neighbors.

**Here and Now:** The majority of Grant County residents have backyard gardens from which they supply some of their own food during the growing months and into the winter if they preserve their harvest. According to the Community and Household Food Survey, 59% of survey participants grow some of their own food. The community gardens that are developing around the county provide even more residents with the opportunity to grow their own food and to help grow food for those in need through the food pantries.

Of survey respondents, 15.7% say that they would be interested in having a space in a community garden to grow their own food, and another 24.8% say they might be interested.
Of those who said they were not interested, the majority indicated they already had a place of their own to raise a garden and some indicated they were no longer physically able to garden.

*John Day Community Garden.*

Several survey participants indicated they hunt and fish for their own meat when asked about their local food consumption. There were several others who mentioned they raise their own meat. It is fairly common in Grant County for a family to have at least a couple of livestock for their own consumption. Programs such as 4-H are great for providing these skills at an early age.

**Conclusion:** It is important that the community continues to provide resources, such as community gardens, that encourage residents to supply their own food and therefore allow them to be more self-sufficient in terms of having a nutritious food supply. Such resources may need to alter the way in which services are offered in order to accommodate the elderly who are not physically able to the work themselves or for those who want to be involved with a community garden, but cannot give the time to be responsible for their own plot.

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**Low-Income Access to Food**

**Background:** “Is food available and affordable in Grant County?” This is one of the main questions of this assessment. This question is especially directed towards concern for the low-income population of the community.

**Here and Now:** The answer: Food is available to those who can afford it. To low-income residents of Grant County food is not really available or affordable. Prices at the local grocery stores are higher here than in large population areas. As one Grant County Food Bank recipient states, “Prices are not really affordable for those living on a budget.” Many, who can afford it, take at least monthly trips to stores like Costco, because they like having the variety and paying less at the register.

A previous employee of a local grocery store explains, “There is no comparable competition so the store can charge whatever they want. People do not like the lack of option. They are even less willing to pay high prices when that is their only option. People go to Bend just to have choices.”

As mentioned in an earlier section, roughly 50% of survey respondents indicated they shop for groceries at a store outside the county. “It is less expensive at stores like Wal-Mart that are out of town,” says one John Day resident. By the time consumers spend money on gas to drive out of the county to go to discount grocery stores, it is not really any more affordable than buying groceries at a store here. With gas prices being around $3.20 in John Day, as of June 2010, it costs roughly $20.00 in gas to go to the closest discount store in Baker City, which is a 160 mile round trip from John Day, and it costs roughly $40.00 to drive the 300 miles to Bend and back to go to...
Costco. However, many residents indicated during interviews that they travel outside of the county for other reasons, such as doctor’s appointments or general shopping, and stop for groceries while they are there. Therefore they are not paying these prices in gas only to go get groceries.

Each of the outlying communities has a small grocery store or mini mart and most of the residents of each town say that they do buy some things from their local store, but the prices are high and eventually they have to come into John Day for some reason or another. Most people living in the outlying communities find they have to come into John Day at least once a week, whether it is for prescriptions, doctor’s appointments, hardware, or even just gasoline. Several of the outlying communities do not have a gas station. This trip to buy gas, groceries, or whatever other necessities, is at least an 80 mile round trip. For some, just having the money to make this trip is a hardship. If they do not have enough money to buy food it is hard for them to have enough money to buy gasoline to get to a cheaper grocery store or to the food pantry. There are some people who do have jobs in John Day who make the trip once a day and have the ability to pick up groceries as needed. When asked if food is available and affordable in their community one Dayville resident said, “No, not for everyone. We need services to areas outside John Day.”

There are enough challenges living on minimal income in John Day, however it becomes even harder for those living a good distance from the limited services that Grant County does have. The wife of a preacher who lives in an outlying community explains that, “One thing that we have noticed since living here is that all services are centered in John Day and there is no way for people to access services if they are living in outlying areas and can’t get themselves in to town. The price of gas makes it even harder.”

The results of the USDA Food Insecurity Survey conducted in 2009 in Grant County indicate that 37.7% of residents could not afford to eat balanced meals sometime over the 12 months before the survey was conducted. The 2009 report “Assessing Hunger in Grant County” put out by the Partners for a Hunger Free Oregon states that, “In these hard economic times, many more people are hungry, especially children and seniors. Federal food programs can help feed people and provide economic stimulus for local economies. Grant County could bring in millions more federal dollars by reaching more eligible people ... If all eligible people were enrolled in SNAP, Grant County would have received an additional $501,563 dollars each month in federal money and 717 additional people would have received help putting food on the table” (“Assessing Hunger in Grant County,” 2009).

Nearly all of the grocery stores and mini marts in Grant County accept SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits, which were formerly known as food stamps. There are only a couple of small convenience stores that do not accept these benefits (“SNAP Retail Locator,” 2010). The fact that so many stores are accepting SNAP benefits indicates in part that these stores recognize the economic opportunity that these benefits offer for them.
as well as the individuals using the benefits and the community at large.

Of the total number of respondents to the Community and Household Food Survey, 22.2% said they do not know how to get food assistance if they need it. This is not an extremely high number, however it is still a fair amount considering what it means for those who do end up facing hard times and can’t get help. The $500,000 of unused food stamps that are available to Grant County could be helping those who need it.

According to the Community and Household Food Survey, only 74.4% of Grant County Food Bank recipients are receiving SNAP benefits. Given they are all eligible based on the income requirements, which are the same for the food bank and SNAP, they could all be enrolled in the SNAP program. This indicates one area of potential outreach.

Of the Community and Household Food Survey respondents who do take advantage of food assistance in one form or another 47.3% are not always able to make it through the month with enough food. Another 5.4% say they do not make it through the month with enough food on a regular basis.

**Conclusion:** This information clearly indicates there are Grant County residents who are struggling to acquire adequate levels of nutrition for themselves and their families, both using and not using food assistance programs. For some who are living in the outlying communities it is a challenge of accessing the grocery store. Others describe high prices at the local grocery stores as being their main challenge. As previously stated by one resident, “It’s a mind set. Grow it, pick it, buy it on sale.” There is a skill set that could help make the food at local grocery stores more affordable for low-income residents. An effort to educate the public about meal planning and shopping for foods on sale could involve a partnership between the local grocery stores and social service groups to make shopping at local stores a more affordable option for residents. There are some consumers who understand the challenges that are a part of living in a rural community, such as one food bank recipient on food stamps who stated, “It’s not always the best pricing on a food stamp budget. I do understand it’s difficult to bring food out here though.” This level of understanding could help foster the cooperation between stores and consumers to educate the community about how to access affordable food at the local grocery stores.

Even if food assistance

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**Figure 3. Poverty, Income & Unemployment**

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<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rank*</th>
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<td>Rate (May 2010)</td>
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*Values for Oregon’s 36 counties are ranked: "1" is the highest value and "36" is the lowest. Information taken from the Northwest Area Foundation and the Oregon Employment Department.
programs do not completely alleviate the struggle to acquire enough food they certainly can help. There is a need for more outreach to be done so people know what assistance is available to them. It is clearly not sufficient to only offer assistance services in John Day given that just getting to town can sometimes be a challenge. Given the unemployment, income and poverty rates for Grant County it is inevitable that there are going to be families who cannot provide enough food for their families without some assistance. An educational program to teach people how to stretch their dollar at local grocery stores would make their WIC and SNAP dollars go even further.

