



Tillamook County Community Food Assessment

*Growing Healthy Communities on
the North Oregon Coast*



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Acknowledgments



Thank you to all those who opened their homes, businesses and minds to me. I've been constantly impressed and humbled by all the amazing work going on in Tillamook County around food.

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 pasture land 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.

Four years ago 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

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Executive Summary

Purpose:

The Tillamook County Community Food Assessment is a living document designed to understand the people, natural resources, land, infrastructure and institutions that shape our local food system in order to help develop innovative approaches to long-term food security in our communities.

Scope:

The information contained in this report deals specifically with communities in Tillamook County. It is recognized that the Tillamook County food system is part of a regional, national and international food system. However, this report is focused on how local residents are feeding themselves and actions that can be taken locally by people to increase food security for all that live in Tillamook County

Key Collaborators:

This project has been a collaborative effort undertaken by Oregon Food Bank, the University of Oregon's Resource Assistance for Rural Environments Program and Food Roots.

Guiding Questions:

This assessment seeks to answer three main questions

1. How do we feed ourselves in Tillamook County? Specifically, what are our communities' food security assets and needs?
2. Who are the people shaping our food system and what are they up to?
3. How can we use what we know about our food system to build a healthier, more food secure Tillamook County now and in the future?

Executive Summary

Guiding Themes:

During the past year of research for this assessment several major themes have emerged that have guided the formation of this report.

1. Isolated rural communities in Tillamook County have challenges accessing healthy affordable food through our current distribution and production systems.
2. The demand for locally produced food outstrips supply in the County
3. A strong sense of community exists all throughout Tillamook County. This is a strength that can be built on as we look to tackle issues of hunger in our homes and those of our neighbors.

What is Community Food Security?

Community Food Security articulates a vision in which a defined geographical region, for this report, Tillamook County, is able to feed its residents while simultaneously addressing a range of factors related to employment, environmental stewardship and environmental health

Why Food Security Matters:

Rural communities throughout the world often produce enormous amounts of food yet find their communities struggling with poverty and food insecurity. Rural Oregon, and Tillamook County are no exceptions to this phenomenon.

In Tillamook County, there are more dairy cows than people and by some measures Tillamook County is the most productive agricultural county in the State. The vast majority of agricultural pursuits in the county are dedicated to growing food for these cows. The cows in turn produce milk that is processed, packaged, distributed and then sold and consumed here and throughout the United

Executive Summary

States. Our dairy farms alone produce more calories in a year than could be consumed by the entire county even if everyone were drinking a 2,000 calorie diet of milk every day. Despite this abundance of production nearly 1/3 of the children in Tillamook county are living in households where at times of the year there is not enough to eat.

The mix of food crops we choose to grow, our ability to process, package, transport and cook this food and then to dispose of its waste, all influence our ability to provide reliable, affordable and healthy food options for everyone. Poverty levels and geographic isolation also play a big role in determining the ability of Tillamook County to ensure all its residents are receiving a healthy diet. As we look for ways to increase access to healthy food for everyone, it is important to assess the strengths and shortcomings of all the aspects of our food system.



Agriculture and Fisheries

Historical Perspective

There is little written record predating the arrival of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the North Oregon Coast in 1805. However, there is ample oral and archaeological evidence indicating that the area has been home to some of the most prosperous pre-European settlements on the North American continent. Native people ate a diet rich in salmon, flounder, herring and crab from the ocean and rivers. Elk, deer, and bear were hunted in the surrounding forests and berries, yetska root and skunk cabbage were gathered from the marshlands and foothills. The land was home to such an abundance of food, that the people who lived here on the North Oregon Coast were able to maintain a relatively sedentary lifestyle for much of the year as hunter and gatherers. The Tillamooks would most often move only once a year, in the summer, away from the ocean, and into the surrounding coast range in order to hunt and gather before returning to their permanent settlements along the coast.

The First European settlers began arriving in the 1850's and by 1890, the town of Tillamook had a city hall and by 1894 its first cheese plant. Early settlers relied on the sale of fish for their main source of income. Canneries popped up in Oretown, Uppertown and Garibaldi. Fishermen would catch and sell fish to the canneries and then others would buy the fish from the canneries and figure out ways to get it to markets in the Willamette Valley.

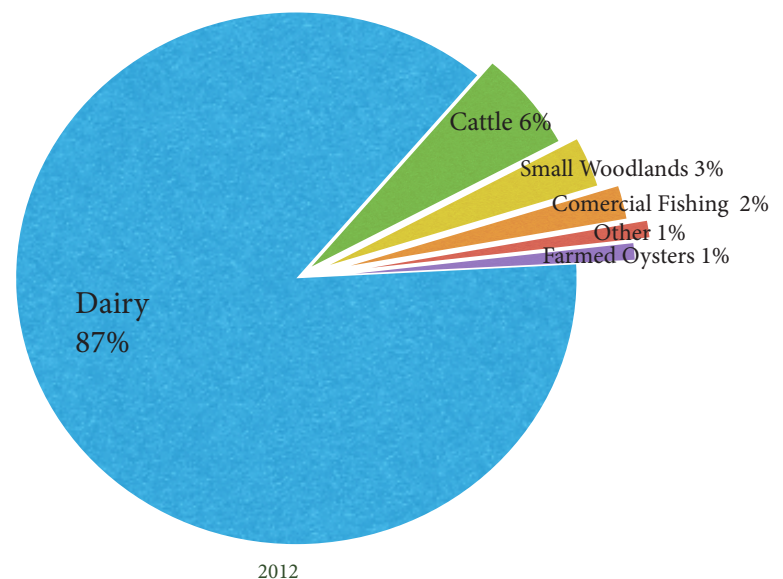
Farmers soon began arriving with dairy herds and in a short amount of time they were producing world class butter and milk. The challenge came in getting this butter and milk to market before it spoiled--this is where cheese came in.

Dairies: How They Built Tillamook County

The relative success of agriculture in providing a livable wage in Tillamook County is largely due to the success of the dairy industry. And the success story of the dairy industry is to a large degree the story of the Tillamook County Creamery Association (TCCA).

The vast majority of agricultural land in Tillamook County is devoted to producing milk for the TCCA. In fact nearly 90% of all agricultural land in the county is devoted to dairy production. According to local Oregon State University dairy extension agent, Troy Downing, all but four of the 106 dairy farms in the county sell their milk to the TCCA. The four farms who don't sell to the TCCA sell instead to Organic Valley, which is another farmer owned co-operative based out of Wisconsin, and concerned with selling locally produced, pasture raised organic milk, among other products throughout the country.

Agricultural Commodity Sales Tillamook County



Agriculture and Fisheries

The story and history of the TCCA is tied up in the story of European settlement in the area. Settlers began arriving in the 1850's, finding fertile flood plains and vastly diminished native populations which had lost an estimated 90% of their numbers over the preceding 40 years to disease. These fertile flood plains could, with clearing and proper pasture management, provide unrivaled forage production even without the use of irrigation. This allowed early settlers to produce vast quantities of milk, far more than could be consumed by the residents of the county. Portland at this time was a bustling and growing metropolis that was ready and willing to buy whatever Tillamook dairy farmers could produce, given they could get their product to their markets before it spoiled. The spoilage issue, along with the desire to add value to their product, led to the first commercial cheese plant being set up in the county in 1894.

Fifteen years later, the county had over 20 small independent creameries making, principally, cheese for export to urban markets in the Willamette Valley. Ten of these cheese plants banded together in 1909 to form the TCCA and by 1968 the TCCA had incorporated the remaining independent creameries under one roof.

Dairy farming in Tillamook County has traditionally been good business. Recently, due to economic pressures and a changing global food and farming

system less and less people are farming. Increases in technology and technique allow fewer farmers to maintain much larger dairy herds than previously possible. One long time Tillamook dairy farmer recalls, "When we were young dairy farmers there were 300 or more dairymen in the county, today we have 101. As the older generation died off and the younger didn't take over the farm, they were taken over by farmers moving in because of the name Tillamook was developing for themselves and farmers were getting a great price for their milk."

Today, the TCCA is one of the largest cheese companies in the United States and is still a cooperative owned by just 100 dairy farmers in Tillamook County. The cooperative now gets more than half its milk from outside Tillamook County and does a portion other cheese making and distribution from Boardman, Oregon where it is easier to ship to markets throughout the country.

The history and impact that the dairy industry and the TCCA specifically have had in the region is rich and immense. Since this report is focused on issues of community food security, an in-depth examination the county's main agricultural industry will not be the focus of this assessment because the TCCA is, to a large extent, concerned with production for markets outside the county. An in-depth study of how the TCCA has shaped the culture and economy of Tillamook County would surely be of great value.





“The soil is the source from whence we derive all that constitutes wealth”
From the Preamble to the Grange Constitution

The National Grange was set up in 1867 following the civil war. The idea was to bring farmers together for educational discussions and social gatherings in order to revitalize farming communities in the South that had been decimated by the horrors of war. By the time Tillamook County established its first grange at Fairview in 1895, the organization had expanded its mission to political organizing and lobbying efforts on behalf of rural America as well as community building. At the height of the Grange movement in Tillamook County there were close to ten active granges that according to an elder member of the White Clover Grange in Mohler “served as a place for us farmers to get together and dance.”

As fewer and fewer people in Tillamook County, and throughout the country, went into farming as a profession, so too did fewer and fewer join the grange. At the beginning of this community food assessment process there were only two active granges left in the County--one up in Mohler, at the White Clover Grange, and one in Sandlake. The Fairview Grange in Tillamook, which according to the grange member from Mohler “had held the best dances in the whole County” had been lying dormant for a couple of years. In January of 2013 a group of community members decided to get together and reopen the Grange.

The Fairview Grange now has 28 new members and has been meeting monthly trying to get the building cleaned up and ready to play host to community gatherings. Fairview Grange Master Taylor Larson says, “It’s our hope that the grange can be a place that brings people together around food and fun.”

If you are interested in getting together with members of your community to discuss issues shaping agriculture and community life, the grange is a great place to make it happen. The large halls are perfect for big gatherings such as dances, weddings and indoor markets. The monthly meetings held at each Grange are a place to engage your community around food and fellowship.

White Clover Grange:

Meets: First Wednesday of the Month

6:30 Potluck (open to everyone)

Contact: Info@whiteclovergrange.com

Sandlake Grange:

Meets: First Tuesday of the Month

6:30pm Snacks (open to everyone)

Contact: Ciny@mairiemillscenter.com

Fairview Grange:

Meets: Second Monday of the Month

6:00 Potluck (open to everyone)

Contact: fairviewgrange@gmail.com

Agriculture and Fisheries

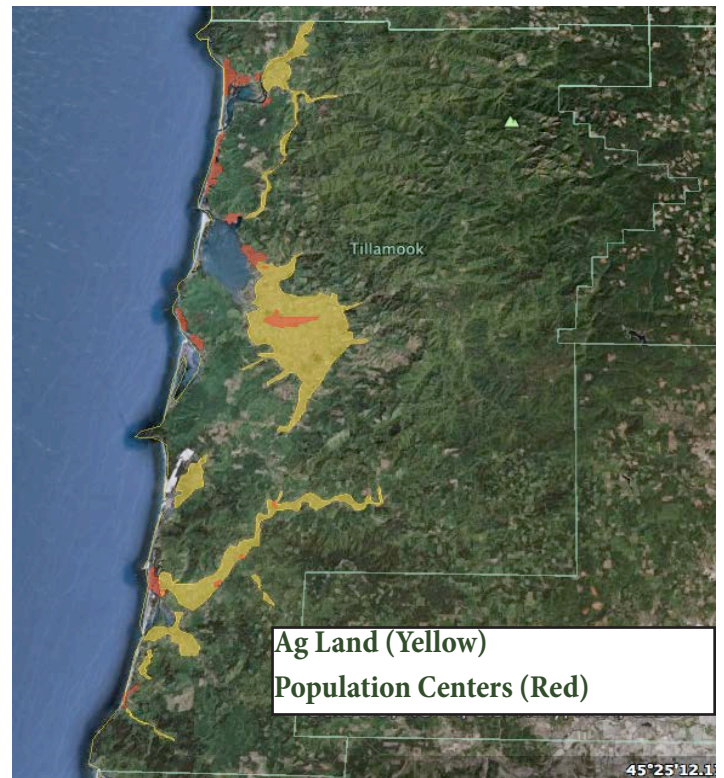
Where We Are and Why It Matters

Tillamook County is 1,133 square miles of lush green pasture, evergreen forest and coastal wetland spanning much of the Northern Oregon Coast. The land has provided a rich diet for its inhabitants for thousands of years and continues to do so today. The climate, characterized by long, wet, mild winters and short, dry summers, has proved the ideal growing environment for the county's two chief cash crops--grass and trees.

Much of the county's land is in State, Federal and private forest. Depending on the time of year, up to 2.5% of the county is under water. Only 59 square miles or 5.35% of the county's land is considered suitable for farming by the USDA. The vast majority of the farm land in the county is located in 3 major river valleys, the Nehalem, the Nestucca and the Tillamook.

The Tillamook Valley is an ancient flood plain created by the convergence of the Tillamook, Trask, Wilson, and Kilches Rivers. Annual flood waters, with their deposits of rich silty soil, have endowed this valley with some of the richest agricultural soils in the state. The same can be said of the Nehalem River Valley to the north and the Nestucca River Valley to the south.

In addition to these three river valleys, other productive agricultural lands exist up the Miami River Valley, the Slab Creek Valley, the Neskowin Headlands, and the Sand Lake Estuary. People are managing to grow food outside these major agricultural areas as well. However, the vast majority of farming operation and population centers exist in the county's river valleys and along its coastal headlands.



Agriculture and Fisheries

Economic Geography

The region's economy is primarily based on agriculture, manufacturing, health care and government. Tillamook is the County's largest city, seat of the county government and home to many of the social and economic service centers for the County. The Nehalem/Wheeler/Manzanita population center serves as an economic and service hub for North County, while the largely unincorporated communities of South Tillamook County often do their shopping and receive their services either in Pacific city or make the commute up to Tillamook. The vast majority of the population in the County is located along the Hwy 101 corridor that links the County north to south along the coast.

