

# Food Congress: Community Food Assessment



Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion

# Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

Introduction

Background

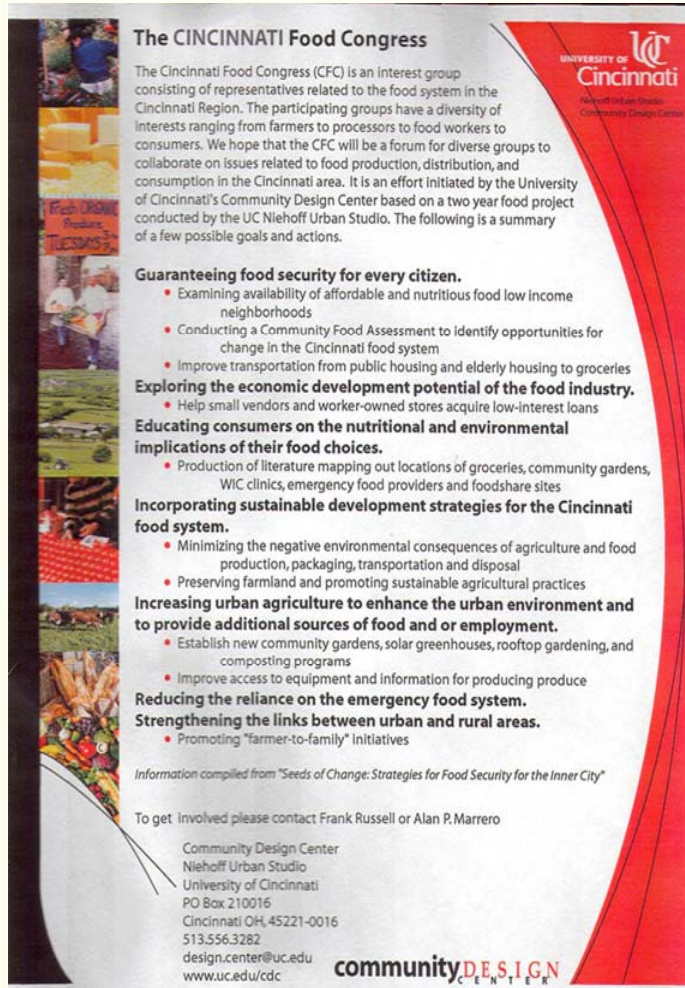
Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion



**The CINCINNATI Food Congress**

The Cincinnati Food Congress (CFC) is an interest group consisting of representatives related to the food system in the Cincinnati Region. The participating groups have a diversity of interests ranging from farmers to processors to food workers to consumers. We hope that the CFC will be a forum for diverse groups to collaborate on issues related to food production, distribution, and consumption in the Cincinnati area. It is an effort initiated by the University of Cincinnati's Community Design Center based on a two year food project conducted by the UC Niehoff Urban Studio. The following is a summary of a few possible goals and actions.

**Guaranteeing food security for every citizen.**

- Examining availability of affordable and nutritious food low income neighborhoods
- Conducting a Community Food Assessment to identify opportunities for change in the Cincinnati food system
- Improve transportation from public housing and elderly housing to groceries

**Exploring the economic development potential of the food industry.**

- Help small vendors and worker-owned stores acquire low-interest loans

**Educating consumers on the nutritional and environmental implications of their food choices.**

- Production of literature mapping out locations of groceries, community gardens, WIC clinics, emergency food providers and foodshare sites

**Incorporating sustainable development strategies for the Cincinnati food system.**

- Minimizing the negative environmental consequences of agriculture and food production, packaging, transportation and disposal
- Preserving farmland and promoting sustainable agricultural practices

**Increasing urban agriculture to enhance the urban environment and to provide additional sources of food and or employment.**

- Establish new community gardens, solar greenhouses, rooftop gardening, and composting programs
- Improve access to equipment and information for producing produce