### Serving Underserved Youth

#### Homeless Teens

**Background:** There are a variety of reasons children under the age of 18 end up homeless. It can be due to family dysfunction, economic stress, or limited alternatives. Regardless of the reason, children that are homeless are living with very few resources available to them especially when it comes to having access to nutritious foods ([National Coalition for the Homeless, 2008](#)).

**Here and Now:** There are teenaged kids in Grant County who are essentially homeless. They are couch-surfing and/or sleeping in cars. They are not getting home-cooked meals, they have no place to cook their own meals, and have very little money to spend on food. These kids exist throughout the Grant County school system. Many of the kids at the Blue Mountain Alternative High School could be classified as homeless. As described by Crish Lydon, an instructor at the Blue Mountain Alternative High School, “A large percentage of students who are enrolled at the Blue Mountain Alternative Education School are homeless or are residing in a dysfunctional household that they cannot go home to. These students end up staying on couches at various friends’ houses until the guardian of that household gets tired of having them there. Most of the students do not appear to have the guidance from an adult when it comes to food choices. The result is that they end up making bad choices such as choosing an energy drink as a meal.”

During the 2009-2010 school year the students at the Alternative High School at least got the chance to have a meal at school. This meal was prepared by a group of their fellow classmates who received elective credits for planning and preparing the meal. There were several of these students who found a passion for cooking and became interested in pursuing an education in culinary arts. If nothing else, planning and preparing the meals gave these students the chance to learn important life skills they may not have been learning outside of school. Some of the students did not take advantage of the lunch time meal that was offered to them. Instead they went to the grocery store and bought candy and energy drinks. However, for the students who did stick around during lunch they got a nutritious meal that would enable their young minds to absorb the afternoon’s lessons.

The 2009 Oregon Healthy Teens survey conducted by the Commission on Children and Families in Grant County indicates that 14.3% of 8th graders and 11.3% of 11th graders have eaten less than they felt they should because there wasn’t enough money to buy food

“Most of the students do not appear to have the guidance from an adult when it comes to food choices. The result is that they end up making bad choices such as choosing an energy drink as a meal.”
in the past 12 months. Regardless of whether or not they are homeless there are a number of youth in the county who are not getting enough nutritious food to eat.

**Conclusion:** As of now the county’s homeless teens truly are underserved. There are no programs that serve them directly and the programs that they benefit from at the Alternative School may not be supported into the future. There are programs in place for young children, however teenage children are often overlooked. There need to be services in place that are providing teens with at least one meal a day as well as programs to provide them with the guidance to make good nutritional choices they are not getting at home.

### Summer Food Service Program

**Background:** The Summer Food Services Program was developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and is administered by individual states through their education departments. Many kids receive free or reduced-price lunches during the school year. Families often have a hard time filling the gap that is created when school is out during the summer. The Summer Food Service Program is intended to fill this gap so kids can stay healthy and ready to learn over the summer months. Lunch sites qualify for this program when 50% or more of the students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunches at the nearest school. Once the program is established all kids under the age of 18 years can receive free lunches from a designated lunch site without application or qualification.

**Here and Now:** The Summer Food Service Program was offered through Lake Creek Youth Camp for the first time in Grant County the summer of 2009. Lunch was offered at the John Day City Park Monday through Friday during the summer months. The park where the meals are served is located next to the public swimming pool where many kids are dropped off for the day throughout the summer. The lunch program provides a complete meal that these kids may not get otherwise during the day.

In its first year the program served around 1,800 meals. The program in John Day offers meals to adults for the low cost of $2.00. Offering a meal option to adults encourages parents, caretakers, and friends to come eat with their kids during their lunch break. For the summer of 2010 the Summer Food Service Program is offered again in John Day as well as in Monument and Long Creek. In John Day the average number of lunches served a day has significantly exceeded the numbers from the previous year. The Long Creek School District is providing lunch four days a week during the summer. In Monument the Summer Food Service Program is taking place one day a week at the city park. The meals are being distributed at this location by the OSU Extension employee who is administering the Nutrition Education Program, thus providing an opportunity to educate children and adults about nutrition.

**Conclusion:** The Summer Food Service Program is providing an opportunity for kids to get a nutritious meal during the summer months as well as serving as a gathering place for community members of all ages to socialize and learn from one another. This is an important program to sustain in Grant County for the benefit of children and adults alike.
Chapter 4: Opportunities for the Future

The following recommendations for future efforts in relation to Grant County’s food system were developed by two groups who were informed by the findings of this assessment and their own experiences of Grant County’s food system. The first set of recommendations were developed by a group that consists of producers, distributors, processors, and consumers who have met on two occasions this year to discuss assets and challenges within the county’s food system. The second set of recommendations were developed by the Grant County Hunger Task Force that meets frequently to discuss hunger issues in Grant County and played a large role in the implementation of this assessment. The first recommendation made by each group is directed towards the education of consumers and they share a large amount of similarity. This similarity between two groups with different focuses demonstrates the common threads that run throughout the food system and provide an opportunity for cooperation between all participants of the food system.

**Recommendations for Grant County’s Food System**

**Recommendation 1:** Educate consumers about how to access and use locally produced foods, as well as, the benefits of buying locally produced foods.

**Step 1:** Continue to publish the Grant County Local Food Guide.

**Step 2:** Provide information about how to use locally grown food at the John Day Farmers’ Market.

**Step 3:** Partner with Agriculture teachers, Home Economics Teachers, the Health Department, OSU Extension office, and Families First to offer food education.

**Step 4:** Possibly have a column in the newspaper or a spot on the radio about foods that are in season, where to find them, and how to use them.

**Recommendation 2:** Educate producers about what else can be produced and new methods of production.

**Step 1:** Provide a center for information that is partnered with OSU Extension. Provide information about regulations, how to access sales markets, resources that are available, alternative crops that grow well here, about the need for consistency, how to work around challenges of this area, and how to make an operation that supplies the local community sustainable.

**Step 2:** Take this information out to producers and talk to them one-on-one.

**Step 3:** Encourage producers to share their successes with their friends and neighbors, so that producers show each other that it can be done.

**Recommendation 3:** Expand the local market for food that is already being produced in the county by networking local producers and local buyers.

**Step 1:** Connect local producers with schools that are interested in sourcing food for their cafeterias locally.

**Step 2:** Connect local producers with local restaurants.
Step 3: Encourage the hospital and senior centers to source their food for their food service locally given the nutritional benefits of fresh, local foods.

Step 4: Look into the possibility of creating a local commodity exchange network so that local producers, processors, and consumers can exchange information and products.

Recommendation 4: Provide assistance to businesses that enhance the food system with raw or value-added products.

Step 1: Conduct a feasibility study to assess the need and the required capacity for a community processing facility in Grant County.

Step 2: Develop partnerships between Grant County Economic Development, OSU Extension and other community organizations to provide services in conjunction with a processing facility that assist the development and expansion of local food businesses.

Step 3: Explore ways to fund the operation after the initial construction and first year.

Step 4: Develop a board/non-profit to oversee the operation.

Recommendation 5: Explore options to alleviate the challenges of transportation within such a dispersed and isolated county for both producers and consumers.

Step 1: Recognize that such challenges are a part of living in a rural place and are a part of what people like about living in a rural community.

Step 2: Figure out how to make transportation as efficient and profitable as possible.

Step 3: Consider a more formal cooperation of transportation to move both people and products.

Step 4: Explore the possibility of utilizing trucks that bring goods in to the county and leave empty to take locally produced products to outside markets.

