Annual Report: 2015
Presented to the City of Lawrence Commission

- DOUGLAS COUNTY -
FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

http://www.douglas-county.com/sites/fpc
This report has been prepared for the City of Lawrence Commission by Helen Schnoes, Douglas County Food Systems Coordinator, on behalf of the Douglas County Food Policy Council. Eileen Horn, City of Lawrence and Douglas County Sustainability Coordinator, along with Tresa Carter, Program Coordinator for Market Match, contributed to its creation.

A full or condensed presentation of this report or any of the programs highlighted herein is available to the Commission upon request.

Contact: Helen Schnoes at hschnoes@douglas-county.com or (785) 832-5157
THE DOUGLAS COUNTY FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

- Established by the County Commission in 2010
- Convened as a joint City-County Council in 2013
- Identifies the benefits, challenges and opportunities for a successful food system
- Recommends local policies to support food system
- Represents a wide range of stakeholders in food system through Commission appointments
FOOD POLICY COUNCIL GOALS

- **Economy**: Economic development and entrepreneurial opportunities in local food production = jobs.
- **Wellness**: Improved health outcomes with access to wholesome foods.
- **Environment**: Improved environmental quality.
- **Equity**: Increased access to healthy food for all residents, regardless of income.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food System Sector (as stipulated in bylaws):</th>
<th>Representing:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At-Large: Appointed by Jim Flory</td>
<td>Lone Pine Ag Services Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At-Large: Appointed by Mike Gaughan</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At-Large: Appointed by Nancy Thellman</td>
<td>KC Healthy Kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Producer</td>
<td>Vesecky Family Farms</td>
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<td>Agricultural Producer</td>
<td>Douglas County Farm Bureau</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agricultural Producer</td>
<td>Moon on the Meadow Farm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail Food Outlet</td>
<td>Merchants Pub and Plate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional Food Purchaser</td>
<td>USD497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>KU Center for Sustainability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extension Service</td>
<td>Douglas County Extension</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO- Health/Nutrition/MD</td>
<td>Dietitian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO- Local Food Systems/Sustainable Ag.</td>
<td>The Kansas Rural Center</td>
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<td>Youth Representative</td>
<td>Youth</td>
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<td>Senior Food &amp; Nutrition Programs</td>
<td>Douglas County Senior Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>At-Large (appointed by City)</td>
<td>Sunflower Foundation</td>
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<td>At-Large (appointed by City)</td>
<td>Lawrence Douglas County Health Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agricultural Producer</td>
<td>Pendleton’s</td>
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<td>Retail Food Outlet</td>
<td>The Merc Community Market &amp; Deli</td>
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<td>Retail Food Outlet</td>
<td>Hy-Vee</td>
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<td>City of Lawrence Sustainability Advisory Board</td>
<td>City of Lawrence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food Security</td>
<td>Just Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Established Farmer's Market in Douglas County</td>
<td>Downtown Lawrence Farmers Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Community</td>
<td>Lawrence Chamber of Commerce</td>
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*Boldface indicates City of Lawrence appointees*
Much of the Council’s work gets done within its three subcommittees that work at each level of local policy intervention: city, county, and community. Each of these subcommittees works with community partners and elected officials to advance our community’s vision for regional and local foods.

The FPC decided to “retire” the State/Federal committee in 2015. The FPC still engages with state or federal issues as relevant, and staff follow opportunities for grants, networking, and technical support from these levels.

The diagram on the left provides examples of the type of work that each subcommittee might pursue or the type of community partners with whom they may collaborate.
Upon formation, the FPC undertook a study to understand the food system, partnering with K-State researchers. Some of the key findings included declining fruit and vegetable production in our rural areas and the presence of urban food deserts where citizens face limited access to grocery stores in their neighborhood—while over half of residents live with weight-related health concerns. The FPC also saw that an economic opportunity exists to develop a stronger regional food system and capture the local food dollar. These findings have guided the work of the FPC in the years since the study’s release.
MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

GRANTS:
✓ USDA Value-Added Producers ($245,000)*
✓ KHF Implementation ($40,000)*
✓ CDC Partnership to Improve Community Health ($1.3 million)
✓ USDA Farmers’ Market Promotion Program ($53,650)
✓ Various for Market Match ($49,251)

*Awarded to the farmers launching a regional food hub
COMMON GROUND PROGRAM

- Established 2012 and managed by Sustainability Coordinator with other city staff.
- Utilizes vacant, under-utilized city owned properties.
- FREE lease to community gardeners, market farmers.
- WIN-WIN for gardeners and farmers who need land and City staff tired of mowing vacant lots.