**Reducing the reliance on the emergency food system.**

**Strengthening the links between urban and rural areas.**

- Promoting "farmer-to-family" initiatives

*Information compiled from "Seeds of Change: Strategies for Food Security for the Inner City"*

To get involved please contact Frank Russell or Alan P. Marrero

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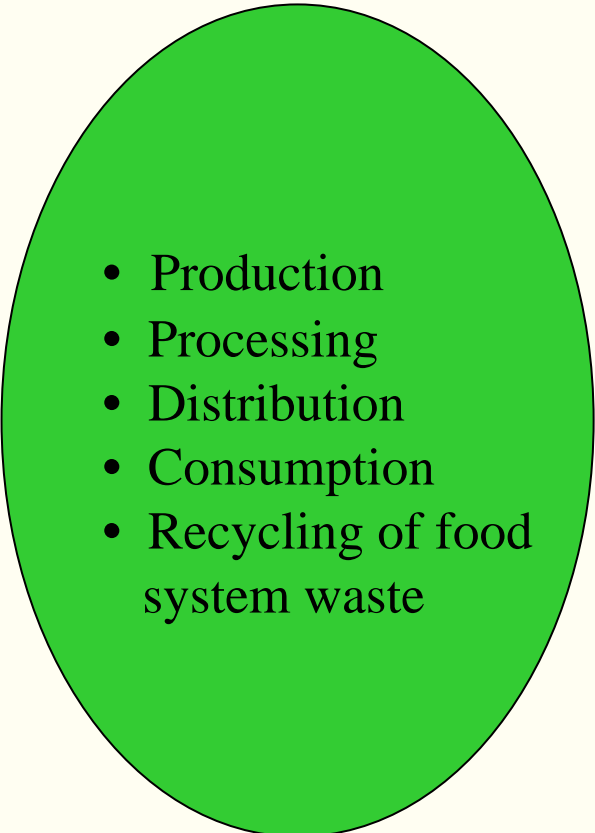
**community D E S I G N**

- 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.

# Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

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

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion



# 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.

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

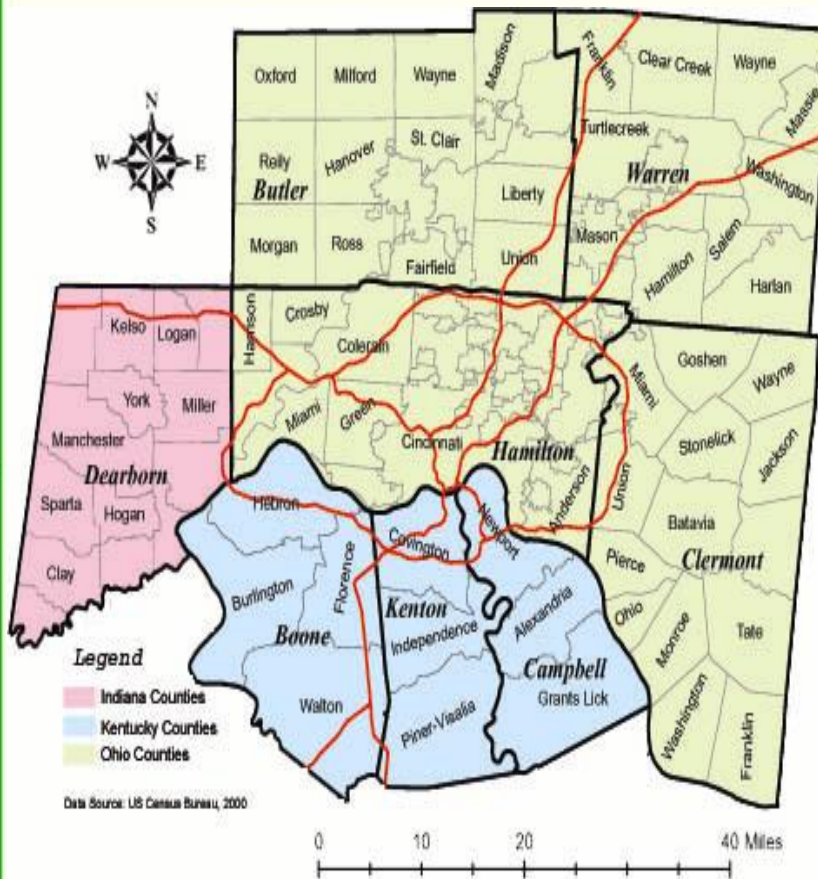
Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion

# 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).

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion

# Food Congress:

## Community Food Assessment

- *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

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion

# Food Congress:

## Community Food Assessment

- Reasons for undertaking food assessment

Madison, WI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Gain a better understanding</i></b> of food system.</li> <li>• Devise <b><i>strategies to improve</i></b> food security.</li> <li>• <b><i>Establish partnership</i></b> between community members and educational institution.</li> </ul>
San Francisco, CA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Improve accessibility</i></b> to nutritious foods.</li> <li>• Provide <b><i>job training opportunity</i></b> for youth</li> </ul>
Somerville, MA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Determine</i></b> food and nutrition <b><i>resources</i></b>.</li> </ul>
Columbus, OH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Promote sustainability</i></b> while moving toward a more food secure community.</li> </ul>
Louisville, KY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Address food insecurity</i></b> caused by lack of access to healthy nutritious foods.</li> </ul>

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion

# Food Congress:

## Community Food Assessment

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

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

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion



# 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.

	Site Visits	Survey/ Questionnaire	Focus Group	Unknown
Madison, WI	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	
San Francisco, CA	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		
Somerville, MA	<b>X</b>			
Columbus, OH				<b>X</b>
Louisville, KY	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		

- Data collected depended on focal point of study.

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion

# Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

- Outcomes of case studies

Madison, WI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report <i>publication</i>.</li> <li>• <i>Development of County Food</i></li> <li>• <i>Group Greater visibility</i> of food system.</li> </ul>
San Francisco, CA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Generated report</i>.</li> <li>• <i>New transportation route</i> to connect residents to other food sources</li> </ul>
Somerville, MA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Development of food &amp; nutrition guide</i>.</li> <li>• Generated <i>report</i>.</li> <li>• <i>Cooking classes</i> for low-income persons.</li> <li>• Creation of <i>nutrition based task force</i> to address health related issues.</li> </ul>
Columbus, OH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Community gardens</i> and <i>cooking classes</i>.</li> <li>• <i>Establishment of local Foodshed Council</i></li> <li>• <i>Publication</i> of report.</li> </ul>
Louisville, KY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Publication</i> of report.</li> </ul>