Recommendations to Address Hunger Issues in Grant County

Recommendation 1: Promote opportunities and education that help expand an individual's food resources.

Step 1: Promote the community gardens around the county as a source of food and education. Perhaps provide more varying options within the gardens for individual and families to participate. Ask community members how the community gardens could better serve them.

Step 2: Offer more opportunities for food preservation and preparation education. Support the continuation of home economics programs in schools. Create a Farm-to-School program as an opportunity to teach children about where their food comes from. Perhaps partner with local grocery stores to demonstrate cooking from scratch in the stores.

Step 3: Provide education to enhance the consumer's food shopping and meal planning skills. Perhaps partner with local grocery stores to promote the sales the stores are offering to help teach consumers how to plan their meals in order to access affordable food right here in the community.

Step 4: Provide food education by going to low-income consumers. Host a community event, such as a block party, in low-income neighborhoods that provides education about preparing a nutritious meal while feeding people at the same time.

Step 5: Develop a mentoring program to teach individuals and families on a one-on-one basis to better suit the needs of the individual/family and provide a less intimidating atmosphere.
Recommendation 2: Pursue opportunities for more effective food assistance outreach.

**Step 1:** Explore approaches to break down barriers to accessing food assistance.

**Step 2:** Publicize the eligibility to receive food from the food pantries (Grant County Food Bank, Methodist Church Food Pantry, and Prairie City Food Bank).

**Step 3:** Explore opportunities for outreach about SNAP, WIC, and other food assistance programs in all communities around the county.

Step 4: Offer SNAP and WIC outreach at all food pantries in the county.

Recommendation 3: Further assess and address the presence of homeless and runaway teens in Grant County and the challenges that they are facing.

**Step 1:** Gain further insight from talking to struggling teens directly and/or the adults who interact with them as to what their specific needs are and what aid they could benefit from.

**Step 2:** Partner with schools to find out how they can serve these kids.

**Step 3:** Develop food programs outside of school to help provide balanced meals for struggling youth. These programs could be in the form of a community meal directed at youth and/or a backpack program that would give kids food to take with them.

**Step 4:** Look into setting up a network similar to the “Angel Network” that other communities have to meet the needs of homeless or low-income youth from providing a winter jacket to a warm meal.

Recommendation 4: Further assess the needs of senior citizens and the need for programs to better serve them.

**Step 1:** Talk to senior citizens to find out what their needs are and what programs would benefit them.

**Step 2:** Develop a home delivery meal program if necessary.

**Step 3:** Explore the development of a mentoring program between seniors and youth in which they would cook a meal together feeding both the senior citizen and the youth while teaching the youth essential skills in food preparation.

Recommendation 5: Ensure adequate food resources for low-income residents of the outlying communities in the county.

**Step 1:** Provide assistance to the Monument Senior Center as they develop a permanent food pantry in Monument.

**Step 2:** Provide assistance to other outlying communities that have a need to provide additional food resources to their residents.

Recommendation 6: Organize and develop a plan for the Grant County Hunger Task Force.

**Step 1:** Organize the Grant County Hunger Task Force so that it meets regularly and has a well-developed mission to effectively assess and address the issues around hunger in the county.

**Step 2:** Recruit new people who need to be a part of the conversation on a regular basis or for specific topics to come to the meetings.

**Step 3:** Find solutions to hunger related issues in Grant County.
Methodology

The majority of the information in this assessment came from informal conversations with individuals and groups (Refer to appendix B). This qualitative information provides an in-depth perspective into the experiences of individuals in their varying roles in the food system.

There were two surveys conducted for the purpose of this assessment. One is the Community and Household Food Survey that was developed with help from the Grant County Hunger Task Force. This survey was designed to collect information from a sample of Grant County’s population across the socio-economic spectrum. This survey was intended to identify some of the barriers that prevent people from having access to food and what resources people are taking advantage of to allow them better access to affordable and nutritious food. There were a total of 166 residents surveyed at a variety of locations. Surveys were distributed at the Department of Human Services office in John Day, the Grant County Food Bank in John Day, the Prairie City Food Bank, the Outpost Restaurant, the Monument Senior Center, community meals in Dayville and Mt. Vernon, and other dispersed locations. (Refer to appendices A and C)

The other survey conducted for this assessment is the Rural Grocery Store Owner Survey developed by K-State’s Center for Engagement and Community Development. This survey is intended to identify some of the challenges that rural grocery stores face and the potential for various solutions to these challenges. For this assessment this survey provides some quantitative data that describes the experiences of the grocery stores and mini marts in Grant County as well as providing an opportunity to have a conversation with the local grocery stores about their role in opportunities in Grant County’s food system.

The quotes that are used in this report are intended to represent a common theme that was expressed by several individuals and the quote or quotes chosen summarize the thoughts of many. Given that most of the observations made in this assessment are supported by qualitative data such as quotes from interviews, conversation groups, or open-ended answers on surveys it is important that the majority of quotes used were a representation of a theme that presented itself on more than one occasion.

Additional sources were used to provide background information to explain and support the findings of this assessment. The demographic information was sourced primarily from the Northwest Area Foundation, Partners for a Hunger Free Oregon, Oregon Employment Department, Oregon Department of Human Services, U.S. Census, and the U. S. Department of Agriculture.
Works Cited


John Day Resource Center. Future Cases Scenario: Grant County AgLand Component (PDF Document).


Appendix

A: Sample Community and Household Food Survey
B: Sample Interview Questions
C: Results to the Community and Household Food Survey
D: 2010 Grant County Local Food Guide
Appendix A:
Sample Community and Household Food Survey

How old are you?  □ Under 25   □ Between 26 and 54   □ Over 55

What community do you live in?
□ Prairie City   □ Long Creek   □ Dayville   □ Seneca
□ John Day   □ Kimberly   □ Mt. Vernon   □ Monument

Is food available and affordable in your community?
□ Yes   □ No

Comments:

Where do you get your food from? (Mark all that apply.)
□ Chester’s Thriftway (John Day)  □ Grant County Food Bank (John Day)
□ Huffman’s Select Market (Prairie City)  □ Prairie City Food Pantry
□ Dayville Merc. (Dayville)  □ John Day Methodist Church Food Pantry
□ Boyer’s Cash Market (Monument)  □ Naturally Yours (John Day)
□ Outside the county: ________________  □ Other: ________________

How do you get to the store or food pantry?
□ My own car  □ I bike
□ A family member’s or friend’s car  □ Someone else gets my groceries for me
□ I get a ride with someone else  □ Other: __________________________
□ I walk

Do you buy any food that is produced within the county? If yes, mark all that apply.
□ No, I don’t   □ Fruit   □ Milk   □ Poultry
□ Vegetables   □ Beef   □ Eggs   □ Other: __________________________
What food assistance programs do or have you participated in?

☐ Receive food from the food pantry  ☐ Farm Direct Nutrition Programs
☐ SNAP (Food Stamps)  ☐ Other: ________________________
☐ WIC (Women, Infants & Children)  ☐ None

Do you know how to get assistance if you need it?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

By using this assistance do you find that you have enough food to get through each month?

☐ Yes  ☐ Sometimes, but not always
☐ No  ☐ I do not use an assistance program

Have you ever taken any cooking or nutrition classes? If yes, where?

☐ Yes, at: ________________________________
☐ No

How are your skills in cooking from scratch?