"If you don't have enough money to live on you're making the hard choices. Do I pay the rent or do I buy food? Do I pay the utility bill or do I buy food? Do I go to the doctor or do I buy food? And then if you don't eat right, you get sick and need to go to the doctor again--so it's (poverty) a vicious circle."
-County Commissioner Bill Baertlein

The population of Tillamook County is 25,403 which is a 4.7% increase since the year 2000. This is far below the population growth rate of the state as a whole which is 12% over the same time period. Current unemployment rates in Tillamook County are around 7.5% and between 2007 and 2011 an average of 17.6% of the population were living below the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

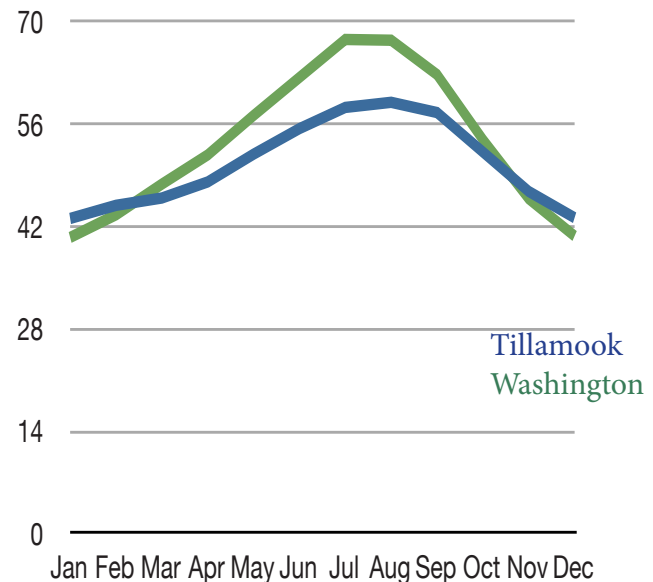
With more than one in six residents living in poverty, it comes as little surprise that many people are having a hard time keeping food on their tables.

Environment

The County receives two to three times as much rain as the major agricultural and population center of the State, the Willamette Valley. With over 90 inches of rain a year, issues of flooding, soil erosion and agricultural runoff can pose serious challenges to local farmers.

It is also cooler on average in the summer and warmer in the winter than the Willamette Valley due to the influence of the Pacific Ocean. This humid mild weather has helped turn the valleys of Tillamook County into some of the best non-irrigated pasture country in the nation. This mild, year round climate also makes it possible for growers on the North Coast to prolong their growing season with the help of hoop houses and/or green houses in order to grow some fruits and vegetables nearly all year long.

Average Temperature: Tillamook County Vs Willamette Valley



Profile: Corvus Landing Farm



Photo courtesy of Corvus Landing Farm

Carolina and Mike grow vegetables on just under an acre up the Slab Creek valley in South Tillamook County. Corvus Landing is beginning its fourth year of operation and has proven highly successful thus far. The farm has a 31 member CSA, sells to several restaurants in the area and is a big part of the Neskowin Farmers Market. According to Carolina, there is far more demand for her produce than she can manage to grow given her space, manpower and desire to do so.

“People are very thankful for the fact that I’m growing vegetables in this community, I think there is a lot more demand than supply with local vegetables.”

Carolina used to work on two of the most successful organic farms in the Southern Willamette Valley, Winter Green Farms and Horton Organics. She is applying much of what she learned there to her operation here on the coast. At Corvus Landing, a major focus is placed on growing crops that are suitable for the coastal environment. Carolina says she likes to grow what is happy here as opposed to fighting nature all season. Because of this she grows and sells a lot of salad greens and she’s able to produce these nearly all year long.

Often farmers on less than an acre are considered to be hobby farmers, however for Carolina, farming is her only job and it’s definitely more than a hobby. The farm keeps extensive records on both finances and cropping systems. “I want people to know that farming is a viable career choice and you can make money farming.”

It is her hope that more people will see the value in producing food for local markets in the area and join her in growing food for their communities. “The farmers’ markets in our region are filled with shoppers but we have a hard time finding producers. I fill my CSA within weeks of opening sign-up with a minimum of effort, and I continue to field calls from interested customers all season long. Restaurants, grocery stores, and more are looking for local produce and are unable to find it.”

Agriculture and Fisheries

Fisheries



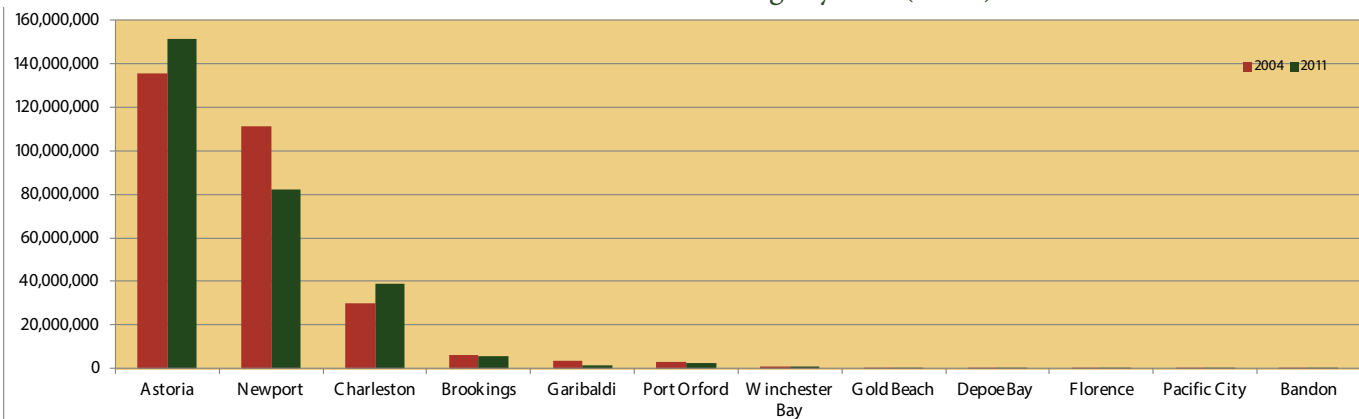
In addition to productive farmland, the Pacific Ocean and bays off the coast provide a bountiful harvest of crab, clams, tuna, salmon, shrimp, rock fish and more, as well as providing an ideal growing environment for farmed oysters.

Along with the dairy and forestry industry, fishing has provided the residents of Tillamook County with a steady food supply and an engine for economic growth throughout its history. Salmon was historically the major catch on the Tillamook Bay, however

overfishing in the early 1900's led to declining runs and by the 1990's the species was put on the federal endangered species list. This, along with increased restrictions placed on the harvesting of bottom fish put many of the area's commercial fishermen in an economic bind.

While the industry does not have as big an economic impact on the area's economy as it used to, one local fisherman points out that "A guy can still get in with a small boat and make it, you just have to work hard."

Commercial Fish Landings by Port (in lbs)



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, 2011

Agriculture and Fisheries

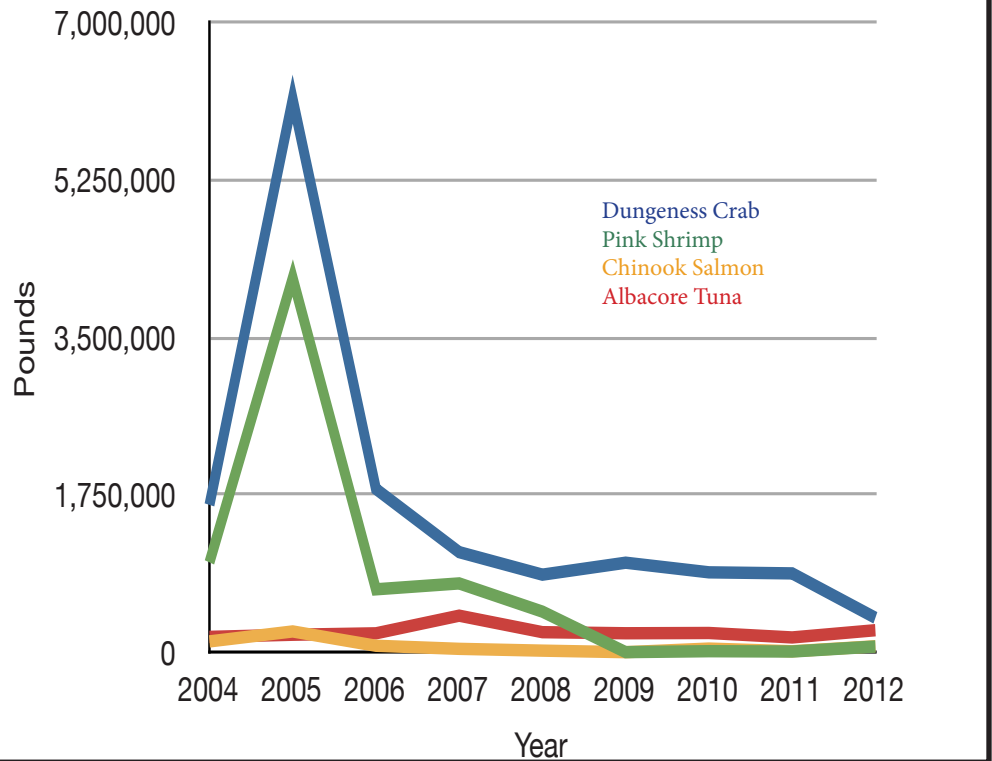
The most productive fishery in the County is the Port of Garibaldi which reported over 1,025,691 lbs of fish landed in 2012. This is almost three times the amount of seafood required to provide the recommended daily servings to every person in the county all year long. Kevin Greenwood, the manager at the Port of Garibaldi, estimates that this number represents close to half of what is actually brought in through the port because fishermen without a commercial license are not included in these numbers. Thus, it seems safe to assume that through the Port of Garibaldi alone, Tillamook County is supplied with enough seafood to feed everyone six times the recommended serving for the whole year. Of course this is an oversimplification of the data, but it illustrates what an immense resource we have.

Much of the fish brought in by recreational fishermen is for personal consumption which goes a long way toward creating a more food secure region. However, the majority of the fish brought in by the commercial fleet is destined for distant markets. A salmon can go for as much as \$40 a pound in Las Vegas assuming it can get there fresh, on ice within a couple of days. Selling that same fish locally would bring in around \$10 a pound.

Oyster Farming

Oysters thrive in brackish bays of which Tillamook is well endowed. The Tillamook and Netarts Bays are especially suitable for commercial oyster production. Oyster farmers play an important role not only in food production, but also in water quality management--for oysters, often eaten raw, can only be grown successfully in pristine waters. Additionally, in

Historical Commercial Fish Landings at Port of Garibaldi



order to feed on algae, each individual oyster filters up to 25 gallons of water a day, in effect, cleaning the bays they live in.

Native Olympia oysters were nearly eliminated from Netarts Bay in the 1800's by overharvesting aimed at supplying the demand for the delicacy in gold rush towns, notably San Francisco. Oyster growers began importing bigger Japanese oysters and began "planting" them in beds throughout the tide flats in hopes of meeting the demand. Supply of this oyster seed dried up with the onset of WWII and the industry struggled.

Because of the relatively cold waters in our bays, Japanese and other introduced species of oyster were unable to reproduce. Today, in order to overcome this hurdle, the Whiskey Creek Hatchery "produces the second most oyster larvae on the West Coast." And the West Coast is now the premier location in the nation for the commercial production of oysters.

Profile: Crabbing



The dungeness crab fishery is by far the most important commercial harvest for the fleets of fishermen based along the Tillamook coast. According to the Port of Garibaldi Commissioner, Valerie Folkema “We’re the second largest port for crabbing in the state of Oregon, and it represents close to a 5 billion dollar industry.”

Bob Browning is a commercial crab fisherman based out of the Port of Garibaldi and also serves as the Vice President for the Board of Commissioners for the Port of Garibaldi. He has a small boat that his father designed and he says he lives on it during the height of the crabbing season in the winter.

Bob says, “We bring it (crab) in and sell it all live. There aren’t any processors left here (for crab), but we do have two live buyers--the (Garibaldi) Cannery and the (Tillamook Bay) Boat House.”

According to Bob, the vast majority of the crab brought in is destined for foreign markets. “A huge part of our catch is going to the export market right now because they are willing to pay more. Except at the very peak of the season (December/January) we really only sell to places like Japan and Korea.

With his boat, Bob manages to bring in around 100,000 lbs. of crab a year. He also fishes for tuna and salmon with the same boat. He says that if you want to be financially successful as a commercial fisherman here you need to be fishing more than just one season because you never know what kind of year you’re going to have with a particular species. This year Bob says things have been pretty good for him. “This year, the crabbing numbers are down but I hit a school so I’m ok. Some years you struggle but the last couple years have been my year.”

Profile: Farmers Creek Gardens



"I just think it'd be so great if people could stop and pick up a bag of greens, fish and potatoes--you have dinner right there."
-Sandra Porter

As you drive north on Highway 101 from Hebo to Beaver you'll pass a field of flowers and a farm stand. The stand has been a mainstay in the community for years since the farm first converted from a dairy farm to a cut flower business, selling most of their product from an unattended farm stand near the old dairy barn. This past year, Waylon and Sandra Porter have begun growing vegetables at the 42 acre farm in hopes of selling these along with fish caught by Waylon, directly to consumers. Sandra and Waylon are working to get a kitchen certified at the farm in order to be able to process and sell fish, that Waylon catches and buys. The hope is to be able to sell directly to customers fish and vegetables that are sourced locally through their farm stand, at the Neskowin and Pacific City Farmers' Markets and potentially down the line, through a CSA.

It can be scary to start up a new business, especially farming. Sandra grew up on a farm and when she was in high school, the farm went under. "I grew up on a dairy farm and my dad had to get out of it. We had a beautiful dairy down in Beaver, but they just couldn't make it work financially." However, with their new venture Sandra is hopeful. "I think we'll do ok as far as customers go."

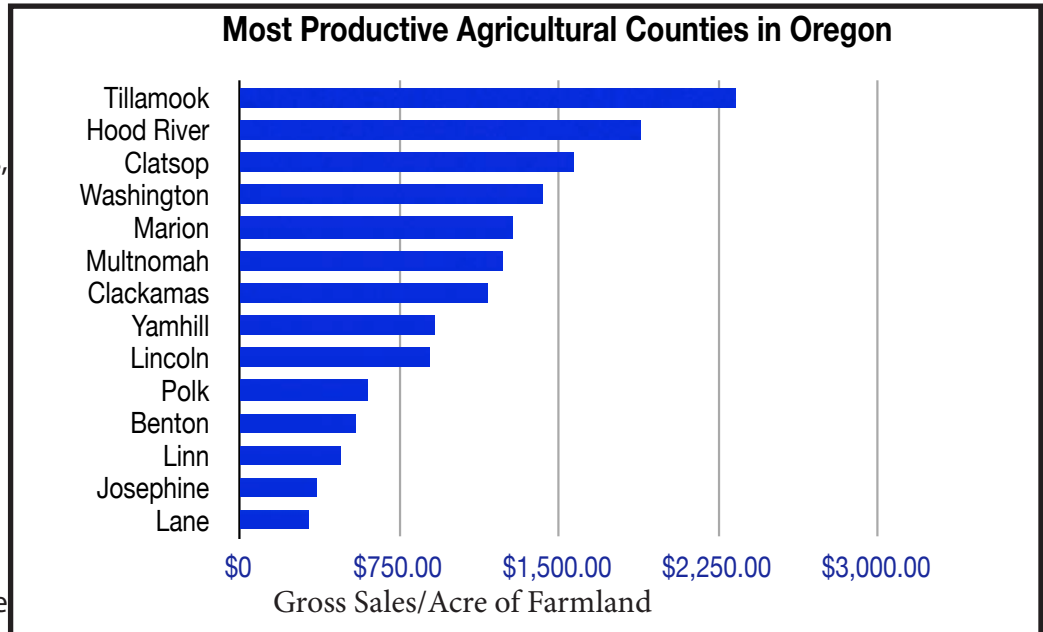
Sandra and Waylon have seen the success and growing popularity of others producing food for the community in South Tillamook County and hope to be able to contribute to their community as well. They say that navigating the regulations that come along with starting up their farming and direct marketed fish venture has been very time consuming. Sandra says "Waylon was trying to figure out who was in charge of inspecting us and it took forever...We're just trying to grow food and make a little money... it's been real challenge."

