

Potential Indicators for Wisconsin Local Foods Initiatives¹

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Local- or regional-level indicators:

What is the geographic area considered “local” by each local-foods initiative?

(Compile from local groups)

Number of farms selling directly to consumers within each locale

(Ag Census — each 5 years — or farmer survey)

Number of CSA farms

(MACSAC, Land Stewardship Project, Urban Ecology Center)

Acreage of farms selling directly to consumers within each locale

(farmer survey)

Total value of direct farmer-to-consumer sales within each locale

(Ag Census — each 5 years — or farmer survey)

Number of farmers’ markets

(USDA, DATCP, Farm Fresh Atlases, SavorWisconsin.Com, Local Harvest, direct reports from markets)

Total value of sales at farmers’ markets

(This may be difficult to compile)

Number of schools, colleges, prisons, institutions buying food items from local farms

(from each institution)

Number of “Farm to School” Programs

(WI Homegrown Lunch, DPI, surveys)

Total value of school and other institutional sales (also report as percentage of total food purchases)

(from each institution)

Number of grocers, dining establishments and food manufacturers buying food items from local farms

(from each business)

¹ This indicator list focuses primarily on local food sales/local food system growth indicators and not on health, food security, and other related local food system indicators that are also of interest to many local foods initiatives. It was developed as part of UW-Extension/UW-Eau Claire’s “Western Wisconsin Local Foods Project.” Many of the indicators were identified by Ken Meter, Crossroads Resource Center, through work performed for the project. The list is meant to serve as a resource for local foods groups as they design, implement, and evaluate “Buy Local” food programs around the State. If you have an indicator you’d like to recommend please email andrew.dane@ces.uwex.edu

Total value of commercial food sales

(from each business)

Number and total revenue of all food-related business in community or region

Which key food-business clusters already exist?

(proprietary business data bases such as Dunn & Bradstreet)

Standard “Finding Food in Farm Country” data set

(farm economic conditions, personal income from food sales, consumer food expenditures, production and other data from Agriculture Census, amount of food stamps received, number of residents living below 185% of poverty line, amount of farm subsidies — Ken Meter)

Aggregate local-food sales as percentage of local consumer market for food

(calculated from data compiled above)

What amount of public dollars have local authorities invested in building or restoring local-foods infrastructure (processing, distribution, warehousing, cooler space, transportation, etc.)

(Township, town, city, county governments)

Percentage of consumers now buying WI ag products more often now than 6 months, 1 year, ago?

(consumer survey)

What foods are farmers interested in producing for local markets?

What are most significant opportunities and obstacles?

(producer survey; augmented with interviews, as below)

Which locally raised foods are local commercial buyers interested in buying?

What are most significant opportunities and obstacles?

(commercial buyer survey; augmented with interviews, as below)

Which locally raised foods are local institutions interested in buying?

What are most significant opportunities and obstacles?

(institutional buyer survey; augmented with interviews, as below)

Which locally raised foods are local household consumers interested in buying?

What are most significant opportunities and obstacles?

(consumer survey; augmented with interviews, as below)

What key assets exist for developing local foods in this region?

(from wise practitioners or focus groups)

What key opportunities exist for developing local foods in this region?

(from wise practitioners or focus groups)

What key obstacles exist for developing local foods in this region?

(from wise practitioners or focus groups)

State-level indicators:

Aggregate indicators above into Wisconsin totals

How many communities/counties in each region...

- ...have performed a local-food-system asset analysis?
- ...have framed a local-food vision with specific measures of food system change?
- ...are engaged in Buy Fresh Buy Local or similar initiatives?
- ...are engaged in farm-to-school, farm-to-institution, or other initiatives?

Identify locales not covered with Buy Local activity — assess assets, opportunities and challenges in each locale.

Total number of food manufacturers by class sizes

- ...by # of employees
- ...by sales

Standard “Finding Food in Farm Country” data set

(farm economic conditions, personal income from food sales, consumer food expenditures, production and other data from Agriculture Census, amount of food stamps received, number of residents living below 185% of poverty line, amount of farm subsidies — Ken Meter)

What trends in local-food initiatives are emergent in each region and in the state?

What types and how many organizations; campaigns; programs; are promoting local food system development?
(Wisconsin Local Food Summit website)

How is each region’s food initiatives similar to, or different from, others?

How do the different regions across the State compare in terms of what is happening with their local food initiatives?
(Wisconsin Local Food Summit, website)

What linkages are being built across regions?

How are groups working together; learning from each other across the State?
(Wisconsin Local Food Summit)

Value of state dollars invested in local-foods infrastructure (processing, distribution, warehousing, cooler space, transportation, etc.)

(Wisconsin Legislature, Governor of Wisconsin, DATCP)

What is the impact of public investments in local-foods infrastructure?

How are public dollars being invested in local foods infrastructure around the State?
What type of impact – sales; new markets – are those investments having?

Selected Resources:

Potential indicators for Wisconsin Local Foods Initiatives

Proposed Indicators for a Sustainable Food System. October 2005. Project Manager: Gail Feenstra, UCSAREP. Principal investigators: Carolina Jaramillo, Steven McGrath, Ken Meter and Analisa Gunnell. Prepared by Katy Mamen, consultant. <http://www.vividpicture.net/documents/>

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Halweil, Brian (2002). *Home Grown: The Case for Local Food in a Global Market*. Washington, DC: Worldwatch Institute, Worldwatch Paper 163, 22.