Food Congress: Community Food Assessment
Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

- Guarantee food security.
- Explore economic development opportunity within the food industry.
- Educate consumers on the nutritional and environmental implications of their food choices.
- Incorporate sustainable development strategies for Greater Cincinnati.
- Increase urban agriculture to enhance the urban environment and to provide additional sources of food and/or employment.
- Reduce the reliance on the emergency food system.
- Strengthen relationships between urban and rural areas.
The **food system** is the complete process that allows food to be provided to us. This includes the growing, harvesting, raising, processing, marketing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food waste.

**Food System Activities**

- Production
- Processing
- Distribution
- Consumption
- Recycling of food system waste
Food Congress:
Community Food Assessment

• The *Community Food Assessment* …
  – is a tool that enable community members to examine food systems at the local, regional and national level, and determine the level of food security.
  – highlights trends, problems and opportunities within the food system.
  – differs from other assessments in that it not only identify issues, but also the cause. It also seeks to find local solutions.
Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

Why does Greater Cincinnati need a food assessment?

- To **learn more** about the local food system and **document findings**.
- Promote: change, food security and awareness.
- **Create forum** where food related issues can be addressed and action taken.
- **Empower community** (collaborative effort).
- No formal Community Food Assessment has been done (that we know of).
Cincinnati is not unique in its need for a food assessment. Other communities have elected to assess their food system for similar reasons, which is evident in the following case studies.

- Community Food Assessment Case Studies
  1. Madison, Wisconsin
  2. San Francisco, California
  3. Somerville, Massachusetts
  4. Columbus, Ohio
  5. Louisville, Kentucky
**Food Congress:**

**Community Food Assessment**

- **Reasons for undertaking food assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madison, WI</td>
<td><em>Gain a better understanding</em> of food system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Devise <em>strategies to improve</em> food security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Establish partnership</em> between community members and educational institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco, CA</td>
<td><em>Improve accessibility</em> to nutritious foods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Provide <em>job training opportunity</em> for youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerville, MA</td>
<td><em>Determine</em> food and nutrition <em>resources</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus, OH</td>
<td><em>Promote sustainability</em> while moving toward a more food secure community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisville, KY</td>
<td><em>Address food insecurity</em> caused by lack of access to healthy nutritious foods.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

- **Focus of study area**
  - Most studies are focused on low-income neighborhoods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madison, WI</td>
<td><em>1997 graduate workshop</em> at the University of Wisconsin focused on the local food system. It was believed that food system could act as a barometer of the well-being of the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco, CA</td>
<td>In 2001, <em>Dept. of Public Health</em> and <em>League of Urban Gardeners</em> joined forces to identify and promote strategies to improve access to nutritious food* in Bayview Hunters Point, a rapidly growing ethnically diverse neighborhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerville, MA</td>
<td>Massachusetts Health Research Institute and Tufts University’s nutrition dept. took an <em>introspective look at food and nutrition resources</em> for low-income residents, in 1999.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus, OH</td>
<td>To <em>produce a more food secure</em> and <em>sustainable food system</em>, while empowering and educating the Greater Columbus area residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisville, KY</td>
<td>Kentucky’s Community Farm Alliance <em>focused on food accessible</em> issues in West Louisville and East Downtown.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Food Congress:
Community Food Assessment

- Case study research methodologies
  - Of the case studies cited, the most common form in which information was gathered is through site visits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Site Visits</th>
<th>Survey/Questionnaire</th>
<th>Focus Group</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madison, WI</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco, CA</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Somerville, MA</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisville, KY</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Data collected depended on focal point of study.
# Food Congress:
## Community Food Assessment

- **Outcomes of case studies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Madison, WI    | • Report *publication.*  
                | • *Development of County Food*  
                | • *Greater visibility* of food system.                                   |
| San Francisco, CA | • *Generated report.*  
                 | • *New transportation route* to connect residents to other food sources  |
| Somerville, MA | • *Development of food & nutrition guide.*  
                | • Generated *report.*  
                | • *Cooking classes* for low-income persons.  
                | • Creation of *nutrition based task force* to address health related issues. |
| Columbus, OH   | • *Community gardens* and *cooking classes.*  
                | • *Establishment of* local *Foodshed Council*  
                | • *Publication* of report.                                           |
| Louisville, KY | • *Publication* of report.                                               |
Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

Critical Path Diagram

Development of Goals & Scope of Work

Review Assessment Material

Create Spreadsheet/Database

Define Categories

Gather Information

Internet (websites)

Site Visits

Telephone Calls

Government/Non-Profit Agencies

Data Input

Data Analysis
Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

• Method for structuring database
  – Ease of use.
  – Cluster data into categories.
  – Comprehensive.

