2018 Annual Review and Report

Our current food system, agricultural production and associated land use practices are often found to be the culprits for practices that damage our soils, air, waterways and ecosystems. They are also the sources of the social and economic issues that impact community sustainability, such as obesity, ill health, increased rates of cancer, petroleum based (and greenhouse gas emitting) long distance hauling of goods, and the competitive edge in subsidies and quantity sales available to the conventional large-scale farmers.

_In response Community FARE has been looking closely at building a locally sourced food system that supports soil, water and human health by 1) creating market access to locally grown food, and 2) building a regenerative agriculture movement so that locally grown food is healthy. Through our work we address not only human health but environmental and economic as well._

(2014-2016) Community FARE conducted a baseline community food survey of growing/land management and marketing practices of local family farmers. FARE also researched the feasibility of creating a food hub in Frederick County to enable aggregation, distribution and marketing of farm products to institutions (schools, restaurants, caterers, coffee shops, hospitals etc). Both efforts showed tremendous interest on the part of farmers and institutions to work together; there is, however, a lot of work that must be done to make that happen.

(2017) Frederick County Public Schools feeds over 40,000 children daily, a worthwhile focus for our first farm to institution challenge. Community FARE partnered with the Frederick County Public School Food and Nutrition Services to request support from USDA to develop a Farm to School program. We received support to prepare an Action Plan to increase local food in lunches at 5 Title 1 Elementary Schools: Monocacy, Lincoln, Hillcrest, Waverly and North Frederick. We were awarded the one-year Farm to School Planning Grant in June 2018; the initiative, community integration and partnerships for program sustainability are well underway.
Still seeing a need to engage more people in promoting demand for, and access to, locally farmed food, FARE invited the Food Council Network/Center for a Livable Future at John's Hopkins University to help us form a Food Council for Frederick County. In partnership with Fox Haven Organic Farm and Learning Center, Community FARE launched the Frederick Count Food Council (FCFC) with a very successful and well-attended kickoff in April 2018. Since then the FCFC has formed three working groups (Agricultural Economy, Food Literacy, and Food Equity) and has been fully engaged in community actions (see information sheet below for mission and vision). So far more than 100 representatives from more than 60 organizations, institutions and businesses have participated in various aspects of these efforts. Those include farmers, gardeners, chefs/restauranteurs, food processors, wholesalers, farm and food advocates, grocers, consumers, public health practitioners, school and institution personnel, anti-hunger and food security advocates, environmentalists, scholars, educators, marketers and government representatives.

Community FARE shared our results from farm surveys and the food hub feasibility study with elected officials and community organizations in an effort to engage people to share our vision. As a result, FARE was asked to participate on the Agriculture Preservation and Economic Development Working Group for "Livable Frederick" - the 20-year growth and development plan for Frederick County. During the working group of Frederick County residents responded to the Livable Frederick survey on local food that they favored more farmland/family farm preservation, and greater access to locally farmed food. Because of our participation, support for regenerative agriculture and healthy and nutritious food access were included in the Livable Frederick plan. In 2017 Maryland state government unanimously passed the Healthy Soils Program that requires the Maryland Department of Agriculture to provide incentives including research, education and technical assistance contributing to healthy soils for healthy food, water quality and carbon sequestration.

FARE advisors and the FCFC Steering Committee agreed to build soil health (policies, programs and education) into our Food Council Agriculture Economy Working Group farm to institution initiatives. In 2019 we will set out to build a movement for regenerative agriculture in Frederick County.

Links to Community FARE research, documents and articles:


• Formal Participation in Livable Frederick (see pg 140-41)


• Frederick Food Council starts to take shape, focus priorities: https://www.fredericknewspost.com/news/economy_and_business/agriculture/frederick-food-council-starts-to-take-shape-focus-priorities/article_d07bed5-44a1-5a06-a209-47984b32b0c.html


• Five Green Groups in Frederick County to Join Today https://www.fredericknewspost.com/news/environment/five-green-groups-in-frederick-county-to-join-today/article_63770126-8a37-5f7f-e342-f272f3b6acb0.html

• Residents gather to consider the future of food in Frederick County: https://www.fredericknewspost.com/opinion/letter_to_editor/residents-gather-to-consider-the-future-of-food-in-frederick/article_92b4e279-e4ca-5a8f-8020-dab9c3337096.html

• Farm to School: More fruits, vegetables headed to FCPS https://www.fredericknewspost.com/news/education/schools/public_k-12/elementary/farm-to-school-more-fruits-vegetables-headed-to-fcps/article_7eb25ec1-5b1d-580b-8d85-7a4e390605fc.html
Mission:
The Frederick County Food Council (FCFC) promotes efforts that support our local agricultural economy, education about local food and food system, equitable food distribution networks, and sustainable environmental practices that benefit county residents and farmers.

Vision:
Frederick County’s vibrant agricultural community is a regional model that supports farmers, creates market demand and equitable distribution of fresh, locally grown food, and improves the health and resilience of our communities.

Goals:
Equity & Access: Create markets where people with limited incomes can access healthy, fresh food.

Food Education & Outreach: Educate the public through speakers, films, workshops and presentations related to local, regional, national, and global food systems.

Agricultural Economy: Provide farmers, institutional and business purchasers opportunities to connect with the purpose of building a stronger local food economy.

Current Projects/Partnerships:
Hungry Harvest Produce in a SNAP markets in Frederick and a future market in Emmitsburg, LiveWell Frederick, Frederick Food Security Network, Bionutrient Food Association, MD Ag Extension, Master Gardeners, Frederick County Farm to School, and more!

Steering Committee
Lisa Orr - Director, Mountainside Education & Enrichment, Community FARE advisor, Farm to School USDA 2018/19 Planning Grant Director

Janice Wiles - Director, Community FARE. Doce Lume Farm owner, Farm to School USDA 2018/19 Planning Grant Director

JoAnn Coates-Hunter - Director, Fox Haven Farm, Retreat & Learning Center, Community FARE advisor, Farm to School USDA 2018/19 Planning Grant Director

Working Groups
Food Equity & Access
Joanne Petersen, co-chair - Frederick City Sustainability Committee, chef/owner of Trio Catering
Jenny Willoughby, co-chair - Sustainability Manager, city of Frederick

Education & Outreach
Elin Ross, co-chair - Federated Charities
JoAnn Coates-Hunter, co-chair - Director, Fox Haven Farm, Retreat & Learning Center

Agricultural Economy
Greg Wilson - chair of committee, retired government agriculture analyst

The steering committee meets twice monthly. The Food Council meets once each season. Working groups meet monthly.

The Council is currently open to the public to join. Please contact us at: info@frederickfoodcouncil.org