Whatever they grow at Farmer's Creek gets put out at the farm stand or used in baked goods. "I use a lot of the zucchini I grow in my baking. When it comes to the (farmers') market, I can't bake enough (to meet demand)." They have also been making deliveries of fish to those interested. If you are interested in keeping informed as to when and what they have available you can follow them on Facebook or stop by their farm stand and inquire (27850 Hwy. 101, Cloverdale OR).

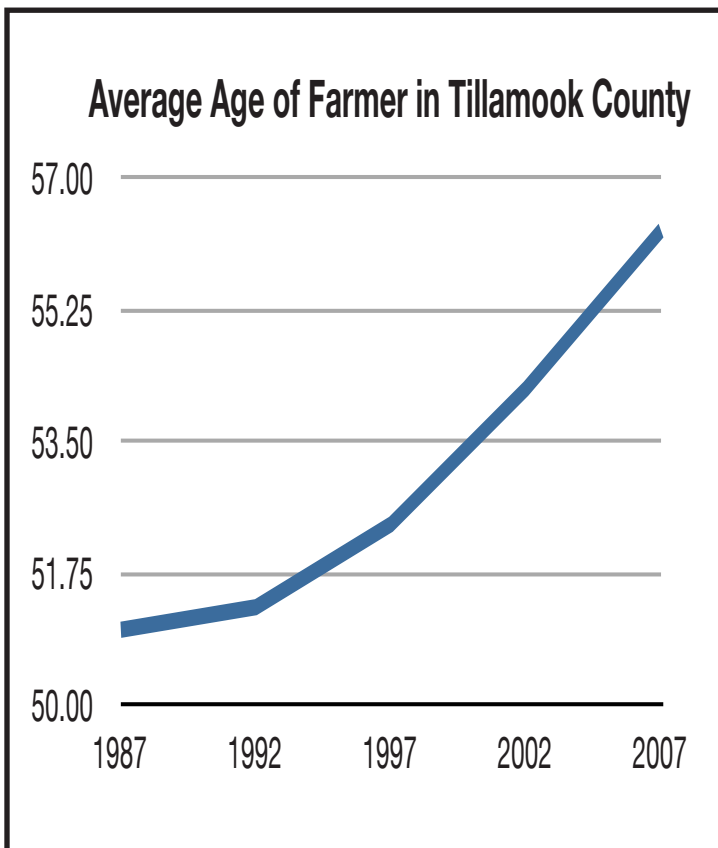
Agriculture and Fisheries

Who's Producing What? A Look At The Data

Tillamook County is among the top producing agricultural counties in the State. It ranks 11th out of 36 in terms of gross farm and ranch sales, and does so on much less land than most counties. Only about 59 square miles (5%) of Tillamook County is classified as farmland, yet on these 59 square miles, the men and women who farm in Tillamook County manage to produce more, as measured by gross sales, than my childhood home, Lane County, does on 4,722 square miles. In fact, when measured by agricultural sales per unit of land, Tillamook is by far the most productive county in the state.



Agriculture is a major pillar of Tillamook County's economy, however some startling trends are causing some to worry about the future of farming in Tillamook County. Largely because of the success of the dairy industry, farmland in Tillamook is relatively expensive at \$6,236 an acre which is 230% higher than the state average. For a young farmer looking to get into the business, this can be a large barrier--and many in the County believe the need for new farmers is growing.



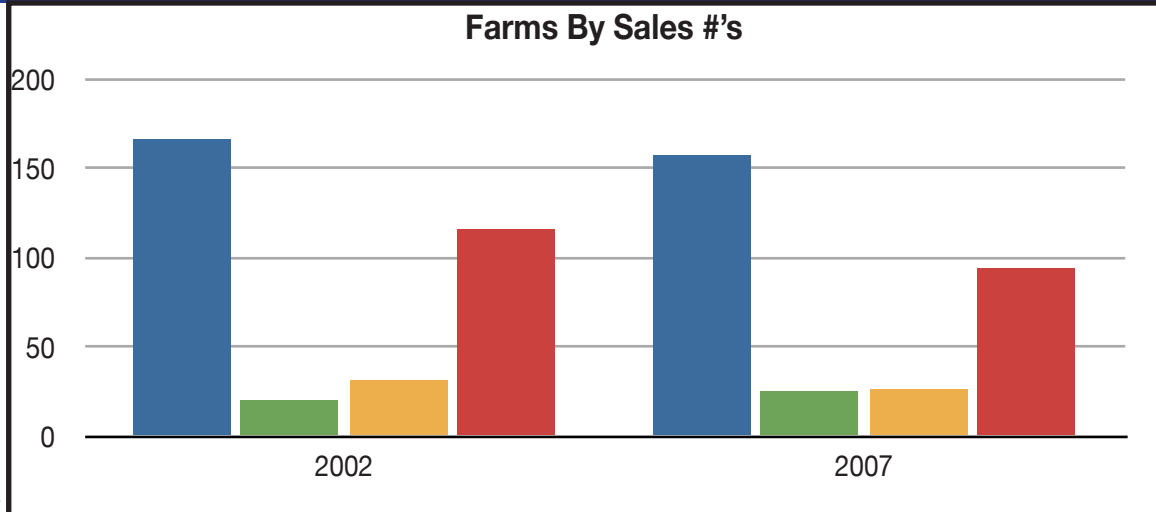
The average age of a farmer in Tillamook County is now 56.3 and trending upwards. Over 1,700 acres of farmland was lost between the 2002 and 2007 agricultural census, as well as more than a 10% decrease in the number of farms. There are fewer farms, fewer farmers, the farms that are left are bigger and they are being run by older and older farmers.

A dichotomy of very large and very small farms exists in the county as well. There are very few farms operating at levels that can supply the local market while at the same time supporting the farmer financially. The largest group of farmers are those generating less

Agriculture and Fisheries

than \$25,000 worth of sales a year, which once costs are figured in, could hardly be counted on to provide a livable income. The next largest segment of farms are those generating more than \$250,000 in sales a year. These are almost exclusively the highly capital intensive dairies which are designed to produce for markets outside the County.

These numbers can be a bit deceiving because generating large sales numbers does not guarantee that the farm is actually turning a profit. In 2007 just over 52% of farms reported net gains and the average net gain was \$210,145. The 48% of farms that failed to turn a profit had an average net loss for the year of \$21,173.



Farms w/ Sales <\$25,000
 Farms w/ Sales \$25,000 to \$99,000
 Farms w/ Sales \$100,000 to \$249,000
 Farms w/ Sales >\$250,000

Growing For Local Markets

Growing food for local markets is, in a lot of ways, a different ball game from growing food for international commodity markets or even a 100+ member cooperative. Most farmers concerned with growing food for local markets must do all their own processing, packaging, marketing and distribution, as well as farming.

While the overall acreage being devoted to production for local markets is small, the impact these farmers have on our communities is not. There are people raising beef to stock our freezers, goats for their milk, bees for honey to satisfy our sweet tooth, extensive vegetable and fruit operation to provide for our produce needs and farmers raising chickens in order to sell both eggs and meat to their neighbors. Official agricultural census data has a hard time capturing the scope of the local food economy because often, sales, trades or production for home consumption go unreported. However, it is clear that production

"I've heard about 19 cents of every dollar you spend at the grocery store on food goes to the farmer. When you buy from me, all the money goes directly into a local business." -Local Farmer, Carolina

of food for local markets plays a large role in the economy and culture of Tillamook County

Residents of Tillamook County spend roughly \$70 million on food every year. This is money that through thick and thin economic times remains relatively constant. There are economic consequences to spending money on locally produced food, chiefly that like other locally produced products more of this money stays in the county and is spent at other businesses creating what economists call the multiplier effect.

The extent to which buying local foods can positively affect the local economy are the subject of debate. One recent study coming out of the University of Iowa suggest the multiplier effect of purchasing locally produced food was 1.55. This means that for every dollar spent on local food in Iowa, \$1.55 of economic activity is generated.

Profile: Foss Road Beef

Foss Road Beef is a 100 acre cattle ranch located at the northern end of the Nehalem Valley. Bob and Charlotte Forester maintain herd of around 100 Herefords and sell their beef direct to their customers in quarter, half and whole shares of the animal. The couple bought their farm in 1978, originally running it as a dairy and selling their milk to the Tillamook County Creamery Association. More recently, Bob says he found he couldn't make money



operating as a dairy producer for the TCCA at his scale so he decided to convert his herd to beef cows and handle the marketing and distribution himself.

They have now been selling beef direct to their customers for two years and have managed to sell out every year. The first year they sold 16 cows and this year they sold 22. They sell their beef at a price per pound which according to Bob, just covers their costs. The cows are 100% grass fed but not certified organic because of a once a year spray along the fence lines and the high costs associated with organic certification.

Bob says "We only sell shares of our cows because we're not allowed to do it any other way." This is because Bob and Charlotte are in fact selling a share of their live cows and not the meat itself due to the fact that they don't have easy access to a USDA certified processor. The meat is processed and packaged at Tillamook Meat and then available for pickup by Foss Road Beef's customers.

Bob and Charlotte have been farming their land for 34 years and hope to see the land continue to be farmed. Bob says "This land was meant for raising cows." They are hoping to find a young farmer who is interested in raising cattle and taking the business to the next level who they could partner with and hopefully transition the farming operation to over time. If you're interested in stocking your freezer with meat this year or simply having a look around a beautiful farm, Bob and Charlotte welcome you to contact them.

Agriculture and Fisheries

Challenges of Starting a Local Food Business

Starting a local food business is not for the faint of heart. There are many challenges and stumbling blocks that can get in the way of success. Local Oregon State Extension Agent Joy Jones joked that the old adage is true, "Farming is the only profession where you purchase your inputs retail and sell your product wholesale." She went on to describe why she and her family got out of farming "We got out of farming so we could feed our family and send them to school...It was difficult to do that farming back in the 1980's"

The economic realities can be challenging. Access to traditional forms of capital such as bank loans can be hard to come by for those interested in starting a local food or farm business. TLC Credit Union CEO Mike Pierce laments that fact that they are unable to support many emerging food business due to lack of capital and increasing regulations.

"We simply aren't able to make the loans we were able to 10 years ago. We used to have a part time staff position dedicated to making sure we were complying with Federal and State regulations, we now have 3 full time staff committed to this and we receive 1,000 pages of new regulations every quarter."

Smaller financial institutions such as TLC are facing similar challenges to those of smaller farmers. Regulations designed to regulate larger bodies are often very costly to adhere to because of the monitoring costs involved. This means that many of the advantages that come with being small, such as relationship based business dealings are all but impossible to take advantage of.

Carol Marie Leuthold, a local dairy farmer says "The rules and regulations have gotten real stringent... people have gone out of business and moved away because of this. We could hire one full time person just to keep up with all the rules and regulations. The

The guy doing the work just doesn't have time to keep up with it all."

Alternative forms of capital are often key when it comes to starting a local food business. One such option is to enroll in an Individual Development Account.

IDA's are a state funded program designed to help low and moderate income people build assets. In Tillamook County the program is administered by Food Roots. Residents interested in starting a food related business and who meet the income requirements can enroll in the program. The program allows you to save up to \$1,000 a year for up to three years. This money is matched at a 3:1 rate which means that at the end of three years you could potentially have \$12,000 to invest in your business.

Extension Agent Joy Jones also points to several other challenges facing farmers who want to grow for local markets. "Most people don't want to pay a premium for necessities." 96% of those interviewed as part of the consumer survey said they did buy some local food, 24% said that they didn't buy more of it because it was too expensive. Another issue Joy pointed to was the lack of institutional support for small farmers. "There just isn't the infrastructure here to support small scale producers. Water rights are difficult to access, upfront capital costs can be prohibitive and growing organically can be difficult... and there isn't much of a temporary or seasonal labor pool that makes many operations in the (Willamette) Valley feasible...Those who have succeeded have had to be creative and vertically integrate." Joy argues that in order to be successful farmers should focus on what does well here on the coast and make sure they take a hard look at the economics of their operations before investing much time and money in their venture.

Agriculture and Fisheries

Opportunities For Agriculture and Fisheries in Tillamook County

1) Diversify Agricultural Production:

Tillamook County is home to some of the best non-irrigated grass pasture in the nation. The success of the dairy industry has built on this strength. As we look for ways to increase food production, farmers should continue to focus on growing crops well suited to the North Oregon coast climate. There exists a demand for locally grown food in Tillamook County that to this point is not being met by supply in many areas.

2) Increase Access to Land and Training for Beginning Farmers:

The cost of agricultural land in Tillamook is amongst the highest in the state and as our farmers age it becomes important that transitions of land be facilitated in such a way that these productive farmlands remain so. The idea of a local farmland trust has been proposed. The establishment of a database of available farmland and farmers looking to transition their operations could also be a valuable resource.

3) Strengthen Farmer Networks:

The unique growing environment of the North Oregon Coast, coupled with the low number of farmers growing food for local markets means that accessing the information and know-how required to succeed in a food production enterprise can be hard to come by. Those who are having success producing food on the North Oregon Coast are a treasure trove of knowledge that should be considered a valuable resource. If new growers are to be successful and established growers are to expand their operations, cooperation and the sharing of knowledge will be key.

4) Get more Local Seafood into Local Markets:

Through the rivers, bays and oceans in Tillamook County comes immense amounts of food. Because of the high value of the catch, much of this fish is bound for distant markets. There exist very few outlets for local seafood in the area and processing capacity at our ports has greatly diminished and disappeared for some of the catch. There exists the potential to begin Boat to School and Community Supported Fisheries programs. However a study of how these programs are working around the country for fishermen as well as their customers should be conducted, and local fishermen must be engaged in the process.



Food Access and Health

The world produces more than 1 1/2 times enough food to feed everyone on the planet a 2,500 calorie diet. Yet hunger is still a major problem in America and even in Tillamook County where, if we are world famous for anything, it's farming. Hunger, to a large extent is not a problem of production it's a problem of poverty. The relative price of fruits and vegetables is up 40% since 1980 while the relative price of processed foods is down about 40%. Here in America we spend less of our income and food and more on health care than any other industrialized country in the world. Rates of obesity in Tillamook County are around one in four and rates of food insecurity nearly the same.