☐ Excellent  ☐ Fair
☐ Good  ☐ Poor

Would you like to learn more about how to cook various foods?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Maybe

Do you grow any of your own food?

☐ Yes  ☐ No
Would you be interested in having a space to grow your own food in a community garden?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Maybe

For more information about community gardening please call the OSU Extension Office at 541-575-1911.

Comments:
Appendix B: Sample Interview Questions

Producers:
Describe the history of your farm/ranch?

Is it a full time profession? Do you rely on off-farm income?

Acres farmed/ranched?

How many people does your farm/ranch employ?

What methods do you use?

Product (raw, finished)?

Is your farm/ranch profitable? Do you rely on subsidies?

What are your biggest production expenses?

Whom do you sell to?

Sell or market locally or directly to the consumer?

Do you know of any direct sale opportunities?

What are the barriers to the direct sales?

How would you define your local market?

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

Have you ever been approached by a consumer about direct sales?

Is it difficult to find, interact or correspond with retailers or consumers?

Do you know of any local or regional processing facilities?

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

Are there any transportation issues?

Have you ever approached economic development folks or sought out grant opportunities?

What is the future of your farm/ranch?

How would you describe the state of agriculture in this region?

Are you interested in being in a local growers guide?
Retail:
Are you an independent grocer or part of a chain?

What is the geographic extent of your customers?

Who makes the purchasing decisions?

How would you define locally-grown product?

Do you sell local products?

If yes, how are relationships with local producers formed?

Do you ever have requests for local products?

Do you believe there is a market for locally produced products?

What are barriers or issues exist to buying directly from producers?

Do you face any transportation issues?

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

Do you donate product to anti-hunger efforts?
**Consumers:**
Have you ever run out of food? How often does it happen?

Do you ever worry about running out of food?

What do you do if you don’t have enough food?

Do you think food is accessible, available and affordable?

Where do you get your food?

How do you get to the store?

What barriers do you encounter in accessing food?

What else could be done to address these barriers?

Are there any community gardens, farm stands or farmers’ markets in your community?

Do you grow your own food?

Are there any people that grow extra vegetables and share them with the community?

Are there any community meal sites in your community?

What food assistance programs do or have you participated in?

How important are food assistance programs to your household? Why?

What are the best features of food assistance programs?

What are some problems you’ve had with food assistance programs?

If you are not using an assistance program, why?

Do you access emergency food supplies?

How often do you rely on this source?

Describe how you think your community could become more food secure.
### 1. Survey Location:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DHS Office</td>
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<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant County Food Bank</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairie City Food Pantry</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outpost Bar</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monument Senior Center</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Vernon Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayville Community Hall Potluck</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>9</td>
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**answered question** 165  
**skipped question** 1

### 2. How old are you?

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<thead>
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<th>Age Range</th>
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<td>Under 25</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 26 and 54</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>72</td>
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<tr>
<td>Over 55</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
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**answered question** 161  
**skipped question** 5
### 3. What community do you live in?

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<th>Community</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prairie City</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Day</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Creek</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimberly</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayville</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Vernon</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seneca</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monument</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**answered question** 165  
**skipped question** 1

### 4. Is food available and affordable in your community?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Comments:** 49  
**answered question** 158  
**skipped question** 8
5. Where do you get your food from? (Mark all that apply.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Store Name</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chester's Thriftway (John Day)</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huffman's Select Market (Prairie City)</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayville Merc. (Dayville)</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyer's Cash Market (Monument)</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant County Food Bank (John Day)</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairie City Food Pantry</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Day Methodist Church Food Pantry</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturally Yours (John Day)</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside the county:</td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
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- **answered question** 160
- **skipped question** 6
### 6. How do you get to the store or food pantry?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>My own car</td>
<td>83.0%</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A family member's or friend's car</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get a ride with someone else</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I walk</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I bike</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone else gets my groceries for me</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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Answered question: 165

Skipped question: 1

### 7. Do you buy any food that is produced within the county? If yes, mark all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Type</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No, I do not</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
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</table>

Answered question: 151

Skipped question: 15
### 8. What food assistance programs do or have you participated in?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receive food from the food pantry</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNAP (Food Stamps)</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
<td>63</td>
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<tr>
<td>WIC (Woman, Infants &amp; Children)</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm Direct Nutrition Program</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>66</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
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**answered question** 159  
**skipped question** 7

### 9. Do you know how to get assistance if you need it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
<td>120</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>34</td>
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**answered question** 153  
**skipped question** 13
### 10. By using this assistance do you find that you have enough food to get through each month?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sometimes, but not always</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not use an assistance program</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
<td>69</td>
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**answered question** 152  
**skipped question** 14

### 11. Have you ever taken any cooking or nutrition classes? If yes, where?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Yes, at:</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>64.1%</td>
<td>100</td>
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**answered question** 156  
**skipped question** 10
12. How are your skills in cooking from scratch?

<table>
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<th>技能水平</th>
<th>百分比</th>
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<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>39.4%</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
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answered question 160
skipped question 6

13. Would you like to learn more about how to cook various foods?

<table>
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<th>选择</th>
<th>百分比</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
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answered question 155
skipped question 11

14. Do you grow your own food?

<table>
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<th>选择</th>
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<td>59.0%</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
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answered question 161
skipped question 5
15. Would you be interested in having a space to grow your own food in a community garden?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
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</table>

answered question 153
skipped question 13

16. Comments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Count</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

answered question 13
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Connecting Local People and Local Food

Why Local?

Supports local farmers, creates jobs. By supporting your local farmers and producers you are providing a Grant County resident with a decent livelihood. If our local farmers are successful at what they do and can sell their product then they will be able to expand. If they can expand they may be able to hire others to help with their production, thus creating more local jobs in a sector that directly benefits the local community.

Keeps money local. The money that you spend with a local farmer, rancher, producer, processor, and retailer stays within your community. That money circulates within the community paying the wages of not just one Grant County resident, but several. Keeping that money within the community allows for just a little more money in everyone's pocket. These locally spent dollars can increase the quality of life within the community.

Makes fresh and healthy food more available and affordable. Given that locally produced food does not have to travel great distances to get to your plate the costs of that transportation are cut out of the product's price. Locally produced food also spends less time sitting around between when it is harvested and when it ends up at your table giving you the freshest food possible. Fresh produce has a higher nutritional value because it is picked when ripe not before. Produce that has to travel a distance is usually picked before it is ripe for the purpose of storage and shipment. A local diet generally consists of more fresh fruits and vegetables, leading to a very healthy diet. By supporting local producers you are also allowing them to put more resources back into what they do, produce food. As a result local food becomes more and more affordable.

You know where your food is coming from. When you meet the farmer, rancher, or processor who is producing and processing your food you know what went into producing it and how it was processed.

Reduces dependency on fossil fuels. When your food is coming from right here in the county it does not have to travel very far on a truck to get to your table. Therefore fewer fossil fuels are needed to get your food to you.

Allows Grant County to be self-sufficient. By supporting the production of food within Grant County we do not have to depend solely on food coming in from other places. The community as a whole can also be more self-sufficient economically. A strong local food system can lead to the self-sufficiency of both individuals and the community.

It’s been done before! Historically the people of Grant County lived and ate locally. From the early days of the county’s settlement until the mid 1900s there was very little food transported into the county and the people of Grant County did not travel elsewhere to buy their food. Most of the food consumed in Grant County was produced in Grant County. Let’s do it again!

How to Eat Local?