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

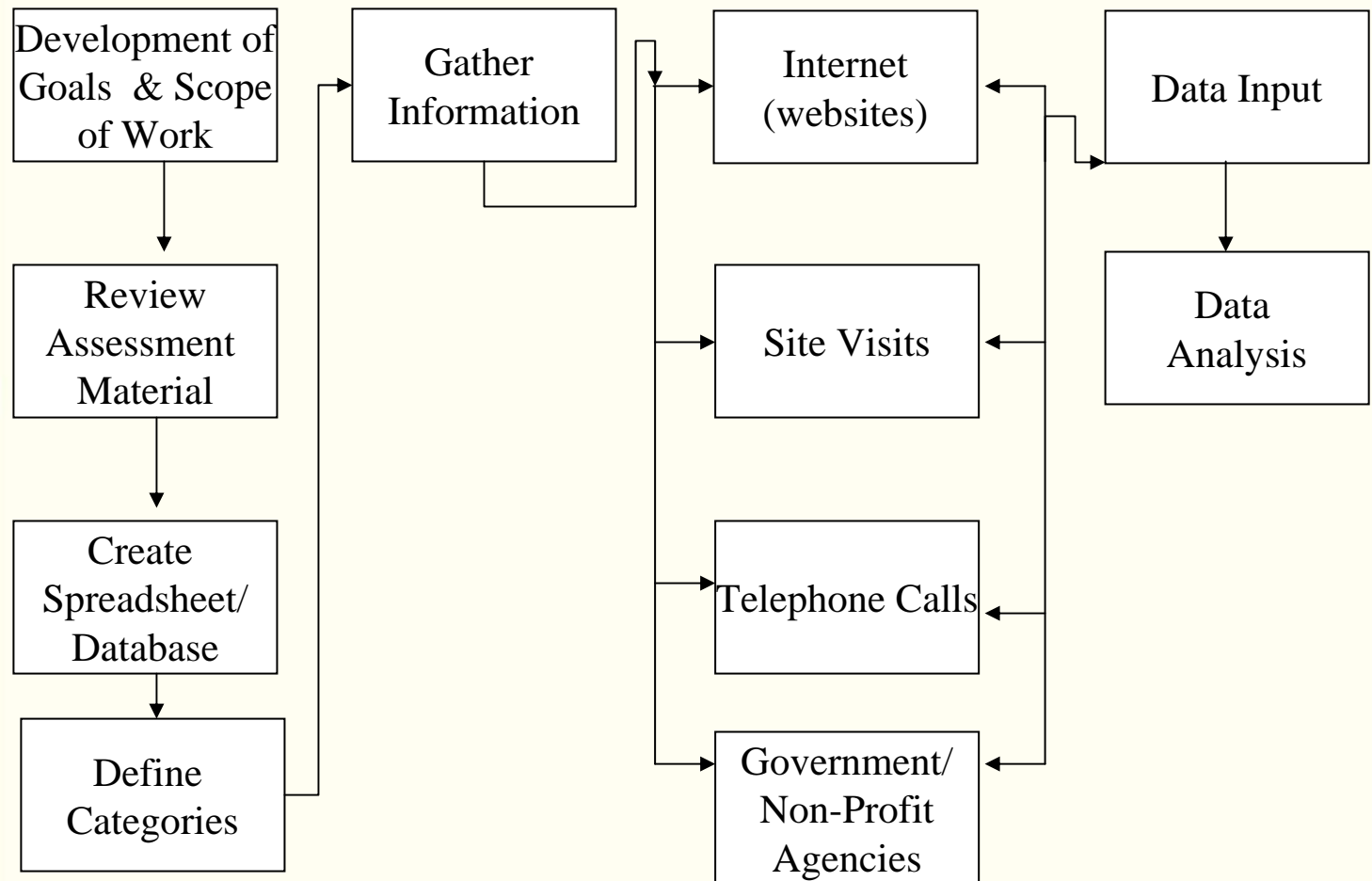
Opportunities

Conclusion

# Food Congress:

## Community Food Assessment

### Critical Path Diagram



Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion

# 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.

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

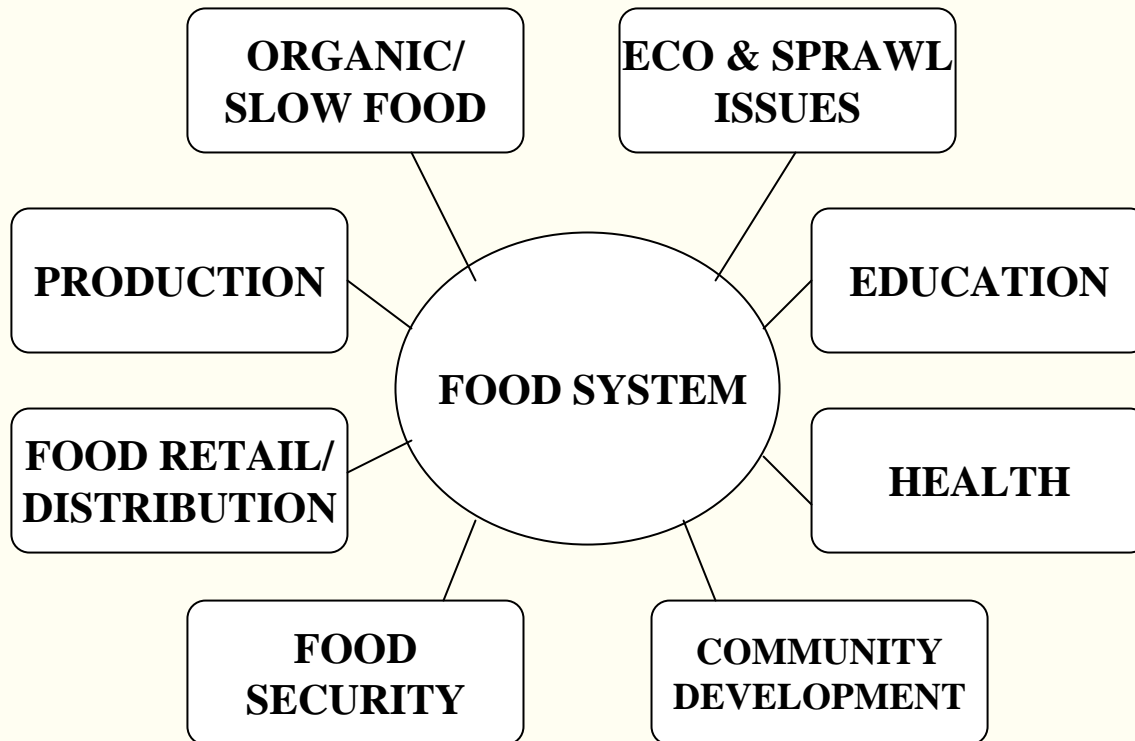
Opportunities

Conclusion



# Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

## *Interest Groups*



Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

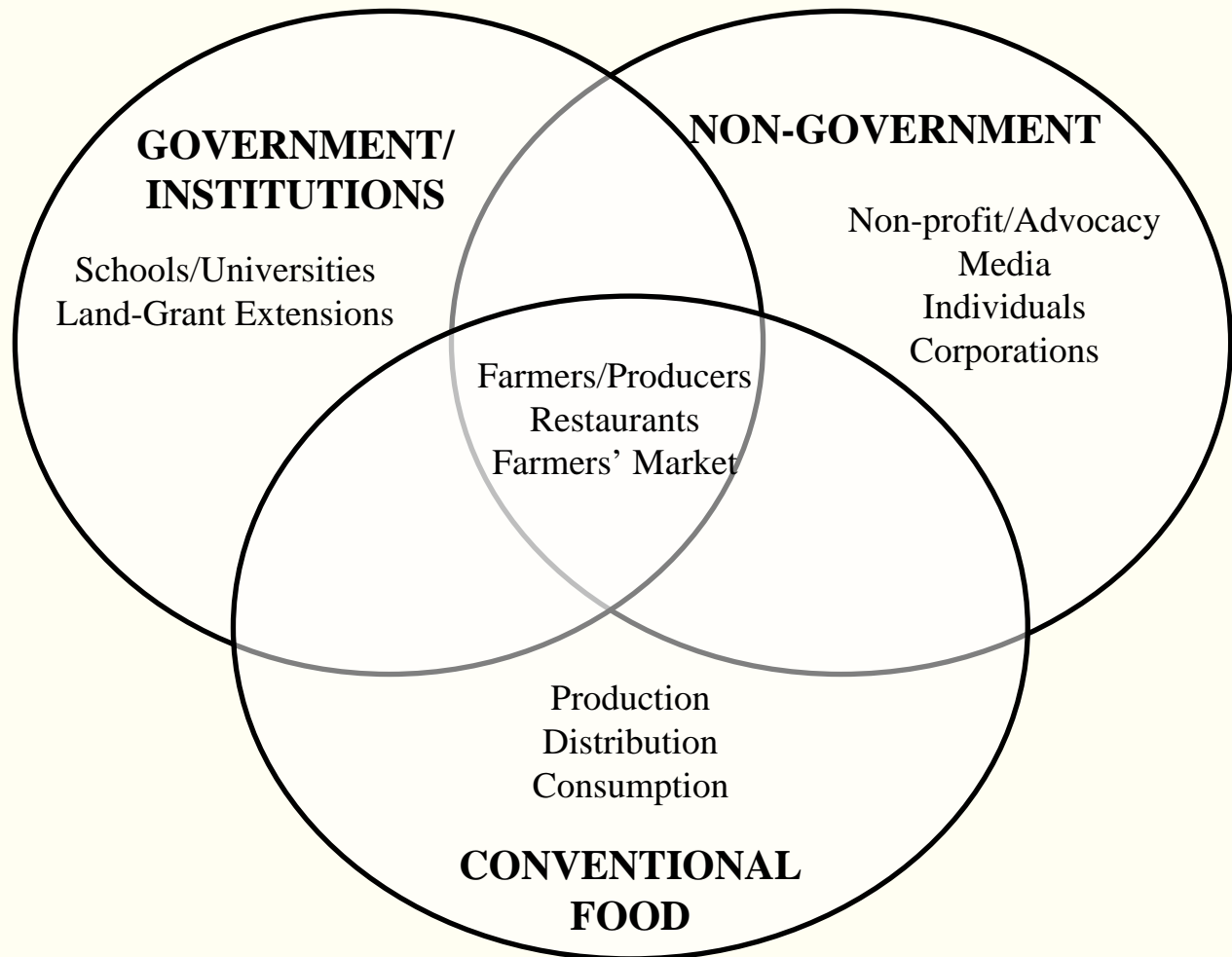
Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion

# Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

## *Organization Types*



Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion

# Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

## *Comprehensive Model*

(What's Cooking in Your Food System?)

no hierarchy in categorization

**ANTI-HUNGER  
RESOURCES/  
SERVICES**  
(Subcategories)

**CONVENTIONAL  
FOOD SYSTEM**  
(Subcategories)

**COMMUNITY-  
BASED/LOCAL  
FOOD SYSTEMS**  
(Subcategories)

**INFRASTRUCTURE/  
TRANSPORTATION**

**PUBLIC HEALTH  
& NUTRITION**

**ENVIRONMENTAL  
(FOOD SYSTEM  
RELATED ISSUES**

**POLICY**

**COMMUNITY FOOD  
HEALTH &  
NUTRITION  
RESOURCES**

**MEDIA**

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion

# 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.

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion



# Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

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

Subcategories	# Records
Emergency Food	22
Government	55
National Schools	176
Child and Adult Care	111
Summer Food	15
Food Pantry (United Way)	144
Other Outreach	28

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

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion

# 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*.

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion

# 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.

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion

# 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.

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion



# Food Congress:

## Community Food Assessment

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

Subcategories	# Records
General Farms	52
Livestock Farms	11

- *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.

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion

# Food Congress: Community Food Assessment

- Community Organizations/Institutions
  - Total of 63 records.

Subcategories	# Records
General	19
Cooking Schools/Classes (comm.)	28
Universities	33

- 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*.

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion

# 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*.

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion

# 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.*

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion

# 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.

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion



# 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.

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion

# 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.

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion

# 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

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion

# 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*.

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion

# 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.

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion



# Food Congress:

## Community Food Assessment

- Database has sufficient information necessary to accommodate any direction that the food assessment could take.
- Where do we go from here?

Introduction

Background

Case Studies

Research Methodology

Research Findings

Opportunities

Conclusion