"I would say there is a significant part of our population that doesn't receive 3 meals (a day)."
-Mark Labhart Tillamook County Commis-

When access to healthy, affordable food is not available, the health consequences can be dire. Tillamook County Health Officer Dr. Paul Betlinski points out that "The cheap foods are often those that are worst for you." In Tillamook County 16% of the population is considered food insecure and 24% obese. There are many factors that play into these numbers, but a large reason why people aren't able to get enough of the healthy foods they need is because they simply lack access to these foods, or enough money to purchase them.

Rural Food Deserts

The USDA defines a food desert as an area of the country void of fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods. Food deserts most often occur because an area lacks grocery stores, farmers' markets, and health food providers. According to a study put out by the USDA, the majority of South Tillamook County is considered a food desert. Other areas of the county also lack convenient access to healthy, affordable food.

Forty percent of people interviewed in the consumer survey indicated that transportation costs affect their ability to access and afford food. Because there are only two major grocery stores in the county, both located in Tillamook, many residents of the county must travel for many miles just to access healthy, affordable food. This can be a real challenge for the elderly as well as low income families. With some residents living more than 30 miles from the nearest grocery store, smaller stores are often relied upon to supply a large share of the diet.



Senior citizens who make up roughly 1 in 4 Tillamook County residents can be especially vulnerable to issues associated with living in a food desert. Many live on fixed incomes and face high medical costs. Some seniors are limited in their mobility and find it difficult to make trips to buy food on a regular basis. This makes it exceedingly difficult to keep fresh fruit and vegetables in their diet.

Food Access and Health

Grocery Stores



The places where a community comes together to access food are natural social and economic hubs. As long as people have been living in communities, there have been marketplaces where people come together to exchange food and crafts. In our modern world much of this role is now being played by grocery stores, big and small.

The most widely used medium for accessing food in Tillamook County and throughout much of the United States is the grocery store. Ninety-two percent of respondents to the consumer survey conducted as part of this assessment indicated that they did their food shopping at a major grocery store. Tillamook County is home to two major groceries, a Safeway and a Fred Meyer, both located in the city of Tillamook. Pacific City, Garibaldi and Manzanita each have a mid-sized grocery as well as smaller grocery stores. The remainder of the County is served by a network of 21 independently owned and operated rural grocery stores. These stores provide access not only to essential nutritional needs in their communities but also provide a bustling market place that

serves to build relationships with those who live in and around the community.

Poverty is also a major challenge to accessing a healthy diet. Food budgets are often the most flexible in the household and thus when finances are tight, spending on food is often the first to be cut. The cheaper foods are often the least healthy and have the longest shelf life. So when someone on a low income goes to their local grocery store they often find that either no fresh fruits and vegetables are available or, if they are, they are too expensive to make them part of their families diet.

Rural Grocery Store Survey

As part of this assessment process, grocery store owners and managers who operated stores in the outlying communities were interviewed. The goal was to understand what their shared challenges and successes were when it came to supplying their respective communities with healthy and affordable

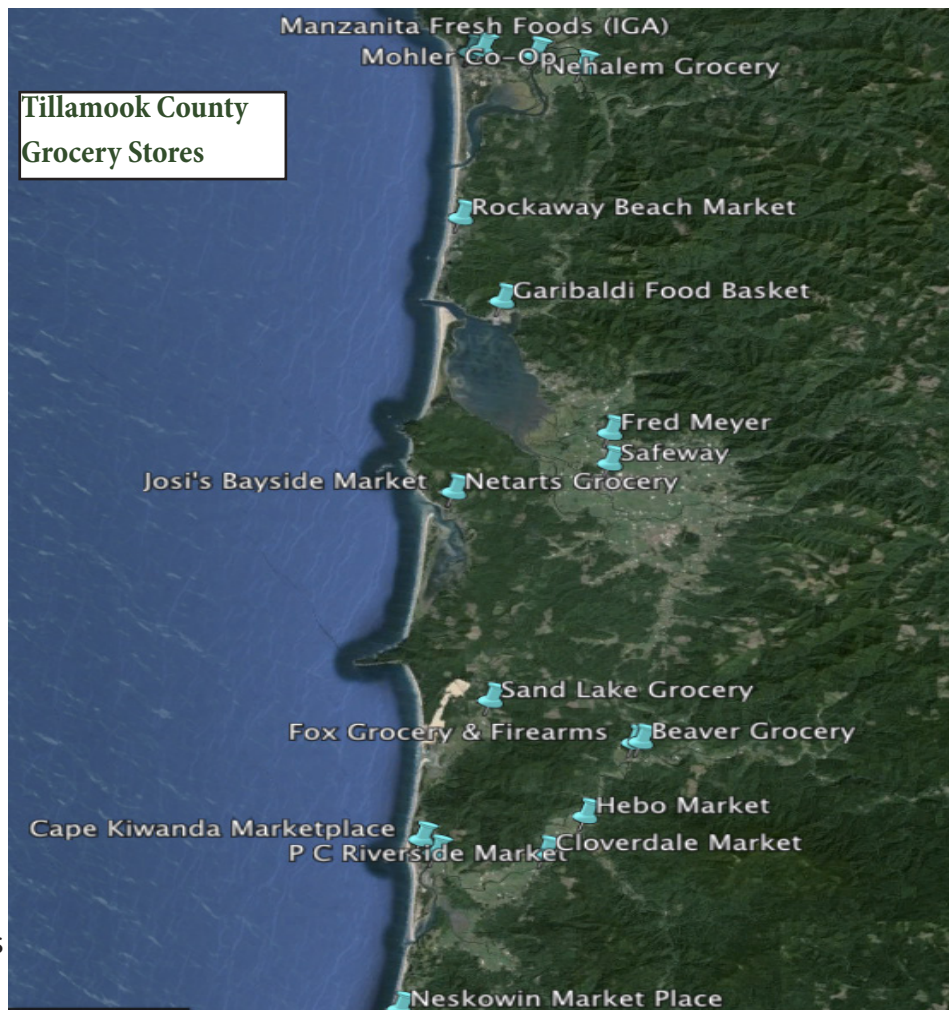
Food Access and Health

food, and to find out what sorts of challenges prevented them selling more locally produced food.

The emerging themes of the survey were that most of the rural grocery stores relied on summer sales to carry them through the rest of the year. This makes a lot of sense as the population doubles from 25,000 in the winter to 50,000 in the summer months with the majority of the population increases seen in the small coastal communities.

Another major challenge discussed by many of the grocery stores interviewed was getting distributors to deliver to their stores. One small grocer said that they don't have a primary distributor but instead go to Costco twice a month in order to stock their shelves. This same store used to get milk delivered but now goes to Safeway instead because "it's crazy, but it's cheaper."

North County grocery stores interviewed were having an easier time sourcing locally grown vegetables from farms such as Revolution Gardens and Kingfishers Farms, but were still struggling to keep prices at a place where local residents could do the majority of their shopping locally. In South and Central County it seems much less was being sourced from local farms, however local seafood was often being sold at the coastal groceries. One local grocer is also a commercial fisherman and thus his store carries much of



what he catches such as crab and tuna, in addition to carrying farmed oysters from the nearby bay.

There is no doubt that these rural grocery stores play a large role in the character and livability of their respective communities. Of the stores who completed the survey the average time they have been at their present location was 52 years.

Which of the following are major challenges for your store?

Winter Sales Volume	5	Debt or High Payments	2
Narrow Profit Margins	4	Shoplifting/Bad Checks/Internal Theft/Unpaid Accounts	2
Low Sales Volume	3	Taxes	1
Required Minimum Purchasing Requirements	2	Government Regulation	1

Food Access and Health

Government Assistance

In Tillamook County, nearly 17% of the population is living below the Federal Poverty Line. Many of these same people are considered to be food insecure, meaning that certain times of the year they don't know where their next meal will be coming from. One local resident who relies on SNAP benefits to help feed her family says "The support system is crucial... I get a little tired of hearing 'oh yeah, they just aren't trying hard enough.' You can't help it when you have medical things come up that you didn't predict—you can't help it if you lost your job...I think they need... to have a little bit more compassion."

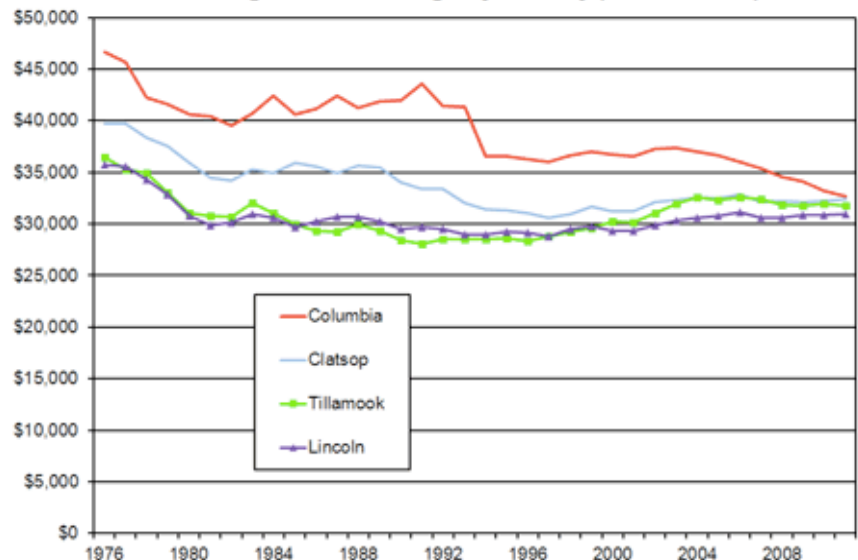
There are a number of local, state and federal government assistance programs here in Tillamook County designed to mitigate the effects of food insecurity.

Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP)

About half of all Americans will at some point be the recipients of SNAP benefits (formerly food stamps)--making it the largest federal nutrition assistance program in the country. Families receive SNAP benefits based on their income. Most people, in Oregon, will qualify if they fall below 185% of the federal poverty line and can start receiving the benefits by going down to the Department of Human Services with an ID and proof of income.

Currently in Tillamook County about 30% of the population qualify for SNAP benefits, with an average monthly benefit of \$82 per participant. This translates to \$5,894,286 being spent at Tillamook County food outlets every year. According to a 2010 national

Real Average Covered Wage by County (2011 dollars)



study, each SNAP dollar spent in a community generates \$1.79 of economic activity. Currently, only 52% of those who qualify for SNAP benefits in the county participate in the program. This equates to \$5,547,670 in additional SNAP dollars that could potentially be flowing into the local economy and an additional \$9,930,329 of unrealized local economic activity.

Thirty six percent of respondents to the consumer survey indicated that they received SNAP benefits and another 32% were unsure as to if they qualified or not. Almost half of all children who qualify for SNAP benefits in Tillamook, fail to enroll in the program.

SNAP benefits are rarely enough to cover all food costs for the month. The average cost of a meal in Tillamook County is \$2.78. This means that someone receiving the average SNAP benefit of \$82 a month would have enough to cover about 10 days worth of food. A local Netarts resident who receives SNAP benefits says "I feel guilty if I eat three bites of

Food Access and Health

dinner because I feel like I'm taking food away from my child. I mean, if I can't feed her tomorrow and if I eat, then I'm taking it away from her. So I eat like three bites of a meal, just so it makes it seem like she thinks I'm eating. You know, she's like 'mommy, you got to eat' and I'm like 'I'm eating.'"

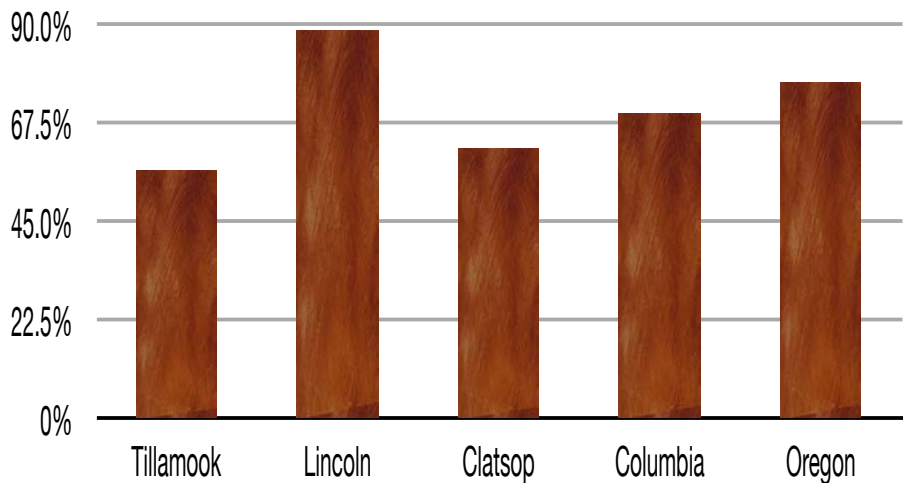
SNAP benefits can be used at participating grocery stores, farmers' markets, farms and produce stands throughout the county. SNAP benefits can be used to purchase foods for the household such as bread, cereal, fruits, vegetables, milk as well as soda, candy and chips. SNAP benefits cannot be used to purchase alcohol, tobacco or hot prepared food. However you can use your SNAP benefits to purchase seeds and plant starts in order to grow your own food.

Women Infants and Children (WIC)

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is a program designed to provide access to nutrition education and healthy food for low-income pregnant or breast-feeding women and to infants and children up to age five with medical and /or nutritional risk factors. In 2011 51% of all pregnant women in Tillamook County were served by the program amounting to \$427,877 spent on healthy food, and in 2012 the number of pregnant women served by WIC rose to 54% which amounted to \$475,896 spent in the county on healthy food at local retailers.

The program provides assistance through vouchers, education and pregnancy support. WIC vouchers can be used by a family to purchase high-nutrition foods such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables, milk and baby food. According to Dawna Roesener, the WIC coordinator for Tillamook County, for every \$1 that is

SNAP Participation Rate Amongst Eligible Youth



spent in WIC funds, \$9 is saved in health care costs. WIC programs include the Fresh Fruit and Veggie Voucher and Farm Direct Nutrition Program (FDNP). Fruit and Veggie vouchers are given to participants throughout the year to provide extra money for healthy food that is often seen as too expensive for low income families to purchase. The FDNP vouchers can also be used to purchase directly from participating farms, farm stands and farmers' markets. FDNP program checks are given out to WIC clients and senior citizens during the summer growing season. It is a unique model that encourages participants to purchase healthy, local, fresh food even though they might not otherwise, due to the perceived high prices. In Tillamook County, WIC families and seniors redeemed \$2,692 of FDNP coupons. This is money that goes directly to farmers and encourages the growth of the local food economy.

WIC vouchers can be used at the two major grocery stores in the county, Safeway and Fred Meyer in Tillamook. There are also 5 independent smaller groceries throughout the county that accept WIC benefits. WIC, Fresh Fruit and Veggie and FDNP vouchers can also be used at the Tillamook and Manzanita Farmers Market as well as DeNoble's Farm Stand and Don's Waterfall Farm.