1) Buy directly from a local producer. Contact some of the producers listed in this publication. Pages 2-4.
2) Go to the John Day Farmers’ Market. Support the local vendors who come out to the farmers’ market for your convenience. Page 3.
3) Get involved with a community garden. Grow your own food or food for someone in need at one of the several community gardens around the county. Page 3.
4) Buy from a retailer that sells locally produced food. Encourage local retailers to source their products locally by purchasing locally produced items at the stores listed. Page 3.
5) Buy locally raised whole animals. Contact one of the live stock producers to arrange the purchase of an animal for meat. Then contact a custom meat processor for the kill, cut and wrap. Page 4.

The History of Food Production in Grant County

- During the early 1900s there were 40 to 50 thousand acres of fruit trees.
- There were 5 to 6 thousand acres of grain being produced.
- Until the 1950’s 140,000 gallons of milk was produced annually.
- There were also 20,000 dozens of eggs being produced annually at that time.

Grow a little extra and donate to a local food pantry:

- Prairie City Food Bank – Open the 3rd Tuesday of every month from 5pm to 7pm at the Youth Center in Prairie City; they also serve a community meal. Donated food items can be dropped off at the Prairie City Baptist Church located at 238 N McHaley Street in Prairie City. For more information call 541-820-3696.
- John Day United Methodist Church Food Pantry – Hands out food boxes every Friday 3pm to 6pm. Donations can be brought to the church, located at 126 NW Canton Street in John Day, Mondays through Wednesdays from 9am to 12pm, call 541-575-1326 for more information.
- Grant County Food Bank – Distributes food the 4th Wednesday of every month from 9am to 1pm in John Day. Located at 330 E Main, Suite B in John Day. For more information and to donate food call Jim Spell at 541-575-1671 or Tom Sutton at 541-575-1431.
Riverside Gardens
Kimberly, Oregon
541-934-2097
Located just the other side of the river from Kimberly Orchards, look for the sign on the right hand side of Hwy 19 before you cross the North Fork of the John Day River.
Debbie Reid grows various vegetables that are ideal for canning. All of her produce is grown without the use of herbicides or pesticides. Vegetables include; green beans, corn, zucchini, yellow crook neck squash, patty pan squash, pickling cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, herbs. She also sells her own strawberries, red seedless grapes, as well as Elstar and Braeburn apples grown up the road. You can come to the garden and pick your own or buy the produce pre-picked. Debbie also sells potted herbs and flowers as well as gourds and rabbits. Call for more information.

Kimberly Orchards
Kimberly, Oregon
541-934-2870
www.kimberlyorchards.com
Kimberly Orchards is located along the valley floor of the North Fork of the John Day River. This valley provides the perfect climate for producing sweet and flavorful fruit. Kimberly Orchards has a variety of fruit available for U-pick, ready picked, and mail order. They have a selection of fruit that is certified organic.
They also offer fruit butters, syrups, jams, and dried fruits. You can purchase fruit directly from the farm stand at the orchard, which opens in late June with the coming of the first cherries and stays open offering their assortment of apples into the end of October. The farm stand is open seven days a week from 8 am to 6 pm during the busiest part of the season.

Approximate Fruit Season

**Apricots:** Mid July to end of July
**Cherries:** End of June to end of July
**Peaches:** End of July to Mid September
**nectarines:** End of July to first part of September
**Plums:** Mid July to Mid August
**Pears:** Mid August to Mid September
**Apples:** Mid August to end of October

Kimberly Orchards participates in the Farm Direct Nutrition Program that helps provide fresh, local fruits and vegetables to seniors and families participating in the WIC program.

North Fork Ranch
46400 Hwy 402
Kimberly, Oregon
541-934-2521
northforkranch@live.com
Jim Bahrenburg grows certified organic vegetables on his farm which is situated on the picturesque North Fork of the John Day River. As a general time line, Jim expects to have various produce by the following dates:

- **July:** Beets, Peppers, and Cucumbers
- **July 13:** Corn, Tomatoes, and Carrots
- **August 20:** Squash
- **September 15:** Onions and Dill

Call or email to find out what is available and make arrangements to purchase produce.

*Donates fruit to the Grant County Food Bank*

Happy Hens Egg Farm
42794 Hwy 26
Dayville, Oregon
541-987-2378
Dan and Grima Horgan raise about 150 laying hens on their farm just west of Dayville. Their hens are cage free and naturally raised. They provide fresh eggs and some whole fryers to consumers who are interested in knowing where their meat and eggs come from. Eggs are $1 a dozen for small eggs, $2 a dozen for medium, and $3 a dozen for large and $3.50 a dozen for extra large. Grima also grows a large garden that she sells produce from during the summer months. She sells basil, cilantro, spinach, tomatoes, tomatillos, squash and pumpkins. Look for the sign that says, “Eggs” along the south side of Hwy 26 and stop by to get some fresh eggs and see what vegetables Grima has for sale. You can also call for more information and to arrange for purchase.

*Donates fruit to the Grant County Food Bank*

David Farms
38367 Hwy 19
Spray, Oregon
541-468-2441
Located near Service Creek, about 20 miles from Kimberly, David Farms offers a variety of all naturally raised fruits and vegetables. Produce is available for U-pick or we pick.

For more information call Sheldon Davis or stop by when you see the sign out on the side of the highway. Estimated Produce Seasons:

- **Strawberries** - First of June until the first frost
- **Cucumbers and Zucchini** - July
- **Tomatoes** - End of July
- **Corn** - End of July
- **MELONS** - August

Monument Foods
244 Main Street
Monument, Oregon
541-934-2010
Philip Merricks grows a large garden from open pollinated, organic seeds and uses only organic fertilizers. If you know that you are going to want a large quantity of produce, let Phil know ahead of time so that he will have enough set aside for you. Phil has tomatoes, bell peppers, hot peppers, onions, broccoli, green beans, pumpkins, tomatillos, basil, peaches, and concord grapes. Call for more information.

Mary Walker
61449 Marysville Ln.
Canyon City, Oregon
541-575-0776
Mary Walker grows a large garden and has rhubarb and leaf lettuce available starting in May, heirloom tomatoes in August and September, cut herbs, and cut sunflowers. The produce will be picked while you wait or it could be ready for you if you call ahead. Call for availability, if there is no answer leave a message and phone number.

Bruce Land and Livestock
39144 Rudio Road
Kimberly, Oregon
541-934-2225
The Bruce family grows a large garden, without the use of herbicides or pesticides, from which they sell a variety of produce. Produce is available in the months listed below. The Bruce family also produces honey that is available for purchase. Call Bob Bruce for more information.

Estimated Produce Seasons:

- **Green Beans:** June, July, August
- **Peaches:** June, July, August
- **Radishes:** June, July, August
- **Cucumbers:** June, July, August, September
- **Tomatoes:** July, August, September
- **Squash:** July, August, September, October
- **Corn:** August, September, October

Harrison Ranch
53983 Happy Valley Lane
Mt. Vernon, Oregon
541-932-4718
harrhjs@ortelco.net
The Harrison’s grow a large home garden and often have extra to sell to the community. They raise cucumbers, various squash including summer squash, green beans, melons (many varieties), carrots, onions, tomatoes, peppers, corn, beets and potatoes just to name a few. They sell by availability and then by appointment. Give them a call to find out what is available.