www.lawrenceks.org/common_ground

Community Partners for 2015

KU Alternative Breaks
Baker U. Big Event
KU Rugby Team
Just Food
Ballard Center
Sunrise Project
KU Super Service Saturday
Lawrence Community Shelter

Penn House
Kaw Valley Seed Fair
Lawrence Public Library
Douglas County Community Foundation
LMCMS Student Gardeners
Bert Nash
2015: COMMON GROUND PROGRAM

Number of gardens/farms: 10*
Number of gardeners/farmers: 186
Number of community events/classes: 51
Number of participants in events: 756
Market value of produce sold: $54,300
Pounds of produce donated: #1,900

*Two gardens are located at 13th and Pennsylvania St. Four gardens located at the Incubator Farm, near the airport.
A key finding of the food system assessment was that we are missing much of the infrastructure “in the middle” that would link food producers with consumers. We lack food processing, packaging, warehousing, or food distribution facilities in our region that are at a large enough scale to serve our large institutional buyers (like schools). Also, we were reminded of the opportunity for economic development and job creation.

This led us to look for national best practices and opportunities to rebuild the processing and distribution components of our food system. Food Hubs stood out as a potential innovation to grow local economies (see diagram below). In 2013, we secured a USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant to conduct a feasibility study of a 16-county NE Kansas region to better understand how to support this underdeveloped sector of our food system.
The Food Hub Feasibility Study was conducted by SCALE, Inc. and released in June 2014.


December 2014 – November 2015: TA for producer steering committee from Douglas County & Kansas City area

- Working with KU Small Business Development Center, K-State Research and Extension, DCFPC, and Lincoln University Extension

December 2015:

- Farm Fresh HQ registers as a KS Cooperative, with two of the founding farmers coming from Douglas County (www.freshfarmhq.com)
- Hires Director to oversee food hub launch

2016 will be the pilot season

- Working Capital from:
  - $40,000 Kansas Health Foundation Implementation Grant, received by the DCFPC and given to the food hub for start-up expenses
  - $245,000 USDA Value-Added Producers Grant
PARTNERSHIP TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH

$1.3 million CDC grant received by LDC Health Department: Grant period September 2014-2017
→ $65,299 subcontracted to County for staff and programming for local foods efforts in 2015
→ Other work includes anti-tobacco and Safe Routes to School

Helen Schnoes, MRP, hired as full time Food Systems Coordinator hired to support PICH efforts and DCFPC

Wholesale directory for local farmers and buyers created

August 2015 campaign with 6 county grocers to promote local food and healthy eating; City & County Proclamations

Developed local purchasing guidelines with USD497

http://www.usd497.org/Page/7076
URBAN AGRICULTURE

- Working with Planning staff to expand support in Lawrence Development Code following the policy review initiated by the City Commission in June
- Community survey in August
- Public policy forum in September (over 40 attendees)
- Draft presented twice to Planning Commission for direction and feedback
- Changes may include allowing urban beekeeping, on-site sales, and clarification of allowed practices in residential areas
- Vote in February by Planning Commission?
In the community survey, we asked about current practices and perceived policy barriers and opportunities. One clear finding we saw, that aligns with the City Commission’s original impetus for reviewing urban ag policies, is the link between urban agriculture and food security. Growing food can allow income to be used on other basic necessities, or provide a supplementary source of income generation. Growing food for donations is also of interest to many in the community.
Market Match continued in 2015 for its second year. This program allows the users of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps) to redeem their assistance dollars at the farmers’ market and then double the amount they can spend on local, healthy food. It launched in 2014 at the downtown Lawrence Farmers’ Market and the Cottin’s Hardware Farmers’ Market. The program is overseen by staff with Douglas County.

How does the program work? A simple postcard explains below:

- **Swipe your Vision card at the market tent.**
  Pase su tarjeta Vision por la máquina EBT en el puesto de información del mercado.

- **We’ll match what you spend, up to $25 per market day.**
  Doblaremos el valor del dinero que gasta en el mercado hasta un máximo de $25 por día.

- **Use the $1 tokens to shop the market for fresh, local food.**
  Use las fichas de $1 en el mercado para comprar alimentos frescos y cultivados localmente.
2015 presented successful expansion of the program. Thanks to support from the below funders, Market Match launched at four new markets outside of Douglas County, while still growing within Lawrence. In December, remaining Matching funds allowed for a holiday TRIPLING of food assistance at markets, with $3000 redeemed.