• Food Assessment Models
  – Interest Groups.
  – Organization Types.
  – Comprehensive.

• Models show relationship of different sectors of the food system.
Food Congress:
Community Food Assessment

Interest Groups

- ORGANIC/ SLOW FOOD
- ECO & SPRAWL ISSUES
- PRODUCTION
- EDUCATION
- FOOD RETAIL/ DISTRIBUTION
- HEALTH
- FOOD SECURITY
- COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Food Congress:
Community Food Assessment

Organization Types

GOVERNMENT/ INSTITUTIONS
- Schools/Universities
- Land-Grant Extensions

NON-GOVERNMENT
- Non-profit/Advocacy
- Media
- Individuals
- Corporations

CONVENTIONAL FOOD
- Farmers/Producers
- Restaurants
- Farmers’ Market

Production
- Distribution
- Consumption
Comprehensive Model
(What’s Cooking in Your Food System?)
no hierarchy in categorization

ANTI-HUNGER RESOURCES/ SERVICES
(Subcategories)

COMMUNITY-BASED/LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS
(Subcategories)

ENVIRONMENTAL (FOOD SYSTEM RELATED ISSUES)

COMMUNITY FOOD HEALTH & NUTRITION RESOURCES

PUBLIC HEALTH & NUTRITION

INFRASTRUCTURE/ TRANSPORTATION

POLICY

MEDIA

CONVENTIONAL FOOD SYSTEM
(Subcategories)
Food Congress:
Community Food Assessment

• Over 700 records in Database

• Data gathered through various means
  – Internet.
  – Site visits.
  – Government & Non-profit Agencies.
  – Telephone Calls.

• Difficulty in collecting information
  – Time constraints.
  – Not available for distribution.
  – Not published (i.e. related research projects).
  – Category or coverage area too broad.
Food Congress:
Community Food Assessment

- Anti-Hunger Resources/Services
  - Total of 551 records.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategories</th>
<th># Records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Food</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Schools</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child and Adult Care</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Food</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Pantry (United Way)</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Outreach</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The **objective of these institutions and agencies is to provide nutritious food** to the indigent, vulnerable, young, elderly and disabled populace.
Food Congress:
Community Food Assessment

- Anti-Hunger Resources/Services (Cont’d)
  - Key Organization(s)
    - Freestore/Foodbank.
    - Government Programs
      (WIC, School Lunch, Food Stamps).
  - Research Methods
    - Internet Searches.
    - Site Visits.
    - Ohio Dept. of Education.
    - United Way of Cincinnati.
    - Telephone Calls.
  - Research Results
    - *Sufficient coverage* for *Ohio* counties.
    - *Limited data gathered* on programs in *Northern Kentucky* and *southeast Indiana.*
Food Congress:
Community Food Assessment

- Public Health and Nutrition
  - Total of 21 records.
  - **Organizations and agencies** under this section are typically non-profit in nature with an emphasis on community health and intervention.
  - Key Organization(s)
    - Nutrition Council of Greater Cincinnati.
    - Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati.
    - Greater Cincinnati Health Council.
  - Research Methods
    - Internet Searches.
    - Site Visits.
  - Research Results
    - Difficult to isolate health & nutrition programs on the local level.
    - Comprehensive research needed for coverage area.
Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

- Conventional Food System
  - Total of 20 records.
  - Entries cover *a broad range of food system characteristics*. Listing includes but is not limited to, *grocery stores*, wholesale stores, *conventional food stores*, *restaurants* and other food service businesses.
  - Key Business(es)
    - Jungle Jim’s.
    - Wild Oats.
  - Research Methods
    - Internet Searches.
    - Ohio counties: Health Dept. (Food Service Operators & Retail Food Establishments).
  - Research Results
    - Because of breadth of category, *limited research* was gathered.
    - *Intense research needed* in the form of questionnaires/surveys, site visits and interviews.
Food Congress:
Community Food Assessment

• Community-Based and/or Local Food Systems
  – Total of 63 records.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategories</th>
<th># Records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Farms</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock Farms</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

– *Data* under this section reflects local producers and markets of local goods (i.e. farms, farmers’ markets, etc.)