*Donates fruit to the Grant County Food Bank*

Better Blooms and Gardens
65153 Hwy 26
John Day, Oregon
541-820-3329
At Better Blooms and Gardens you can find vegetable plants including tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, broccoli, Swiss chard, onions, and zucchini. Julie also creates “salad bowls,” which are pots of mixed greens that can be harvested for a nice salad mix. She also sells a variety of fruit trees including currant, service berry, apple, apricot, peach, pear, plum, asian pear, and pie cherry.

Other edible plants that she sells are blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, grapes, herbs and asparagus.
**Community Gardens**

**John Day Community Garden: Our Plot of Gold**
**Location:** Fairgrounds 3rd St. Extension Property, across from the fairgrounds arena in John Day.
**Plots:** There is a community tended plot managed by master gardeners that anyone can volunteer to work in to help grow food for the local food pantries. There are also plots available for individual use. These plots are available in two sizes: 5’x10’ for $15 and 5’x20’ for $20. The plot fees pay for one plot for the entire season.
**Wish List:** Gardening tools (rakes, shovels, etc.), hoses, seeds, plant starts, a tool shed or materials to build a tool shed, and compost. For more information: Call Hannah Ancel at 541-575-1911 or 541-575-1555.

**Garden of Eat’n**
**Location:** Families First Property at 401 S Canyon Blvd in John Day.
**Plots:** There are plots available for individual use for $15 a season. For more information: Call Hannah Ancel at 541-575-1911 or 541-575-1555.

**Garden on the Prairie**
**Location:** Dejong’s Property on Front St in Prairie City.
**Plots:** There are plots available for individuals, families, or groups to use to grow food for themselves or the Prairie City Food Pantry. The cost of a plot is $10 for the season with the option of volunteering at the garden instead of paying cash.
**Wish List:** Gardening tools (rakes, shovels, etc.), hoses, seeds, plant starts, fencing material, and compost. For more information: Call Sandi at 541-820-3701 or Carol Waggoner at the OSU Extension Office 541-575-1911.

**Monument Community Garden**
A Community Garden plot has been chosen in Monument. For more information on the garden contact Shane at 541-934-2790.

**Seneca Community Garden**
The Seneca Community Garden organization established a site Spring 2010. There will be 12 plots available. Their garden will be ready for planting late May. For further information contact Sue Findlay at 541-542-2431.

**Retailers That Carry Locally Produced Foods**

**Naturally Yours**
135 W. Main, John Day
541-575-1241
The health food store, Naturally Yours, understands the importance of the nutritional value that can be found in fresh, local foods. In their efforts to supply customers with healthy food options, Naturally Yours carries several locally produced products particularly during the growing season. They do their best to carry locally produced fruits, vegetables, honey, and herbs. They can also connect consumers to local egg producers. What Naturally Yours carries in the store is determined by the season, therefore the best thing to do is to call or stop in to see what they have.
Naturally Yours accepts Oregon Trail cards.

**Chester’s Thriftway**
631 W. Main
John Day, Oregon
541-575-1899
Chester’s Thriftway carries David Hamilton’s Wine; Field’s Grass Fed Beef (starting the end of July 2010), Kimberly Orchards fruit and products, and other locally grown fruits and vegetables from smaller producers.
Chester’s Thriftway accepts Oregon Trail Cards and WIC vouchers.

**Dayville Mercantile**
207 Franklin Ave.
Dayville, Oregon
541-987-2133
The Dayville Mercantile sells locally grown produce during the growing season and is a local experience worth checking out on its own.
The Dayville Mercantile accepts Oregon Trail Cards and WIC vouchers.

**A Guide to Buying Local Whole Animals**

BUYING A WHOLE ANIMAL DIRECT FROM THE PRODUCER AND HAVING IT PROCESSED

Knowing where your food comes from is becoming more important every day. Purchasing meat directly from the producer and having it processed locally allows you to follow your product from the field to your dining room table. In addition, you will be supporting local farmers, ranchers and processors which keeps dollars in our community. You will also gain a better understanding of what goes into raising and processing the animals you eat.

### Locating the animal:
Find a producer and get to know them. This guide contains a list of local producers who are willing to sell you an animal. If possible, visit the ranch or farm and see how the animals are raised and treated.

### Buying the animal:
There are several ways you can purchase your animal:

1. **Live weight (on the hoof):** You pay for the entire animal as you see it standing in the field.
2. **Hanging weight:** In this method you pay for the animal as it is hanging on the rail. You are purchasing the edible parts of the animal. If you don’t want the entire animal, the producer may sell the animal as a half or quarter. The price for this is higher per pound than that of the live animal.
3. **Estimated pounds of wrapped meat.** This would be a pre-estimated yield from a live animal. You will know how much to expect when the meat is finally delivered. For this information contact the meat processor.

### Processing the meat:
In order to fall under the USDA custom-exempt slaughter regulation, you must purchase the animal live. This gives you the right to control how and where the meat is processed and you are assured that the animal is healthy at the time of slaughter.
After you have chosen who you want to kill and process your animal the following questions need to be considered to help in the cutting and wrapping of the carcass.

1. What types of cuts do you cook now? Thick steaks or BBQ?
2. Do you like stew meat or ground meat better?
3. Lean vs. extra lean?
4. The size of packages of meat? How many people will you feed at one meal?
5. Do you want the heart, liver and other organ meat?
6. Do you want dog bones?

Compiled with help from Gary Delaney and Kathy Moss.
Radio Creek Ranch
38854 Radio Road
Kimberly, OR 97848
541-934-2410
www.radiocreekranch.com
thom@radiocreekranch.com

The cattle raised at Radio Creek Ranch are naturally raised, grass fed, registered Black Angus. No growth hormones, no antibiotics and no confined feeding practices are used. Orders for beef can be placed any time. The purchase and delivery of beef happens in January. The beef is sold by the half or by the whole hanging weight. Your order can be delivered right to your freezer. You can choose to have your beef butchered at a USDA facility or locally through Russell’s. Either way the carcass is dry aged to insure extra tenderness. USDA inspected lean ground beef is also available through Radio Creek Ranch any time of the year.

Call Thom and Gaylene Bruce for more information.

Crown Cattle Company
Seneca, OR
541-542-2608
crown@crowncattle.com

At Crown Cattle Company, our operation is centered around a cow herd that calves in June and is sustainably and nutritionally well matched to the order of the seasons. We produce completely natural, free range, hormone free, grass fed and finished beef animals. We believe the health benefits are well worth the extra time it takes to finish our animals on grass. Bees are sold by the whole or half and are ready at varying times throughout the year. To learn more about us, call or email Mat or Jennifer Carter.

Blue Mountain Angus
6444 Indian Creek Rd.
Prairie City, OR
541-820-3371

Steve and Carolyn Mullah have naturally raised hanger cows as they become available. They sell by the whole, providing about 200 to 300 pounds of hamburger. Call Carolyn for more information.

Key Farm
Mt. Vernon, Oregon
541-932-2874

Darlene Key holistically raises Navajo-Churro lambs, which are prized for their lean and flavorful meat. These sheep also produce a dual fiber fleece that is coveted by weavers for its natural variety of colors. There are several organizations including Slow Food who are advocating the breeding of these sheep for meat and other purposes given their low impact on the land, their high nutritional value, and the fact that they are an endangered breed in North America.

Darlene will have lambs ready for purchase in the late fall. Call for more information.

Marilyn Smith Kight
Naturally Raised Lamb
John Day, Oregon
541-620-0977

Marilyn raises grass fed lamb without the use of hormones or antibiotics. She sells her lambs whole. For more information call Marilyn.

