



THE MICHIGAN GOOD FOOD CHARTER:

PANELIST NOTES FROM “FOOD POLICY FROM THE GROUND UP”

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Michigan is the 2nd most diverse state in the nation for food and agriculture contributing \$101.2 billion annually to the states economy, yet more than 1.8 million residents do not have access to nutritious fruits and vegetables.

More than 30% of Michiganders are obese - the second highest rate in the Midwest region, which costs the state \$3 billion annually in related medical cost.

Communities of color are disproportionately affected.

WHAT IS NEEDED

It became apparent back in 2010 that what was needed in Michigan was a food system based on “good food” - that is a system where food is healthy, green, fair and affordable.

The MI Good Food Charter was developed in 2010 in consult with a wide range of organizations but with the main lead from Michigan Food Policy Council, the Food Bank council of Michigan, the and our organization, the Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems.

Michigan Good Food Charter, is a policy document that provides a vision and road map for Michigan to:

- strengthen our states economy
- strengthen our natural resource base
- strengthen our residents health
- enable youth to thrive

One of the main objectives of the charter is to increase the amount of food consumed in Michigan that comes from Michigan

The Charter outlines 6 goals and a set of agenda priorities, which include that by 2020:

- our states institutions will source 20% of their food products from local sources
- farmers will profitably supply Michigan 20% of its consumed food
- we will generate agrifood businesses to support 20% by 2020
- and we will double the access of MI residents to fresh healthy foods

Between November 2010 and June 2011, 5 workgroup reports were released to support the goals in the charter and to be used as a resource for advocates. Each report provided

- the current state of that arena in food systems
- additional info on the rationale behind and implementation of the agenda priorities
- indicators to assess progress towards the charter goals

The reports covered the following areas:

- Youth engagement
- Good Food access
- Institutional procurement
- Farm Viability
- Food System infrastructure

Since those documents were developed, a good food movement has been growing in Michigan and I can share a few of the many activities that have grown in the past 3-4 years as a result of the formation of the Michigan Good Food Charter. Note more information on the Michigan Good Food Charter, including summaries, workgroup reports, signing the resolution of support and success stories can be found at www.michiganfood.org .



SOME BACKBONE CHARTER ACTIVITIES

Organization

A number of organizations including the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems have used the Michigan Good Food Charter as the basis of their organizational strategic plan.

Communication

We have held 2 Michigan Good Food Summits, the last of which we held in October and had nearly 450 attendees. These summits have focused on the Good Food Initiative and have highlighted the successes of organizations working towards the goals of the charter. They have also focused on connecting people from across the state to learn about and develop initiatives to work on the goals of the Charter.

Networking

We have spent a great deal of time developing networks to address several of the agenda priorities. Networks include:

- The Michigan Farm to School network which has now grown to a Michigan Farm to institution network and statewide campaign called Cultivate Michigan to help promote Michigan Foods into institutions and to their clients
- The Michigan Food Hub Network provides education and network opportunities for 100+ people statewide.
- Healthy Kids Healthy Michigan Policy Action Team provides education and network on food access issues.
- The Michigan Good Food Steering committee provides oversight for the coordination work that we have been doing. This group are now launching into training and strategizing in food policy
- The latest network that we have recently initiated is the Michigan Local Food Council Network. We completed a survey of local food councils

Funding

Our state has sought and been successful in multiple funding resources to grow the Good Food initiative and achieve the goals of the Charter. One of the most recent is the Michigan Good Food Fund. The Michigan Good Food Fund is set to launch this summer and is a healthy food financing initiative for Michigan good food businesses that benefit underserved communities across Michigan. A task force has been developed to inform the design and execution of the Michigan Good Food Fund. Currently the fund is set at \$3 million and fund raising is being done to raise this to \$20 million. Core fund partners include Capital Impact Partners, Fair Food Network, The MSU CRFS and the WK Kellogg Foundation.

Shared measurement

Measuring our progress of the goals of the Michigan Good a food Charter has been a challenge, partly because many of the organizations are using different indicators to measure the progress towards agenda priorities and goals. MSU Center for Regionals Food Systems is currently in the process of a pilot shared measurement project, which has pulled together organizations across the state to prioritize areas to measure the progress of the Charter. We have contracted with the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition to implement this pilot.

Interdepartmental Collaboration Committee Subcommittee on Food Policy (ICC)

In 2005 The Michigan Food Policy council was signed in as an executive order and developed a number of recommendations, not least of all the Michigan Good Food Charter. In December 2014 the Michigan Food Policy Council was abolished for what Governor Snyder and director of Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) have called a more action-orientated group for change, the Interdepartmental Collaboration Committee Subcommittee for Food Policy (ICC). This ICC has representation from several of the networks I have previously mentioned and are in the process of supporting the transition from the Michigan Food Policy Council to the ICC.