Profile: Knights of Columbus

The Knights of Columbus is a Catholic charity with a chapter in Tillamook. The Knights grow a one acre garden every year in order to supply the Food Bank network in the county with fresh produce. Keeping fresh produce and healthy foods in the food pantries can be a real challenge.

Don Armstrong, who has been leading the effort since its inception, was living next to a one acre field that he says “was growing nothing but canary grass”. After complaining to the owner once or twice “it just came to me to plant potatoes... now we also have corn, sweet meat squash and cabbage all grown for the food bank. Last year we were able to give close to 10,000 lbs. of fresh produce to the food bank.”



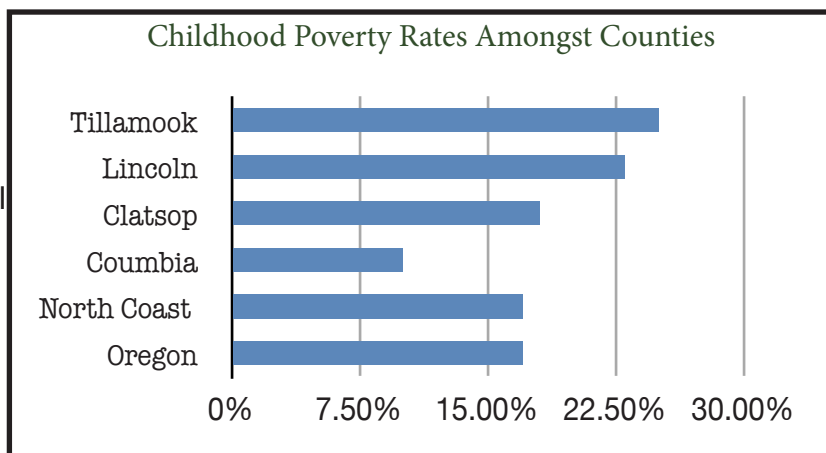
Melissa Carlson Swanson, the Oregon Food Bank Tillamook Branch Services Manager, says these types of donations are of immense value and greatly appreciated, “We just can’t keep enough sweet meat squash at the food bank...people just swarm around it.”

The Knights of Columbus have around eight volunteers who come and help maintain the garden, but most of the volunteers are of the older generation. This is a problem facing many service organizations and food producers throughout the county. Don believes that in order to combat hunger and increase awareness of food issues amongst the general population, “we should do what we did during World War II where everybody planted little victory gardens.”

Childhood Hunger and Obesity

Access to food is often a bigger problem for children than it is for adults. Not only are children more likely to come from food insecure homes, but when they miss a meal or become malnourished, it can have a detrimental effect on both their physical and mental development. According to Tillamook County Health Officer Dr. Paul Betlinski, “building a child is much like building a house... you need the best materials... and you need them at every stage of the building process, especially in the foundation.”

In Tillamook County, more than 32% of children under 18 are living in households considered food insecure, 34% are obese, 24% are living in poverty and nearly 4% are considered homeless.



There are a number of programs in Tillamook County designed to deal with the problems of childhood hunger. However, due to funding issues and capacity of volunteers to meet the need, some children have access to assistance programs while others do not.

Food Access and Health

School Lunches

Children spend much of their day in school and many children rely on their school to provide a substantial portion of their nutritional needs. The National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program provide free and reduced priced meals to children who come from low income households.

In order to qualify for free lunches, a child must come from a household that falls below 130% of the federal poverty line. Children living in households with incomes 130-185% of poverty are eligible for reduced priced lunches. In the 2012-2013 school year 62% of students in Tillamook County were eligible for free or reduced lunch. However, just because a

Summer Feeding Programs

With nearly 2,000 kids across the county relying on free and reduced priced meals during the school year, the burden placed on families during the summer time can be substantial. The USDA summer feeding program provides funds to organizations in order for them to provide meals to low income children throughout the summer. And while these funds are intended to target low income youth, meals at these summer feeding programs are available to any one under 18.

In the summer of 2012, over 8,180 lunches were served throughout the county at various USDA funded meal sites. There are also summer feeding programs that don't participate in the USDA program so this number is not complete. However it is clear that while summer feeding programs are feeding kids they are only feeding a small fraction of the nearly 2,000 kids a day that are fed during the school year.

Grub Club is a county-wide effort being undertaken by volunteers and the faith community. Georgia Dorsey coordinates the largest Grub Club in the county out of the Tillamook Methodist Church. Every weekday throughout the summer, volunteers use the kitchen at the Church to prepare hundreds of

student is eligible does not mean that he/she will receive a free or reduced lunch. Due to stigma and other factors, participation rates for the program amongst children who qualified in 2009 was only 77%.

School District	% Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch
Tillamook	59.9%
Neah-Kah-Nie	61.5%
Nestucca Valley	70.1%

lunches that are then distributed to summer meal sites in the surrounding area. According to Pastor Jerry Jefferies of the Methodist Church (among others) "last year we made and distributed more than 6,000 lunches and this year we're on track to do a lot more." The program is a USDA certified site so they receive funding from the government and in turn must provide what the USDA considers a balanced meal. Georgia says that the USDA funding is often not enough to provide the caliber of meal that kids deserve. The Grub Club is able to raise additional funding from local churches and businesses in order to supplement the USDA funding.

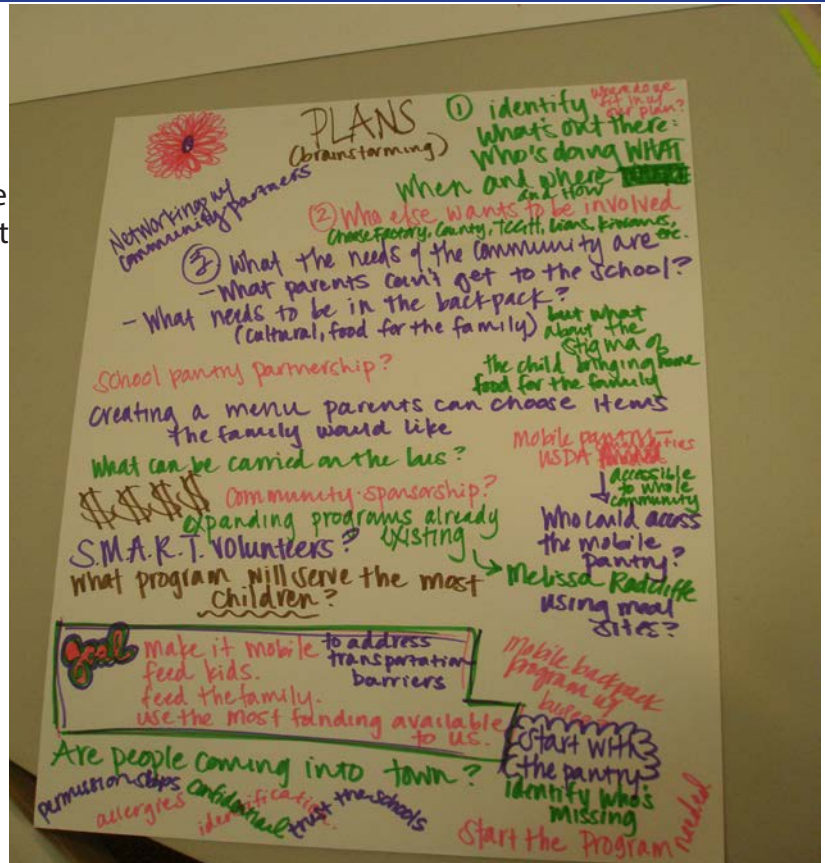


Profile: Childhood Hunger Summit

This past May, nearly 40 people gathered at the Tillamook Methodist Church for a day long summit, aimed at combatting childhood hunger Tillamook County communities. The day began with a look at the issues throughout the country, state and local area. It was agreed that while there are very few starving kids in the county, malnutrition is a problem and kids do occasionally go hungry. After a series of presentations, participants gathered into groups and discussed strategies for mitigating the root causes of childhood hunger throughout the county.

Much of the discussion centered around the issue of gaps in feeding programs designed to reach children living in food insecure households. It was agreed that school lunch programs are relatively successful with 77% of kids who are eligible participating, but that once children left school for the day or for summer break, the support drops off dramatically. It was proposed to begin after school tutoring and feeding programs as well as school pantry programs.

The tutoring program would be designed to meet the co-needs of academic support and supplement



tal feeding, recognizing that it is very difficult to achieve academic success while not receiving a balanced diet. Similarly the school pantry program would be modeled on the success of the school pantry project currently underway in South Tillamook County.

The Emergency Food System

"It's our job to help feed hungry people, evaluate who they are, where they are, and how we can best serve them. It's the best, most important job in the world." This, according to Melissa Carlson Swanson, director of the Tillamook Branch of Oregon Food Bank, is the goal of her organization and the 28 local partner agencies that she works with throughout the County.

Last year nearly 600,000 lbs. of food went out through the network of six pantries, four meal sites and numerous mobile pantries. The majority of



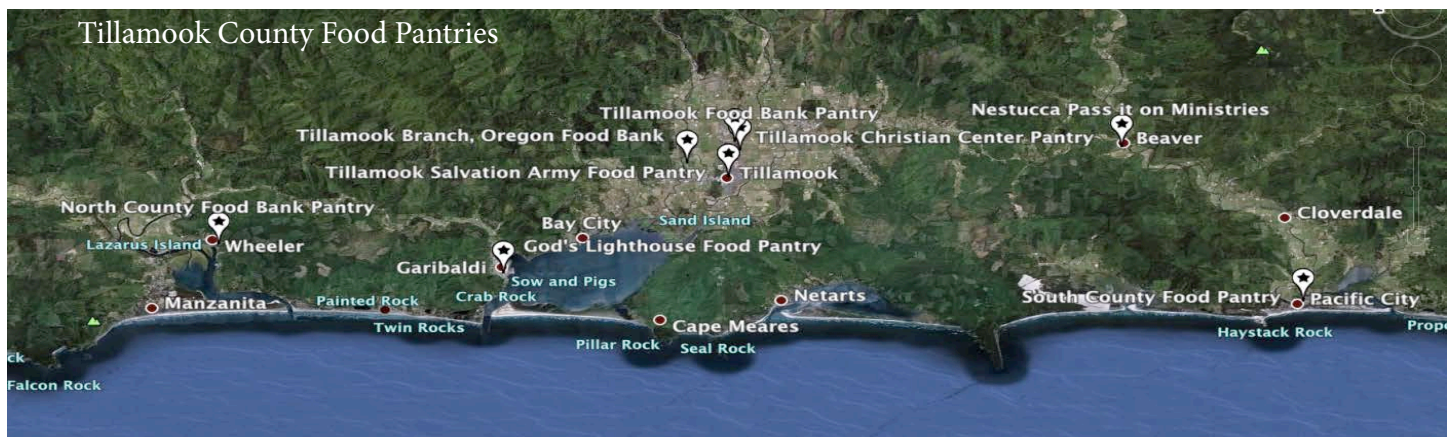
Food Access and Health

this food is intended to fill 3-5 day emergency food boxes for families and individuals who find themselves in a bind.

Food pantries are not designed to be utilized as a consistent source of food. However, because of high rates of food insecurity, food pantries sometimes find themselves filling this role. Imie Camelli who has been directing the The North County Food Bank in Wheeler for years says that she's been seeing a rise in multi-generational households coming in to get food boxes. "People are having a tough time getting out on their own financially." And Steve Forester of the Salvation Army says "We're no longer running an emergency food box program, its a program to sustain households."

Imie and her staff of volunteers keep extensive records of who visits their food bank and what their situations are. One local resident and mother interviewed at the pantry says "I spend almost all week long hitch-hiking back to all the food banks, and carrying as much as I can...back and forth, that's what I spend most of my time doing, is getting food, making sure that I have enough food. It's not enough."

The North County Food Bank is intended to provide emergency food for those living in the north end of the county. However, Imee says, "sometimes we get people in here from Garibaldi and we're really not supposed to serve them, but we won't turn them away. I just tell them to go find God's Lighthouse next time."



Profile: Salvation Army

The Salvation Army has been providing emergency food to the Tillamook community for the last seven years. Steve Forester who runs the operation believes, "My job is to stabilize households through food... so that they can then begin tackling the root causes of their hunger and poverty."

Last year alone the Salvation Army distributed nearly 127,000 lbs of food. 49% of this food came through the Oregon Food Bank Network. The rest was acquired through the efforts of the Salvation Army itself. Steve keeps a detailed record system so he knows exactly what kind of food he'll need to fill his food boxes. He says "This allows me to target my procurement efforts and makes me more effective."

The Salvation Army is "running the county's largest food pantry as far as volume of food distributed" It can be difficult to get all the food needed to supply the need because of limited resources and real or perceived competition for these resources amongst the various pantries and feeding programs throughout the county.

Steve believes that the work of the pantries is of the utmost importance because they allow families to focus on getting the foundations of their life in order and begin tackling the larger underlying issues that are causing them to rely on the emergency food system.

Food Access and Health



Opportunities For Food Access and Health

1) Increase participation rate in Supplemental Nutrition programs

Only 52% of eligible kids are participating in the SNAP program which means that nearly half of the children in Tillamook County are not as empowered as they could be when it comes to acquiring sufficient healthy food. Outreach to qualified parents could go a long way toward enrolling more children in the program.

2) More meals in the summer for children

During the school year over 2,000 lunches are served at reduced or no cost every day through the USDA School Lunch Program. During the summer of 2012, less than 10,000 lunches were served the entire summer leaving a large gap for low income families to fill. Increased awareness of summer feeding sites and an increased number of these sites could go a long way toward reducing childhood hunger.

3) Bring more healthy food into the emergency and school food networks

Nutrition is more than calories alone. Nutrition affects the ability of a child to learn and when kids learn to eat a healthy diet when they're young, chances are good they'll continue as adults. By getting more healthy food into the schools and pantries, people become empowered to live healthier lives.

4) Build distribution networks that empower local producers and retailers

For many rural grocery stores it can be difficult to supply healthy, affordable food while also maintaining a profitable business. Finding ways to reduce the transaction costs associated with distributing highly perishable fruits and vegetables on a regular basis could go a long way toward making these rural grocery stores a reliable place for local residents to access food for their families. The idea of using the food bank distribution network to pick up produce from local farmers and distribute it to rural grocery stores on the way back from the pantries has been discussed and warrants further investigation into its feasibility.

Community Food Efforts

Tillamook County is perhaps the most successful longterm example of an intact community food system in the State of Oregon. Tillamook has twice the ratio of its population working on farms and these jobs pay 15% more than the State average. There are more farmers markets per capita and less food insecurity than the majority of other counties in the state. However, there is still much work to be done in order to build healthier, hunger free and econom-

ically prosperous communities for the future. The people and organizations dedicated to this work are concerned with educating the youth about food production, building networks and coalitions of local producers and community partnerships, finding markets for local food products and educating all people as to the importance of supporting the local food economy.