How much meat should you expect?
½ Beef weighing about 300 pounds
12 T-Bones Steaks ¾”
12 Rib Steaks ¾”
8 Sirloin Steaks ¾”
8 Round Steaks
2 Sirloin Tip Roast (3lb)
6 Chuck Roast (4lb)
4 Arm Roast (3lb)
2 Rump Roast (3lb)
8 Pks. Steak Meat (1lb)
4 Pks. Short Ribs
4 Pks. Soup Bone
80-100 Ground Beef

½ Hog weighing about 80 to 90 pounds
24-28 Pounds Pork Chops
6-10 Pounds Pork Sausage
2 Pks. Spare Ribs
1 Ham (15 -18lb)
2 Shoulder Roast (4lb)
8 -10 Pounds Bacon
2 Smoke Hocks

It is important to work with your producer and the processor as individuals. Each meat processor has their own process and way that they cut. Visit with them to get a feel for how they would process your meat.

How much room you will need?
About 30 pounds of meat will take up a cubic foot of freezer space.
Thank you to the following agencies for their support and contributions to this project.

Oregon Food Bank & Hannah Ancel.
©September 2010, John Day, Oregon.
A Food System with Deep Roots

The Historical Precedents and Future Opportunities of Grant County’s Food System

ADDENDUM 2011

A Collaboration between Oregon State University Extension, Oregon Food Bank and Resource Assistance for Rural Environments
Grant County Community
Food Assessment
Addendum
July, 2011

This addendum captures additional community food system opportunities and areas of need in Grant County that were identified by the Community Food Assessment conducted in 2010. This documentation acknowledges the success that has been achieved so far and can help provide continued direction for future efforts.
Producers

Field’s Grass-Fed Beef

By selling their product through local retailers and a specialty grocer in Bend, Oregon, the Field family has created a niche market for their grass-fed beef business. Through these markets they have created enough of a demand for their product they could be increase revenue by increasing sales at venues as well as expanding to sell to local restaurants. However, now the challenge is on the production side.

Since they are raising a grass-fed product they need a large amount of hay to support each animal. Growing the needed amount of hay to raise the number of cattle they have the demand for will require more land than they currently have. Given the price of land (including water rights) in the John Day River valley, it may be more of a financial burden than the Field’s want to undertake so they are looking for land that could be leased.

The lack of suitable, affordable land is due in part because of the large amount of the land in Grant County that is publically owned. If they are able to gain access to more land to be able on which to raise more cattle then they will be able to supply the local food system with a larger portion of quality beef product and create a stronger livelihood for their family.

The Field family has also been operating a locker beef program for the last few years as a way of supplying the local community with grass-fed beef. Through this program community members order a whole or half beef and Field’s has the meat USDA processed. The customer is then sold the cut and wrapped meat. Many of their locker beef customers saw the Field’s product in the grocery store, liked the product, and then ordered a whole or half animal. The family sees potential in expanding this program as a viable market for their product. The locker beef program has a larger profit margin because there are fewer costs involved through the direct sales model.

They have installed a freezer at the ranch to store cut and wrapped meat to sell to customers and in the future, they would like to offer cold storage to customers.
A Market for Local Food

The John Day Farmers Market

The John Day Farmers Market continued its second season playing a role in the community connecting local producers with consumers. In the 2011 season the market enjoyed an increase of 150 and 200 customers a week, including local community members and visitors. The market board increased their efforts this year to promote the market to the local community, to travelers, and to low-income families. This effort was assisted by a $1,500 grant from the Grant County Transient Room Tax Fund for marketing and promotional purposes.

In order to make the market accessible to low-income families many of the vendors accept the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Fruit and Veggie Vouchers as well as the Farm Direct Nutrition Checks for WIC families and seniors. For the 2011 season the market also added the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) so that low-income families receiving SNAP benefits can spend their benefits at the market for fresh, healthy foods. To encourage families receiving SNAP benefits to come to the market an incentive program was offered starting in July, 2011.

The incentive program offered a $5 match when a SNAP participant spent at least $5 of their benefits at the market. The money for this program came from community donations including a $200 donation from the local Elks Lodge. This program was advertised extensively through the radio, newspaper, outreach at the local Department of Human Services office, and door to door outreach to low-income families. Unfortunately, this program has not attracted as many families to the market as hoped. The market has seen about 1 to 5 families take advantage of the program each week. The market intends to offer the program in the 2012 season and hopes that over time more families will come to take advantage of the program.

By the 16th week of the 2011 season the vendors collectively brought in $22,141.82 in sales. The average total per week was around $1,383. This is an increase of approximately $400 over the 2010 season average, primarily due to the increase in the number of vendors at the market. However several of the vendors experienced a higher weekly average in sales indicating that the market is continuing to grow as a viable avenue of sale for producers. The market brought in significantly more revenue than last year which totaled $17,500 at the end of the season.
Grant County Local Food Guide

In 2010 a local food guide was produced for Grant County which listed local food producers and other local food resources. Over the course of the 2010 growing season several more producers showed interest in being listed in the local food guide. As a result it was decided by the Grant County Economic Development office that another local food guide was needed for the 2011 season.

Instead of just creating another printed food guide that would be current for a short time, it was determined that a website would be a longer lasting solution. Therefore the Grant County Local Food Guide website was developed. The website provides much of the same information and more about local food resources in the Grant County region as the printed version.

The benefit of the website is that producers have the ability to register themselves and create their own profile. Once producers have an account they can login and update their information anytime they want. This way they can keep their information current throughout the growing season to inform consumers of product availability. The site is a free service to both producers and consumers. There is an entire page of the site devoted to resources for both producers and consumers to aid in the buying and selling process. The site has information about local community gardens, farmers markets, processors, and food pantries.

Producers can even access the application and guidelines for the John Day Farmers Market from the site. The information about the area food pantries informs producers about the option of donating their excess food to be distributed to families in need. The list of producers is generated into a printable version with a cover page so that consumers can print the list to take with them. The printed version of the guide will be displayed at the chamber of commerce, the farmers market, and other locations accessible to consumers. The website can be accessed at www.gcfoodguide.com.
**Schools**

During the 2010-2011 school year two local school districts initiated the idea of incorporating locally produced food into their cafeterias. Because of the extreme budget cuts that small rural schools have had over the past few years, local schools have not been able to commit to a comprehensive farm to school program.

The agricultural programs that play a key role in providing the education component of a farm to school program in these schools are facing major downsizing. Despite the lack of resources for the program the Long Creek School District did incorporate local foods into their school lunch menu by serving Field’s Grass-fed Beef, local fruits and vegetables from the Kimberly area. For the Long Creek School purchasing local foods makes financial sense, however without additional funding for the program they are not able to provide the educational component that is complementary to a compressive farm to school program.

**Food Processing**

Through the Community Food Assessment a need for various local food processing was identified as a barrier to accessing locally produced food year-round. During 2011 research was conducted to inform the feasibility of developing a community processing facility in Grant County.

The interviews, surveys, and research for this study showed that there is not enough fruit and vegetable product at this time to warrant having a processing facility located in Grant County. Through interviews and surveys most local producers indicated that they are currently selling all of the fruits and vegetables that they can produce fresh and do not have left over product that could be processed. In research of other processing facilities knowledge was gained of how many producers would need to use a facility and how much product they would need to be processing in order to make it viable. On such a small scale the challenge becomes creating a fee scale based on usage of the facility that is affordable for the producer and generous enough to support the facility’s expenses.

