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Overview

About the community food security assessment (CFSA)
Highlights from southwest VA community work sessions
Findings & Recommendations from CFSA
Future directions
Across southwest Virginia…

“There is a lot of energy around vibrant farms, agriculture, and economic development, but there is also a strong culture around having a food system that allows all southwest Virginians to eat nutritious, safe, and culturally appropriate foods.”

Like our most resilient agricultural systems, this report is intended to be both a harvest and a seed.
Why Assess?

To **develop strategic plans** for working together on food security issues in southwest Virginia

As **a space for dialogue** around the issue of southwest Virginia’s food security
Who worked on the assessment?

USDA funded, Appalachian Foodshed Project

Montgomery County Virginia Cooperative Extension
Grayson LandCare
SO Fresh!
AARP
Appalachian Sustainable Development
Independence Farmers Market
SustainFloyd
Virginia Tech

Appalachian Virginia Food Systems Network
What did the CFSA process look like?

Working with a team of stakeholders…

A lot of conversations
• About what the assessment could and should look like
• About food systems work/food security in sw VA

Four stages
• Planning
• Interviews (with key informants)
• Community Work Sessions (3, hosted by community partners)
• Analysis/Reporting
Interviews (Key Informant)

31 semi-structured phone interviews (regionally)

Interviewees expressed a desire for greater connectivity around issues like community food security (e.g., Community Networking & Collaboration)

Developmental process
Community Work Sessions

A Community/University Partnership…

Grayson LandCare & SustainFloyd: Blue Ridge Plateau
SoFresh w/ Virginia Cooperative Extension: New River Valley +
Appalachian Sustainable Development: Far Southwest VA w/ Tennessee
Virginia Tech
Community Work Sessions

Shared Aims and Objectives

What kinds of food system opportunities are taking place?

Where are the synergies happening and with whom?

Ways we can best connect across the region to enhance these synergies for greater community food security?

Distinct Community Goals & Community Sessions
Community Work Session Process

1. Session Planning
2. Implement
3. Collect Notes & Audio
4. Analysis
5. Learn & Reflect
6. Revisit & Report
New River Valley (NRV) + Emerging Opportunities
BlueRidge Plateau
Emerging Opportunities
A **synergy** occurs when two or more things are **brought together** and produce something that is **greater than the sum of the parts**.
Whole Measures for Community Food Systems
(Abi-Nader et al., 2009)

Values
- Justice and Fairness
- Strong Communities
- Healthy People
- Vibrant Farms
- Thriving Local Economies
- Ecological Sustainability

Community Capitals Framework
(Flora, Flora, & Fey, 2004)

Assets
- Political Capital
- Social Capital
- Human Capital
- Cultural Capital
- Built Capital
- Financial Capital
- Natural Capital
Synergies

**Synergy A:** Financial capital and the value of vibrant farms and thriving local economies.

**Synergy B:** Vibrant Farms and Social Capital

**Synergy C:** Cultural Capital and Justice & Fairness and Strong Communities

**Synergy D:** Human Capital across the Whole Measures
Complex
the relationship between cause and effect can only be perceived in retrospect
*probe – sense - respond*
emergent practice

Complicated
the relationship between cause and effect requires analysis or some other form of investigation and/or the application of expert knowledge
*sense – analyze - respond*
good practice

Chaotic
no relationship between cause and effect at systems level
*act – sense - respond*

Simple
the relationship between cause and effect is obvious to all
*sense – categorize - respond*

novel practice

best practice

© Cynefin framework by Dan Snowden
Appalachian Virginia Food Systems Network

Mission

Provide a platform for those working across diverse sectors of the food system to collaborate, cooperate, share resources and knowledge with the goal of enhancing the ability of each partner organization to fulfill aspects of their mission that relate to fostering community food security and a more vibrant and equitable regional food system.
Recommendation One

Strengthen Existing Synergies

by

Connecting Regional Human Capital
Seek funding opportunities for coordinated regional convenings with the primary objective of developing a learning network and building relationships and trust.

Develop and utilize digital platforms for increased open-access information sharing.

Platforms like LocalWiki can be used to share organizational information and organizational/network learning.

Establish a culture of open information-sharing and information transparency.
Recommendation Two

Develop and Strengthen Relationships
with
A Broader Group of Organizations that are Committed to Building Strong Communities and Justice & Fairness
Explore possibilities for collaboration with partners working on issues like affordable housing; sustainable jobs; anti-racism; fair wages; access to safe drinking water.

Develop and sustain places for having cross-sector dialogue with “unlikely” partners.

   Explore the conditions that might make our conversations more inclusive of “unlikely” partners.
Recommendation Three

Monitor and Evaluate Recommendations One and Two
Drawing on evaluation/planning tools like:

Whole Measures (Abi-Nader, 2009)
Network Impact (2014)
Future Directions
“The promise of networks is threefold.

They can:

• Assemble and disassemble capacity with relative ease.

• Adapt to emerging opportunities and challenges in their environment.

• Bring together novel combinations of talent and resources to support innovation.”

- Network Impact, 2014
Assemble and Disassemble
Adapt to Emerging Opportunities
Source Novel Combinations for Innovation
Within [A distributed network], decision making is not binary. It's not a matter of ‘yes’ or ‘no’. It's a matter of ‘to a greater or lesser degree.’

Someone makes a proposal and everyone who wishes to join in can do so.

The range of the action in question will depend on the degree to which the proposal is accepted.”

-David de Ugarte
How might the AVFSN Work?

YOU!
YOU! and a bunch of other People connected to AVFSN
Ooo!
I have an idea!

Has anybody else been thinking about??...
Yes!

I hadn't, but that sounds really interesting!

PLEASE INCLUDE ME

Let's talk! ...
Hi! Can you join us to facilitate a few calls?

Sure!
Thank You! & Contact Information

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References