Profile: Food Roots

Food Roots works to help those interested in growing a healthier local food system succeed. Shelly Bowe, the Executive Director of Food Roots, wants people to know “We’re not the food bank” but rather “We bring together people around this idea of producing food. and eating local.” Food Roots serves as a nexus for many efforts in growing a healthier more resilient food system. They link suppliers with consumers. The Food Roots FarmTable project at the Tillamook Farmers Market is encouraging people into produce more food for local markets by allowing them to sell at the market when they have the product to do so. Thus eliminating much of the risk and hassle associated with starting up a farming venture.



Photo Courtesy of Food Roots

The food system is a complex set of interconnected systems all reliant upon each other. Food Roots recognizes that without a robust distribution system, increases in production will mean little to those looking to buy this food. Similarly, without USDA processing centers for livestock, it is next to impossible to get local meat into local restaurants, retail stores and schools. Sometimes Shelly muses that getting all the different players on the same page is “like herding cats” but that the only way to build a healthier food system here in Tillamook County is to “continue working together.”

Food Roots is a non profit based in Tillamook dedicated to growing a healthy food system on the North Oregon Coast. The organization provides access to capital for small scale food producers through it's Individual Development Account Program (see page 17), runs several school gardens along with educational programming for youth, and coordinates community organizing events around the county focused on growing producers and consumers of local food. They co-publish the North Coast Food Guide which is a yearly publication listing farms that are producing for local markets and how to contact them. The goal of the publication is to link those interested in purchasing local food with those who are producing it. A copy of the North Coast Food Guide is available online at www.foodrootsnw.org.

Shelly Bowe who first moved to Tillamook County as a young dairy farmer has been running the organization since its inception. She says, "We're teaching kids about our food system, and we're also working hard to support beginning farmers, and provide families with opportunities to produce more food." Shelly wants people to know "Food Roots is not a food bank" but rather, "We bring together people around this idea of producing food, and eating both locally and in season."

FEAST and Community Food Conversations



Photo Courtesy of Food Roots

As part of this assessment process, a number of Community Conversations were held in order to sort out what the priorities of communities in the county are around their local food systems. In March of 2012, 76 people met at the Tillamook County Library for 5-1/2 hours in order to discuss what they saw as the most critical aspects of their regional food system. The gathering was a Food, Education and Agricultural Solutions Together (FEAST) event. The event was hosted by Food Roots and facilitated by

Sharon Thornberry of the Oregon Food Bank.

In the room were people from all sectors of the food system. There were farmers and restaurateurs, extension agents and fishermen. All shared a commitment to help shape the future of the food system in Tillamook County. After brainstorming many ideas, there emerged seven major categories that people were interested in improving in their food system. They were as follows:

Community Food Efforts

Policy: Modify beliefs and create sustainable policies that eliminate constraints to creating a healthy local food system.

Community Processing and Distribution: Strengthen the community food system by developing the local processing storage and distribution infrastructure to provide year round access to healthy local food for consumers and retailers and increase marketing and economic opportunities for local food growers and producers.

Coalitions, Communications and Public Education: Develop organized coalitions and strengthen community partnerships, in order to foster a greater understanding of our food system and increase the consumption of locally produced, healthy foods.

Local Production: Connect local growers, producers and consumers with each other.

School and Community Gardens: Alleviate barriers and develop healthy food access programs through education, utilizing school yard and community gardens.

Home Gardening: Create a broad coalition to form Edible Tillamook County initiate coordinating home, community and school garden support system.

Emergency Food: Increase quality and availability of local foods

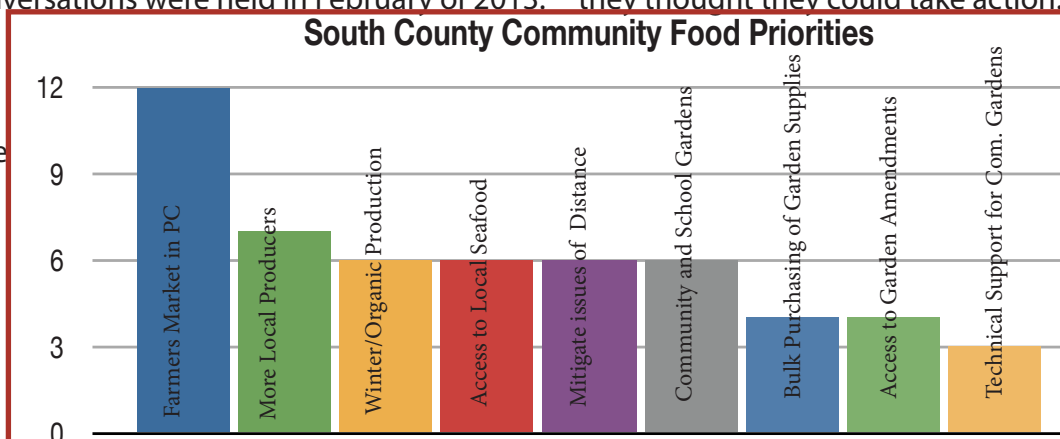
Each interest area formed a group and chose a group leader. The hope was that these groups would continue to meet after the FEAST in order to move forward with plans for shaping their chosen sector of the food system.

As a follow up to the FEAST event and as part of the research process for this assessment, two Community Food Conversations were held in February of 2013.

The goals for these two conversations were to focus on specific community needs and actionable steps people were willing to take to build a healthier, localized food system in their area.

The first Community Food Conversation was held in Pacific City and attended by 15 local residents interested in taking action in their local food system.

While sharing a meal, participants brainstormed issues in their local food system and places where they thought they could take action. At the end of the night participants were asked to vote on which actionable steps they most wanted to see happen and were willing to take part in.



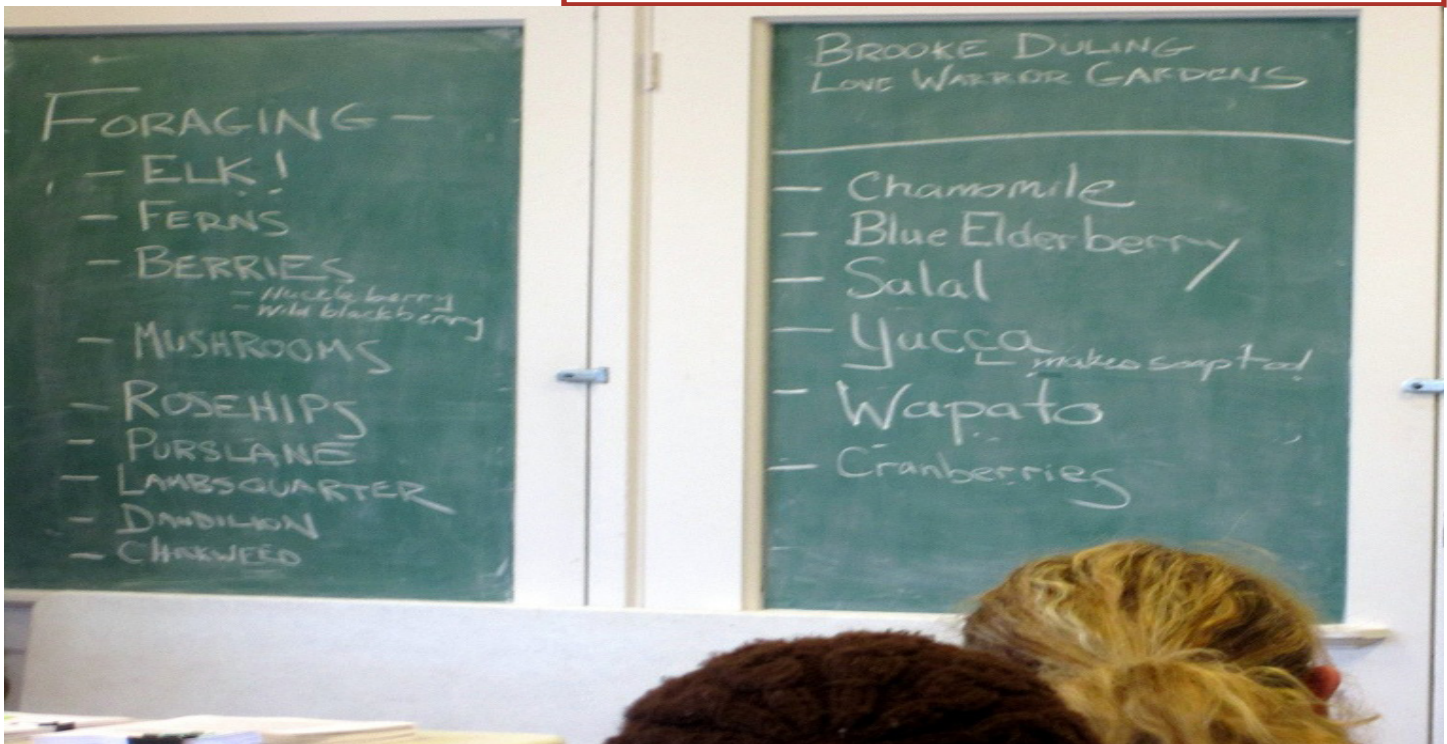
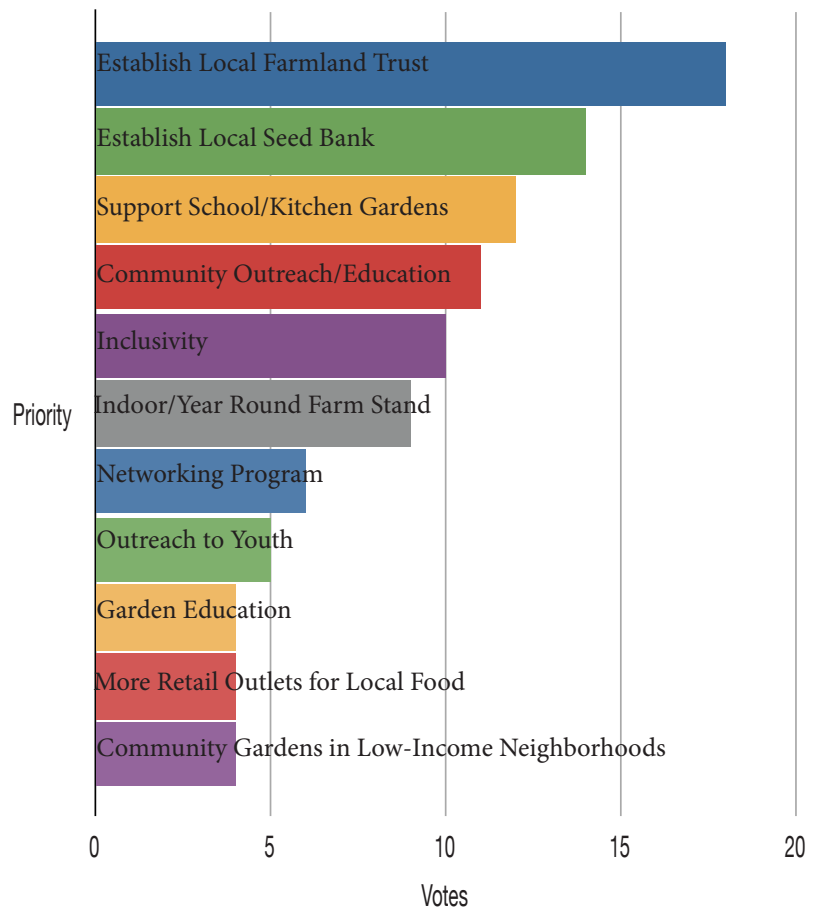
The theme of the discussion was that there was a lot of demand for locally produced products but people were finding it challenging to source them. Seeing a farmers market come to Pacific City

Community Food Efforts

was the top ranked priority and it was hoped that this would encourage more people to produce for local markets. A market is now up and running in Pacific City and is the fourth such farmers market to come to the county.

The North County Community Conversation was held in Nehalem at the North County Recreation District and was attended by 26 community members. In the north end of the county there are more people producing for local markets so lack of supply was not as big of an issue as in South Tillamook County. People were interested in continuing to nurture the farming community by increasing access to land for beginning farmers, and increasing the availability of appropriate seed varieties and other inputs for the coast. Another topic that generated a lot of discussion was the issue of inclusivity. One local vegetable producer noted "we've got to think outside our circle."

North County Community Food Priorities



Profile: Grow the Coast



The first annual Grow the Coast Conference was held early last November (2012) in Nehalem and drew well over 100 participants. The conference was modeled after the Oregon State University's Small Farms Conference and was focused on empowering producers, big and small, to grow, gather and prepare more food here on the North Oregon Coast. Because the North Coast is climatically different enough from the Willamette Valley, there has historically not been much research done on appropriate cropping systems and management techniques. The Grow the Coast Conference was the chance for those who have the most knowledge about the issues involved with growing food on the North Coast to connect with those who have the most interest--in a way, providing education from the ground up.

Keynote speakers Gary Stephenson of the Oregon Small Farms Program and Sharon Thornberry of the Oregon Food Bank began the day by emphasizing the deep connections between health of our communities and the health of our small family farms. Participants then had the opportunity to take part in numerous workshops ranging from wild mushroom foraging to pasture management to integrated pest control on the coast. All workshops were held and facilitated by local and regional experts, however much of the wisdom was in the room. Seasoned farmers, gardeners, extension agents and foragers packed session audiences and contributed to the conversations and development of ideas. The conference will be held again this coming November in Seaside, Oregon.



Community Food Efforts

Community and School Gardens

Community and school gardens are places where people can come together on a shared piece of land in order to grow and learn about growing food. People often join community gardens because they lack space at home and/or enjoy the communal aspect of coming together to grow food. There are many community gardens used in Tillamook County to grow food for the participating families, for the local food bank, or some combination of the two. In Tillamook County there are a total of 15 gardens, 8 gardens are at schools or in educational settings, and 8 gardens provide community garden access (Food Roots East School Garden provides both in one garden). These gardens span the entire county, from Manzanita to Neskowin.

The garden coordinator for the Pacific City Community Garden, Sally Rissel, is working this year to transition the garden from a place where everything in the garden is grown communally to a privately managed, bed-based model. She hopes that this will increase the amount of food being grown in the garden and going into peoples' homes.

School gardens are a vital place for kids to come, explore, learn new skills, and practice applied biology, math, botany and ecosystems, as well as hone their business and project management skills. Both adult volunteers and youth learn best by doing, they are literally enjoy the fruits of their labors. This hands on learning is the goal of most school garden projects.

For the past two years, Food Roots, in partnership with Oregon Department of Agriculture, has hosted two FoodCorps service members. FoodCorps is nationwide team of leaders that connects kids to real food and helps them grow up healthy. FoodCorps places leaders in limited resource communities for a year of service to conduct hands on food and nutrition education, build and tend school gardens and facilitate getting high quality local food into kids diets. It is important for kids to get out into the garden and develop a life long appreciation and

understanding for what it takes to produce food. AmeriCorps service members coordinate Food Roots 'Farm to School Programming, which has a garden based education focus. This year's FoodCorps Service Member, Allyson Gardner, coordinates the two Food Roots' school gardens, a community garden plot and administers comprehensive garden education programs, as well as recruits and manages volunteers throughout these programs. "I do summer and after school program, Root Troop, at East Elementary and Tillamook Junior High School. We focus on learning to grow and cook foods using a garden based model. There are no longer home economics classes in the County and this is a way that I can help fill that gap."