Interviews did however indicate that there is a need for a certified kitchen where food entrepreneurs could prepare foods for catering purposes or baked goods to sell at the farmers market and other retail locations. There is also the continued need for USDA certified meat processing in the area given that beef production is the primary agricultural sector. Thus further research is needed as to the feasibility of developing a certified kitchen available to the community to use and/or the completion of a USDA certified meat processing facility.
Monument Food Pantry

As a result of the trial food pantry that was held at the Monument Senior Center in June of 2010, in which 39 households feeding 88 people received food boxes, a committee was formed to develop and manage a food pantry in Monument. The committee consists of members of the senior citizens board as well as other volunteers from the community. They started meeting on a regular basis in September of 2010. With the support of the RARE participant they completed the application process to receive food through the Oregon Food Bank. By December of 2010 the Monument Food Pantry opened its doors for the first time in the modular home that sits on the Senior Center property.

At the first distribution the food pantry supplied food boxes to 31 families, feeding 68 people. The food pantry operates on a shopping system where the customer has a choice of what they would like for food items in each food group. This way they are more likely to end up with foods that their family will eat. This is especially important for the Latino families who come to be able to choose foods that best fit the way that they prepare meals for their family.

The food pantry committee has a variety of local fundraising sources as well as local food drives to generate resources to support the pantry. Given the large percentage, around 60%, of the population who is in need of assistance themselves it is very challenging to support an operation on local fundraising alone. Thus, the food pantry committee has looked to the county-wide community for assistance and beyond. The food pantry received a donation from the Grant County Food Bank to help with start-up costs. The Monument Food Pantry was also awarded funds through the Oregon Food Bank’s Network Support Fund to assist with food costs.

In June of 2011 the Senior Center received a grant from the Meyer Memorial Trust for $25,000 for the Monument Community Food Security Enhancement Project. The project supports the operation of the Monument Food Pantry, the development of a community garden in the center
of town, and providing food preservation classes to the community. Through the process of gathering information for this grant application the Monument Senior Center and Food Pantry Committee developed an operational budget and a strategic project plan. The funds for this project will address food insecurity from multiple directions.

The numbers for the Monument Food Pantry have continued to represent a large portion of the community. Most recently, the July distribution saw 44 families, a total of 88 people and in August there were 42 families feeding 94 individuals.

The committee is working on assisting Long Creek in an effort to provide emergency food services to its community members. They plan to take the bus to Long Creek on Tuesdays to pick up qualified and interested individuals who are in need of food. Participants can have lunch at the Senior Center and then go to the food pantry to get food. Then they can take the bus back to Long Creek. A donation will be made from the Long Creek community each month to assist the food pantry with the cost of food. There are already eight families that have signed up to come from Long Creek and there are more that are interested.

**John Day Community Garden**

The John Day Community Garden has had more than double community participation during its second season in terms of the number of families with plots at the garden. Of the 20 families participating this year there are several who returned from last year and many who are new. One returning family with small children this year is taking on more plots because it was such a positive experience for them last year. The mother stated that her children’s consumption of fruits and vegetables increased as a result of being at the garden and picking the produce themselves was one of the main reasons that they wanted to have a plot again.

For the 2011 season the John Day Community Garden expanded its “community tended plot” to 25’ X 80’ to produce food for the local food pantries. The plot was planted with potatoes, onions, carrots, radishes, beets, squash, and corn for the purpose of having vegetables that would store longer than lettuce and tomatoes. Storable crops are preferred given that the Grant County Food Bank is only open once a month and they have very limited refrigerated storage.

During the July distribution the community garden contributed roughly 50 pounds of beets, 10 heads of lettuce, and a few zucchini to the Grant County Food Bank. This was not enough to serve every family that came through the food bank, but it did give many families some fresh produce that they would not have gotten otherwise. The community garden hopes that they will be able to produce a higher quantity of food each month to make a more significant contribution to the fresh produce that low-income families have access to.

The community tended plot at the garden also produces a few “cash crops” such as basil, salad greens, and melons to sell at the John Day Farmers Market. The community garden has a table at the market every week during which they accept donations of produce from gardeners in the community that have abundance. The community garden table then sells the produce to customers of the market and the profits go to support the community garden. In this sense it is the community’s garden table because the table is a collecting place for produce from gardens from around the community. This table provides a service of taking produce, distributing it to the local community and providing more fresh local food to the community and not wasting food.

During the 2011 SolWest Fair a workshop was
held to construct a cob oven at the John Day Community Garden. Community members initiated the wood-fired oven at its first community event on August 16th when they baked pizzas with local vegetables for the community. It was a great opportunity for community members to gather around food and appreciate the setting of the community garden. This is precisely the reason that the oven was constructed. The goal is for the oven to be a reason for the community to gather and experience the process of food being produced in their community, cooked right in front of them, and then being able to taste and share the results.

**Serving Youth**

The Grant County Hunger Task Force developed recommendations to address low-income food access issues during the finalization of the community food assessment in 2010. The hunger task made the decision in September of 2010 to focus on addressing the food needs of youth in the community. As result the Grant County Hunger Task Force has partnered with the John Day United Methodist Church to organize a meal program for youth ages 0 to 18 during the school year. They are planning to start by offering a meal after-school one day a week.

In the spring of 2011 the John Day United Methodist Church received funds through the bishop's initiative program to help cover administrative cost for the program. These funds will be used to purchase any necessary equipment and materials as well as to promote the program to youth. The United Methodist Church is also applying to become a meal site through the Child and Adult Care Food Program. This will allow them to receive reimbursement for the meals that they serve to youth. The meal program is intended to provide a well-balanced meal to the youth in the community who may not be receiving regular, nutritious meals at home. The goal is to also use the meal times as a way of accessing what other needs this population may have and how best to serve them. The meal program will operate during the school year when the summer food program is no long available to youth.

The Summer Food Program had another successful year during the 2011 summer providing a total of 2,799 lunches to Grant County’s youth. The program was offered in John Day every day of the week, same as the past two years, and was also offered in Long Creek and Monument one day a week. Last year the Long Creek School offered the program themselves, but it was not financially feasible to do it again this year. Instead, the meals were made in John Day and transported to Long Creek and Monument by the OSU Extension Service.

This year the program ended two weeks earlier due to the decrease in participation during the last two weeks in previous years. There were a few families who mentioned that it was unfortunate that it ended early this year. It may be worth considering going the full term next summer. One parent mentioned that they would be willing to volunteer on occasion to help prepare the lunches if that would make it more feasible. The numbers certainly show that the program is a valuable serve to the community and is making a difference for the youth during the summer.
Opportunities for the Future

Several of the recommendations laid out by the Community Food Assessment in 2010 have been worked on over the last year. There are still many of recommendations that could use some attention.

On July 21st there was a community picnic to celebrate the food systems work that has taken place over the last two years. At this gathering there were groups that are involved in a variety of the projects previously mentioned. The idea was introduced of forming a Community Food System Partnership that would continue to gather on a regular basis to talk about the projects that they are working on, share resources, and keep a collective eye on the community's food system. The idea is that these gatherings will simply be community potlucks where people will come together, eat together, and share information. This would be a good opportunity to remind community members of the recommendations yet to be addressed.

The cob oven at the John Day Community Garden can also provide the perfect venue for people to gather around food.
Thank you to the following agencies for their support and contributions to this project.