– Key Organization(s)
  • Findley Market.

– Research Methods
  • Ohio University Extension Offices.
  • Ohio Dept. of Agriculture.
  • Internet Searches.

– Research Results
  • *Difficult* to obtain farm (livestock) information.
Food Congress:
Community Food Assessment

- Community Organizations/Institutions
  - Total of 63 records.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategories</th>
<th># Records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking Schools/Classes (comm.)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Reflect community-based initiatives for the betterment of the environment and livelihood of residents.
- Key Organization(s)
  - University Extensions.
- Research Method
  - Internet Searches.
  - Site Visits.
- Research Results
  - Limited results due to time constraints.
Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

• Infrastructure/Transportation
  – Total of 1 record.
  – Section reflect *businesses and/or agencies* whose main *concern is with* public *transportation*, vehicle and other mobile transportation *access*.
  – Research Results
    • *Comprehensive research needed* on section.

• Community Development/Economic
  – Total of 2 records.
  – *Organizations* that *provided job training* and offer *assistance to individuals or businesses* participating in the *local food system*.
  – Research Results
    • Comprehensive *research needed*. 
Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

- Environmental (Food System Related Issues)
  - Total of 6 records.
  - Organizations and/or agency concerned with environmental issues.
  - Research results
    - Limited information gathered.

- Policy
  - No records.
  - Section reflects legislation that effect local food system.
  - Research results
    - Additional research required.

- Media
  - Total of 2 records.
  - Entities that publish food related issues and post ads.
  - Research results
    - Additional research required.
Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

- Suggestions for future research
  - *Narrow research* problem *area* (i.e. Ohio Counties) could …
    - *Yield* more *accurate results*.
    - *Enable researcher* to *produce* results *faster*.
  - *Devise questions* that need to be answered to *glean pertinent information from sectors*
    - *Focus needs to be determined* for this to be effective.
  - Gather *demographic information* for research area
    - Type of information needed *depends on research* focus.
Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

- Potential opportunities for Food Congress to …
  - *Focus its research.*
  - *Gain momentum.*
  - *Produce publishable* results.
  - Create and *strengthen ties* to the community.

- More *in-depth screening and research* is *required* to determine level of each problem and its value to the Congress.

- Study area opportunities
  - Nutrition/school-based study.
  - Sustainable food system study.
  - Connective between government and non-profit agencies.
Food Congress:
Community Food Assessment

- Nutrition/school-based study
  - Finding from Research
    - *Little to no focused education* about *healthy food choices in schools*
  - Ohio Wellness Program
    - Section 204 of Public Law 108-265—June 2004 (Federal Legislation).
    - Required all schools to establish Wellness Committee beginning of school year 2006.
    - Some schools in the Cincinnati area have failed to meet standard.
Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

– Study could look at
  • **Current food choices** in the local schools and *how they have changed* over the years
  • **Impact of changing food choices**, such as rising incident of obesity and diet related illnesses in youth in the Greater Cincinnati area
  • **School response to nutrition issue**
  • Look for **local solutions**
    – Educational seminars
    – Setting limits on vending machines and/or types of food choices within schools
    – Schools partnership with local health and nutrition based institutions and organizations
Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

• Sustainable food system
  – This idea stems from our *mission statement* goal of *incorporating sustainable strategies*
    • Food Congress could look at the level of food sustainability by determining number of farms within Greater Cincinnati as well as local purchasers of those goods.
    • Study could also *address locally* the national epidemic of declining farm.
    • This would allow us to *identify specific problems to raise awareness* and *promote* a more *sustainable food system*.
      – Regeneration of *Cincinnati’s Chef Collaborative*. 
Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

• Connective between government and non-profit agencies
  – Finding for Research
    • It would seem that some government agencies do not have adequate knowledge of the non-profit organizations within their county
      – Typically referred to United Way for non-profit information.
    – Study could look at
      • How government and non-profit agencies could work coherently together to meet the needs of clients while promoting self-reliance and a more food secure community.
        – We could identify the types of person being served by these agencies (young, old, disabled, etc.).
        – How long recipients have received assistance?
        – Whether adult recipients have marketable skills?
        – Methods for recipients to be independent of agencies.
      – Since United Way is undertaking similar study maybe the Food Congress could partnership with them.
Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

• Database has sufficient information necessary to accommodate any direction that the food assessment could taken.

• Where do we go from here?