In addition to running the gardens and education programming, Allyson is also building bridges between those interested in similar work. "A lot of what I spend my week doing is making connections between people with the same passion and who want to be doing the same things but aren't yet working together. It is really important to build those connections in a small town and give everyone ownership."

Allyson believes that the most important outcome to the work she does is that "The kids come away from my programs with the sense that gardening and growing is cool! I feel like that's the biggest impact I've had."



Profile: Alder Creek Community Farm



Alder Creek Community Farm has been managed since 2003 by the Lower Nehalem Community Trust. Previously a dairy farm, this 54 acre piece of property is now being used in a number of ways by the Nehalem community. Fifty acres of the property is being restored to native wetland in order to provide ecological services and wildlife habitat. The remaining 4+ acres are being used as a community garden and home for the Trust's Coastal Food Ecology Center which serves as a home base for much of the education work the Trust does.

Because LNCT is a non-profit concerned with growing the local food system, they try to ensure they aren't competing with local producers by selling their produce to raise money for the organization. According to Olivia Mercado, a Board Member of the Trust, "All members of the community garden take responsibility for the whole. People are allowed to take what they need for their families and the rest of the produce is donated to the North County Food Bank." In 2011, the farm donated 2,300 lbs. of much needed fresh produce to the North County Food Bank in Wheeler.

The Trust brings in educational programming as much as possible. This past year they've hosted workshops dealing with issues of growing fruit on the coast, and permaculture. The workshops are always open to the public for a small fee and free to members. Through their education and production programs, the Trust hopes to bring more healthy locally grown food to the coast.

Community Food Efforts

Direct Marketing



Photo Courtesy of Food Roots

Farmers today receive on average 10.8 cents for every dollar that is spent on food by American consumers. In order to increase their share of the food dollar and make farming viable, many are attempting to sell their products directly to the consumer.



2011 USDA Food Dollar

In Tillamook County farmers sell directly from their farm stands, through local farmers' markets and have enrolled some of their customers in annual CSA programs. By choosing to support farmers in this way, residents of Tillamook County are helping to keep food growing in their communities and local farmers in business.



Photo courtesy of Peace Crops

Peace Crops is a diversified vegetable farm focused on selling food to local markets. Jim and Emily Fanjoy run the farm as a husband and wife team. The couple spent two years in Guatemala in the United States Peace Corps before moving to Manzanita and starting their farm near Mohler. Upon arriving in Tillamook County, Emilee interned on another local farm, R-evolution Gardens, and she says that the knowledge she gained through the experience was invaluable. When asked why they decided to start farming Emily explained "I just really love growing food, it's so thrilling!"

Emily and Jim keep bees as part of their farm operation. According to Emily, they help with the pollination of their orchard trees and vegetables. Jim has become a journeyman beekeeper through the Oregon State Master Beekeeper Program and is active in the local beekeepers group in the county. They sell their vegetables and honey through the Tillamook and Manzanita Farmers' Markets. This year they are working on transitioning from their farm on a friends land to a permanent location up Hwy 53. At their new location, Peace Crops hopes to expand to the point where they can grow enough to support "a really engaged CSA that operates on a sliding (fee) scale."

Emily who also works at the Health Department in Tillamook sees a direct connection between what she does as a farmer and her work with the county. She believes that our current food system has a large effect on our health, "We aren't dying... but in a way we are. Our obesity levels and diabetes level are all increasing across all demographics. Everyone's weights are going up... what we're feeding ourselves is obviously not nourishing us well. It's a lot of overeating of empty calories and not as much eating healthy nutritious food... I don't think people realize the extent to which local food is fresher--it is higher in nutritional value than food that comes off any box store shelf."

Peace Crops is committed to growing healthy food for a local consumer base that they hope to increase over time. You can keep track of their progress by following their blog at www.peacecrops.net.

Community Food Efforts

Farmers Markets

Farmers' markets are nearly as old as farming itself. There have been local producer markets here in Tillamook County since people began farming. With the rise of the global food system, the perceived need for such markets diminished as cheap year-round produce and staples became available through large and mid-sized grocery stores. Over the past decade residents of the North Coast have seen a revival of farmers' markets and farmers producing specifically for local markets. Tillamook County now has one of the highest rates of farmers markets to residents in the entire state of Oregon



Photo Courtesy of Tillamook Farmers' Market

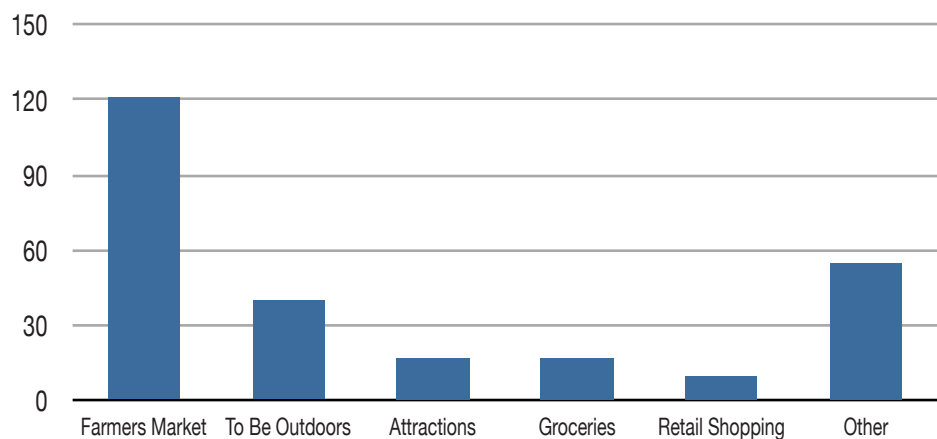
Often, local businesses fear that a farmers' market near them will steal business. However there is evidence that farmers' markets can serve to bring people together and spur economic development around them. A 2012 rapid dot survey conducted at the Tillamook Farmers' Market indicates that the market was the main reason for people coming to downtown Tillamook on their Saturday.

Here in Tillamook County, farmers' markets meet a number of needs in the community including serving as incubators for small business by allowing them to build their clientele, refine their product and focus on their marketing strategy. Laura Swanson, the director of the Manzanita Farmers' Market, points to the success of one of their longtime vendors as an example of this, "Crepe Neptune started out as a farmers' market

vendor and now have a bricks and mortar business. That's kind of what we're meant to do, nurture those types of businesses." The Manzanita Farmers' Market is now entering its eighth year of operation.

At the Tillamook Farmers' Market, Food Roots is focused on incubating food business at an even smaller scale. The Food Roots FarmTable is a project designed to grow farmers and market gardeners by offering them the opportunity to sell at the farmers' market without setting up and paying for a stand of their own. Food Roots operates the table and sells

2012 Rapid Dot Survey from Tillamook Farmers Market (Reason for Coming Downtown)



Community Food Efforts

produce from small producers who bring what they have that week. Through this project, small scale food producers are able to refine their production and marketing techniques in a low risk business environment allowing for a greater chance of success. This, in turn, helps encourage more people to produce food for local markets in our community.

Bringing locally produced food into the markets is a priority for all markets in the county, as there are currently fewer producers in the county than would be needed to fully support all four markets. Tillamook Farmers' Market Manager, Lauren Sorg says "Our customers (come to our market) seeking fresh produce...and favor products grown in our region over produce brought in from outside the area." The market is the county's biggest and plays a large role in attracting tourists to the area. They are always looking for new food producing vendors.

The Neskowin Farmers' Market is now three years old and has been highly successful, especially given their location in a town with a resident population under 200 people. One local farmer states "I sell at the Neskowin Farmers' Market and am excited with how well it went last year." This year they have moved locations but are still in "downtown" Neskowin just off Hwy 101.

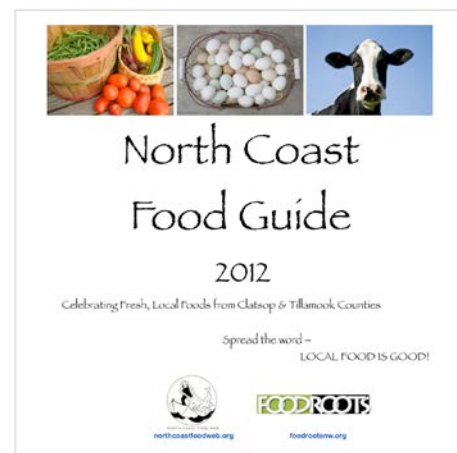
The Pacific City Farmers' Market began it's first season this year. Market Manager Dawn Beyer has worked hard to get a mix of produce and craft vendors in order to make the market a success. The Pacific City Farmers' Market even has one vendor selling fresh fish which has been a challenge for markets here in Tillamook County in the past.

Farmers' Market	Date/Time
Manzanita Farmers' Market	Fridays 5-8pm
Tillamook Farmers' Market	Saturdays 9-2pm
Pacific City Farmers' Market	Sundays 10-2pm
Neskowin Farmers' Market	Saturdays 9-1pm

Community Supported Agriculture

Community Supported Agriculture, more commonly referred to as a CSA is a partnership between producers and consumers of food. The largest costs for farmers come at the beginning of the year when they need to buy all their inputs. It is difficult to gauge how much of each crop to plant because it is hard to know what will sell in the market place. Additionally there is risk involved with producing food crops. Bad weather or pest infestation could cause harvests to be far less than expected. A CSA helps to mitigate all these challenges by allowing customers to purchase a share of the farm at the beginning of the year. They provide the much needed capital at the beginning of the growing season and share in the risk associated with farming. If the farm they are a CSA member of has a bumper harvest, the CSA boxes will be full and varied and if certain crops fail, they will simply not receive them that year.

Tillamook County is home to a number of CSA programs that can be found in the North Coast Food Guide. Food Roots and North Coast Food Web (based in Clatsop County) partner to produce the guide and will have a searchable online version of the guide ready by 2014. The guide is designed to link those interested in purchasing food from local producers to those growing it. The guide is available online through both websites of the North Coast Food Web and Food Roots.



Community Food Efforts

Profile: SNAP Match Project

In 2003 the Tillamook Farmers' Market began accepting SNAP benefits in hopes of attracting a wider spectrum of the population to the market. Lauren Sorg, the Market Manager says "We wanted to make the market a viable place for all people, regardless of income, to get their food."

In 2011 the market took in just over \$200 in SNAP funds. Lauren said she knew they could do better. The Tillamook Farmers' Market stepped up their outreach campaign in 2012 and the market was able to bring in \$1040 in SNAP funds, a more than 500% increase in just one year.

This year along with the Farmers' Market in Manzanita, Tillamook Farmers' Market will be piloting a SNAP match program to increase participation even further.

The program provides a 1 to 1 match for the first \$10 spent by SNAP participants at each market, for the first 10 SNAP customers. By doubling the purchasing power of low income shoppers at the market, more people will be able to access the healthy locally grown food from Tillamook County farmers.



The poster features a red and white striped top border. On the left is the 'FOOD ROOTS' logo. The main text reads 'SNAP MATCH * DOUBLE DOLLARS at local farmers markets'. Below this, it says 'We'll DOUBLE your SNAP / EBT *up to \$10 at Tillamook and Manzanita Farmers Markets!'. There are three images: a blueberry basket, a hand holding colorful vegetables, and a basket of eggs. A 'Oregon Trail' logo is also present. At the bottom, it lists market details for Tillamook and Manzanita, and provides contact information for Food Roots.

FOOD ROOTS

SNAP MATCH * DOUBLE DOLLARS
at local farmers markets

We'll DOUBLE your SNAP / EBT *up to \$10 at **Tillamook and Manzanita Farmers Markets!**

Oregon Trail

*To the first 10 SNAP shoppers each market day, for SNAP eligible food, while funds last.

TILLAMOOK FARMERS' MARKET	MANZANITA FARMER'S MARKET
Saturdays 9:00 am - 2:00 pm	Fridays 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm
June 15th - September 28th	June 14th - September 20th
2nd & Laurel Streets Downtown Tillamook 503.812.9326	Laneda & 5th Streets in Manzanita 503.939.5416

Thanks to Meyer Memorial Trust, Herbert Templeton Foundation, and local community churches

TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS PROGRAM, CONTACT FOOD ROOTS AT 503.815.2800 | WWW.FOODROOTSNW.ORG

Restaurants

Restaurants are innovators in the food culture and economy. They are often the first to try something new and bring it to the public. Procurement of local food is an example of this. Fresh local produce often tastes better because of its ability to be harvested ripe. In a competitive environment, the restaurant with the tastiest food has an advantage.

There are many restaurants in Tillamook County who have expressed interest in sourcing food from local producers and many such as the Rising Sun in Wheeler, the Big Wave Cafe in Manzanita, Pacific Restaurant in Tillamook, Grateful Bread in Pacific City and more who do purchase some locally produced and /or caught food.

The biggest challenge for most restaurants when it

comes to sourcing local food are price and consistency of supply. Restaurants need to know that they can count on their suppliers to meet their orders and to do so in a way that maintains profit margins for both parties. The challenge comes in matching the scale of the restaurants demand with that of a local supplier or group of suppliers.

The Schooner Restaurant in Netarts is able to source from local farms such as DeNoble's Farm Fresh Produce and Don's Waterfall Farm by changing their menu to adapt to the season and by being willing to take the time to go to the farms themselves and pick up their order for the day. They also source nearly half of their eggs from local egg producer Larry Zwiefel, 90% of their Cheese from the Tillamook County Creamery Association.



Photo Courtesy of Katya Renya

The Pelican Pub and Brewery is an institution in Tillamook County. Voted the number one destination Brewery this past year means that for many visitors to the area, it is the Pelican that brings them here. Manager Ken Henson is the man in charge of securing food for the Pelican.

“ I have a deep love and appreciation for food and what it means to people and what it means to communities. A deep respect for everything from the soil from which it grows, to how it can bring people together in commune at a table--that’s a really sacred thing and the reason I got into the industry. And over the last 15 years I’ve seen it deteriorate. The end consumer now is so disengaged from the food supply chain that it makes it difficult in this industry to stay true to this passion.”

The Pelican Pub purchases over \$1 million of food every year, and the vast majority comes from outside the county. The Kiwanda businesses which include the Pub and Brewery, Stimulus Espresso Cafe in Pacific City, and Five Rivers Coffee Roasters in Tillamook are committed to sourcing as much as possible from local producers, assuming they can get a competitive price and reliable scale appropriate supply. This is a tall order for producers who, to a large, degree aren’t scaled to supply a business the size of the Pelican at a price that work for both sides.