The Clinton Parkway Farmers’ Market in West Lawrence became authorized to conduct food stamp (SNAP) transactions and will join in 2016.

The cumulative match total will be around $30,000 after winter markets—money these markets and farmers would not have received without the program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farmers Market</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence Markets</td>
<td>$8,881</td>
<td>$12,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allen County</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atchison</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$4,695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburg</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$2,734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Match Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$8,881</strong></td>
<td><strong>$20,727</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SNAP + Match Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$17,934</strong></td>
<td><strong>$40,278</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Eating healthy was expensive. But, now, it’s great.” —Market Match user

“The abundance of children shopping with their parents and learning [about] farming and producing wholesome products was great to see... It’s a WIN-WIN program!” —Market Match vendor

As the season wrapped up, program evaluation included a user focus group and paper surveys distributed to both users and vendors at each participating market.

**USERS:**
- 52% (16/32 respondents) indicated Market Match had importance in his/her decision to enroll in SNAP.
- Fruits & vegetables are the number one items purchased at the farmers market by SNAP users.

**VENDORS:**
- 76% (38/50 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed there was an increase in SNAP customers compared to 2015
- 73% (38/52 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that Market Match had a positive influence on revenue
2016 MARKET MATCH SEASON

Currently at 6 Markets
Expanding to 13 Markets

Funding fully secured for 2016!

In 2016, thanks to continued support from funders in our city and region, Market Match will continue to grow and support our local farmers and enable low-income residents to access healthy food.
In 2011, the DCPFC launched Chefs Challenge at the County Fair, as a competition of three local chefs who highlight local products and prepare a dish for judges. This year, program oversight was transitioned to Master Gardeners and Master Food Volunteers.

For several years, the DCFPC has worked to revise the policies at the kitchen in Building #21 to better support food entrepreneurs. To help spread the word, the kitchen was rebranded “Culinary Commons” as part of a push to spur use and enhance outreach.

Mayors of Eudora, Baldwin City, and Lecompton sample an eggplant dish prepared by Brad Brown, Bird Dog Bar

Marketing postcards and website in development
Lawrence farmers’ markets approached DCFPC because they identified a need for market data to inform decisions, ensure strong FM sector.

- Received $53,650 in funding from the USDA to conduct an in-depth analysis of our county’s seven farmers’ markets and consumer interests.
  - November 2016: A consultant’s report with strategic recommendations will be presented to the DCFPC, including individual plans for each market.
  - 2017: Funding to hire TA support to help with market implementation.

Douglas County released a RFP in November and conducted interviews in January. The Board of County Commissioners has voted to prepare a contract with SCALE, Inc., who also produced the NE Kansas Food Hub Feasibility Study.
Hosted Heartland Chapter of the Urban Sustainability Directors Network for workshop on urban agriculture

Case study published by Growing Food Connections highlighting intergovernmental cooperation

Supported community members applying for local food and healthy eating grants

Helped FPC and community members attend regional and national conferences

Supported for new FPCs in KS (Jefferson, Franklin, Johnson, among others)
Horizon 2020 Issue Action Report tasks DCFPC to create Food Plan

PICH Year 2 ($65,000) brings expanded local foods communications and extension of Farm to School support into Eudora (Baldwin City in Year 3)

Expand Common Ground by adding 2-3 new properties for lease and work with DCFPC to determine next steps
  - Continue “network” to share resources, knowledge

2016 Market Match expands to 13 markets, 3 more in Douglas County

Execute county-wide farmers’ market study
WHERE WE MEET

✓ All Douglas County Food Policy Council meetings are open to the public—and our City Commissioners:

➢ Full Council:* Third Monday each month, 6:30pm to 8:30pm

   Location varies throughout our county food system

➢ City:* Second Tuesday, 5:30pm, Lawrence Public Library

➢ County:* Second Wednesday, 8:30am, The Merc

➢ Community:* First Friday, 7:30am, The Merc

✓ Agendas, minutes, reports, and additional info online:

    https://www.douglascountyks.org/fpc/welcome

✓ Subscribe for monthly agenda announcements:

    http://lawrenceks.org/subscriptions

*Meeting time or location may change in some months
For questions, feedback, and direction, contact DCFPC staff:

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http://www.douglas-county.com/sites/fpc