According to Ken, “80% of our orders consist of fish and chips and hamburgers... A little piece of me dies every time I write a check to some big nameless distributor, but a (big) frustration of mine is that we can’t make it pencil out.” A local beef producers wanted to supply the restaurant with a high quality product for around \$15 a pound. “I can get the same cut of beef from St. Helen’s Beef for \$5 a pound.” The minute the restaurant starts charging 200% more for a burger, Ken fears they’ll stop selling many burgers.

Ken thinks “We’ve got to change the way people think about what they eat. It’s education in the schools, being involved in school gardens...fostering that real connection with the earth.” The Pelican is opening a new production brewery in Tillamook August 2013 and they have expressed interest in sourcing local produce for their tasting room menu. The tasting room in Tillamook will be a much smaller restaurant operation than the pub in Pacific City and thus it should be easier to find local suppliers capable of meeting the demands of the restaurant.

Community Food Efforts

Opportunities for Community Food

1. Improve North Coast Food Guide

An online, searchable North Coast Food Guide would go a long way toward empowering both producers and consumers of local food to connect and do business.

2. Facilitate Institutional Purchasing of Local Food

By working to link schools, hospitals and restaurants with local farmers and fishermen, new markets can be created and local food production capacity grown. The establishment of a food hub may be necessary in order to allow smaller food production operations to work together to meet larger orders.

3. Build Capacity of Local Growers to Supply Local Markets

Growing food on the North Oregon Coast is different than growing food in the Willamette Valley. The establishment of a comprehensive tool box (training, work experience, technical assistance, access to land and tools) of services for farmers looking to begin or improve their operations in the area would be of immense value.

4. Increase Food Literacy

The terms “Food System” and “Food Security” are still not well understood by many. The complex set of issues involved with getting food from a farm to a plate needs to be better understood by the general population if informed food policy is in our future. People who are knowledgeable about the issues or interested in becoming so can become food ambassadors in their local communities by providing education and access to information to those interested. Food Roots has begun the establishment of a formal network of these “food ambassadors” could further empower these individuals.

5. Support the establishment of a County Wide Gardens Network

Gardeners often lack access to amendments, seeds, tools and knowledge required to be successful growing food in Tillamook County. By sharing resources and knowledge, gardeners can empower themselves to grow more food for themselves and their neighbors. An initial meeting in January 2013 began this effort, resulting in seed exchanges and equipment sharing.

6. Address Infrastructure Deficits for Producers and other Entrepreneurs

It would be useful to survey the food system infrastructure needs, determine if they are good community and economic investments, and move to address those needs.

Community Food Efforts

Opportunities for Community Food

7. Conduct Economic Analysis of Impact of Local Food

Purchasing local food as opposed to food produced outside the county does have a larger positive impact on the local economy, not only by providing more money to local producers but also through the multiplier effect of spending money at a local business. The extent to which this is the case is the subject of debate and a study detailing the economic effects of local food purchasing in Tillamook County would provide a solid foundation for policy makers.

8. Create a Structured Food System Coalition or Council

From 2000-2006 Tillamook County Food Security Council operated to provide a framework for collaboration between public and private interests, to address food system needs and take action on those needs. A lot got done and this model is being successfully used in other parts of the country and state. It's time to look at jump starting this effort again.

9. Engage the Next Generation in all aspects of our Food System Development

The work in front of us will take time, and as our farmers, volunteers and leaders age, it is critical that we inform, invest and engage in the future, if we are truly to make lasting change in our food system.



Methodology

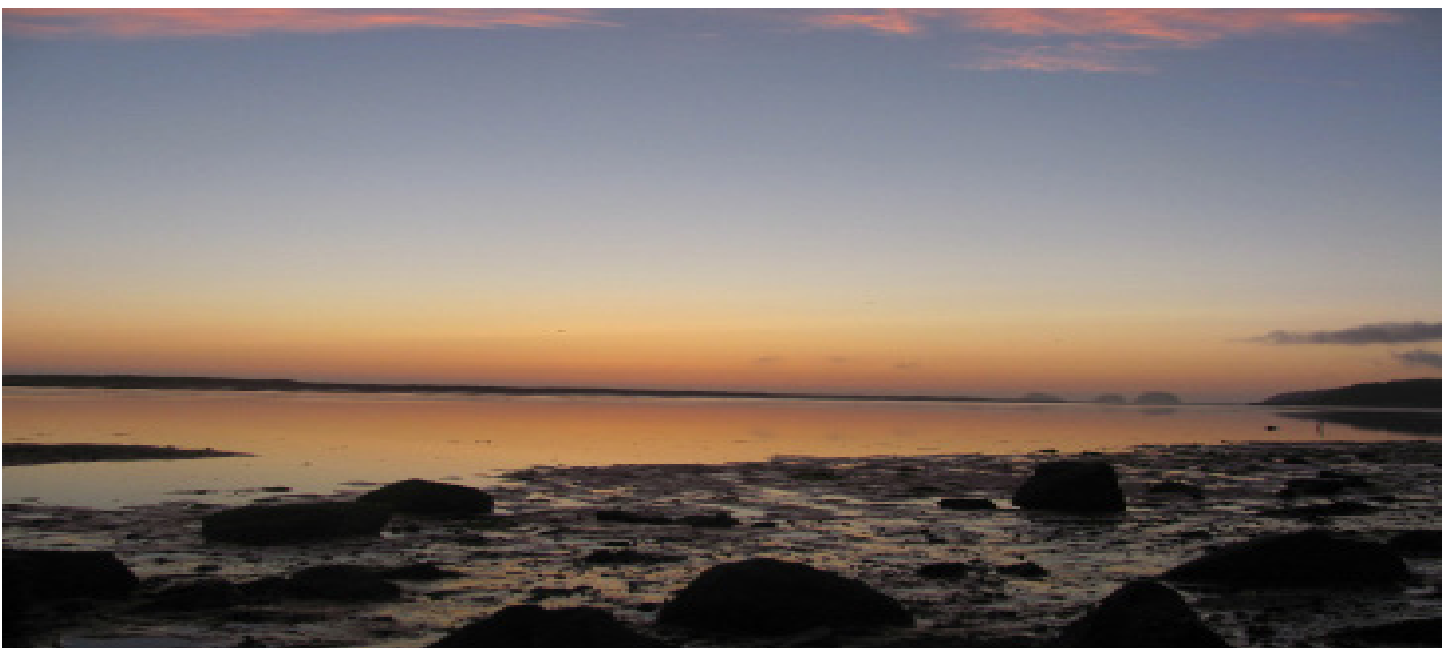
The research for the Tillamook County Community Food Assessment used a mix of both qualitative and quantitative sources. The quantitative sources for the assessment came through two surveys and the collections of data from primary sources such as the U.S. Agricultural Census. However, much of the assessment is based on the qualitative stories of those involved in the food system. Semistructured gatherings such as the North and South County Community Food Conversations, interviews with farmers, food bank operators and community members as well as casual conversations with many about their involvement with, and thoughts about, their local food system informed much of this assessment

Ten rural grocery stores were interviewed for this assessment. However due to owners not being present or unwilling to complete the formal survey, only five surveys were completed. All interviews were conducted by the author which allowed discussion on topics of interest not present in the formal survey. The survey itself was developed by Kansas State University's Center for Engagement and Community Development. The survey was designed to provide quantifiable data regarding the perspective of rural grocery store owners.

On March 27th, 2013 the Tillamook County Consumer Survey was administered outside of Safeway in Tillamook. A total of 26 people filled out the survey. The survey was designed to determine the level of interest in local food amongst the general population.

Quantitative data was collected from the 2007 U.S.D.A. Census of Agriculture, the U.S. Census Bureau, Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon, Indicators Northwest, Oregon Department of Education, and Children First for Oregon.

This Community Food Assessment is a step toward building a healthier, more sustainable community food system in Tillamook County. It is far from comprehensive or authoritative. However it is the hope of the author that this assessment will help shape future discussion, debate and policy around community food systems in Tillamook County. Those community members who read this assessment ought to recognize that the report is limited in breadth and scope and there is much that can be contributed by others in the future.



Appendix A



Rural Grocery Store Owner Survey Rural Community Food Systems Assessment Project

Name of store: _____
Address: _____
Phone number: _____
Contact person for store: _____
Email address: _____

Would you like to be added to a listserv for rural grocery store owners and advocates?

yes no

1. What major products and services does your store offer? *Check all that apply.*

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ATM Bank | <input type="checkbox"/> Hunting/fishing/camping supplies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Books/cards/gifts | <input type="checkbox"/> Institutional supply (school, hospital) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Café/restaurant | <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Catering | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Delicatessen | <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-packaged snacks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fuel | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-serve snacks/drinks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Groceries | <input type="checkbox"/> Video rental |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ | |

2. Who is/are your primary grocery supplier(s)?

3. What products do your secondary suppliers supply?

4. Do minimum (purchasing/ordering) buying requirements create a problem for your grocery store?

yes no

If yes, how?

5. If minimum buying requirements are a problem, what solutions might you suggest?

6. As an independent grocer, do you feel you are getting fair pricing from your suppliers compared to chain stores?

yes no Comments:

Appendix A

Rural Grocery Store Owner Survey – Oregon Food Bank Rural Community Food Systems Assessment Project

7. Have you had problems getting products delivered because of your location?
 yes no

Comments:

8. Do you sell locally-produced food in your store?
 yes no

If yes, what products?

9. Do you accept Food Stamps/SNAP? * yes no
Do you accept WIC? ** yes no

* *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*

** *Women, Infants and Children Program*

10. Has your business been negatively affected by the presence of emergency or supplemental food distribution in your community (i.e. people get bread from food pantry or gleaners so don't buy it from you)?
 yes no

If yes, explain:

11. Which of the following are major challenges for your store? *Check all that apply.*

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of satisfactory labor | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of community support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competition with large chain grocery stores | <input type="checkbox"/> Low sales volume |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Debt and/or high payments | <input type="checkbox"/> Narrow profit margins |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government regulations | <input type="checkbox"/> Required minimum buying requirements from vendors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High inventory costs/low turnover | <input type="checkbox"/> Shoplifting/bad checks/internal theft/unpaid accounts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shortage of working capital | <input type="checkbox"/> Taxes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High operations costs (utilities, building lease, repairs/maintenance, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ |

Which of the above do you feel is the most significant for you and your store?

Appendix A

Rural Grocery Store Owner Survey – Oregon Food Bank Rural Community Food Systems Assessment Project

12. Do you collaborate with other small independently owned stores?
 yes no

If yes, for which purposes? *Check all that apply.*

- Cooperative advertising/marketing
 Grocery distribution purposes
 Sharing concerns and/or ideas
 To achieve minimum buying requirements
 Other _____

If no, would you be interested in doing this?
 yes no

Why or why not?

13. Do you feel that a statewide alliance of small, independently owned grocery store owners may have value?
 yes no

If yes, how could it help?

14. What marketing strategies have you used in your grocery stores that have been effective in drawing in customers?

Advertising

- Newspapers _____
Radio _____
TV _____
Flyers/inserts _____
Facebook _____
Internet/WWW _____

Promotions _____

Word of mouth _____

OTHER: Please identify: _____

Appendix A

Rural Grocery Store Owner Survey – Oregon Food Bank Rural Community Food Systems Assessment Project

When running a grocery store, how important is it to you to offer each of the following? Rate the importance of each by circling the number that best fits your response.

	<u>Not Very</u> <u>Important</u>				<u>Very</u> <u>Important</u>
1. Quality of food	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					
2. Availability of food (variety, brand choices)	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					
3. Prices of items offered	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					
4. Customer service	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					
5. Business hours	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					
6. Buying locally	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					

Which of the above do you feel is the most significant for you and your store?

How do you assess the buying needs of your customer?

Is your stocking of products responsive to customer requests?

What other concerns or comments do you have?

Appendix A

Rural Grocery Store Owner Survey – Oregon Food Bank Rural Community Food Systems Assessment Project

How does your store do at providing the following to customers? Rate your store by circling the number that best fits your response.

	Not Very <u>Well</u>				<u>Very Well</u>
1. Quality of food	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					
2. Availability of food (variety, brand choices)	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					
3. Prices of items offered	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					
4. Customer service	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					
5. Business hours	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					
6. Buying locally	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					
7. Accepting Food Stamps/SNAP and WIC.	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					

Which of the above do you feel is the most significant for you and your store?

Appendix A

Rural Grocery Store Owner Survey – Oregon Food Bank Rural Community Food Systems Assessment Project

Tell us about your store:

How long have you been in the grocery business as an owner? _____

How long has there been a grocery store at your current location? _____

Do you have more than one location? _____ How many? _____

What are your hours of operation?

Mon _____ to _____

Tues _____ to _____

Wed _____ to _____

Thur _____ to _____

Fri _____ to _____

Sat _____ to _____

Sun _____ to _____

Are you open on the major holidays (Christmas, New Years, Thanksgiving, etc.)? _____

Are there other grocery outlets in your community?

_____ a 'quick shop'

_____ another full service grocery

How far is it to the nearest discount grocery (Wal-Mart, etc)? _____

How many employees do you have, not counting yourself?

_____ full-time (40 hrs/week minimum)

_____ part-time (less than 40hrs/week)

What are your average weekly gross sales?

_____ Less than \$5,000

_____ Between \$5,000 and \$10,000

_____ Between \$10,000 and \$20,000

_____ Greater than \$20,000

This survey was developed by Kansas State University Center for Civic Engagement and is being used with their permission. We thank them for their support of this project. *For more information, please contact Sharon Thornberry, Community Food Systems Manager, Oregon Food Bank, sthornberry@oregofoodbank.org or Megan Newell-Ching, Community Resource Developer, Oregon Food Bank, 1-800-777-7427 x2270 or mnewellching@oregonfoodbank.org*

Appendix B

Tillamook County Consumer Survey

Community that you live in: _____

Sex: Male Female

How old are you? Under 25 Between 25-54 Over 55

Is food available in your community? Yes No Comments:

Where do you primarily get your food from?

Grocery Store Farmers' Market Convenience Store/Gas Station Food
Pantry Natural/Specialty Store Grow your own Outside Linn County

Other: _____

How far do you go to get your main source of food? 0-5 miles 6-10 miles 11-25
miles 26+ miles

What factors, if any, affect your ability to get the food you need? (Check all that apply)

High fuel/heating costs Cost of food Transportation Lack of Time High rent
 Availability of quality/variety of food Childcare costs Medical costs
 Other: _____

Are you eligible for government food assistance? Yes No I don't know

If you are eligible, which government food assistance program do you (or your children)
use? SNAP (Food Stamps) WIC Meals on Wheels Free or reduced school
lunch/ breakfast Other: _____ None

Do you buy any food that is produced within Linn County? (Check all that apply)
Fruit Vegetables Milk Poultry Meat Eggs No, I don't

If not, what is the main reason you don't purchase local food?

Not available Too expensive Don't know where to get it Not food I like

Would you like to learn more about how to cook or how to shop on a budget?

Yes Maybe No

Do you participate in a community garden in your area? Yes No, if yes, where?

Your survey will remain confidential.

Thank you for your time, your opinion is greatly appreciated.