Community Food Assessment

Curry County, 2014
Acknowledgements

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Chef Scott at Tu Tu Tun Lodge
Field trip at Wahl’s Ranch
Garden at Tu Tu Tun Lodge
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 pasturceland as well as the streams teaming 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.

Six years ago the 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.

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**Table of Contents**

Assessment Team ................................................................. 2
Acknowledgements ................................................................. 3
Forward ................................................................................. 4
Table of Contents ................................................................. 5
Development of the assessment ............................................. 7
Introduction ........................................................................... 8

Agriculture in Curry County .................................................. 9
  Brief History ..................................................................... 9
  Farming Today .................................................................. 9
Agriculture: Figures, Processing & Regulation ....................... 11
  Berries ........................................................................... 11
  Vegetable Production ....................................................... 12
  Poultry ........................................................................... 13
  Egg Production ................................................................ 13
  Beef ............................................................................. 14
  Oregon Farm Direct Bill .................................................... 15
  Other Agriculture Challenges .......................................... 15
Storage .................................................................................. 16
Distribution .......................................................................... 16
Profile – Hastings Natural Beef ............................................ 17
Profile – Sylvia’s Farm Fire Produce ...................................... 18
Profile – Legacy Meats ........................................................ 19
Recommendations for Agriculture ....................................... 20

Commercial Fishing Industry ............................................... 22
Changes in the Industry ......................................................... 22
Where’s the Seafood? ............................................................ 23
Profile – Fishermen Direct ..................................................... 24
Profile – Port Orford Sustainable Seafood ......................... 25
Port of Port Orford at a Glance ............................................ 26
Port of Gold Beach at a Glance ............................................ 26
Port of Brookings-Harbor at a Glance ................................. 27
Challenges ............................................................................ 27
Opportunities ....................................................................... 29

Barriers to Access ................................................................. 30
Curry County Consumer Access Surveys .............................. 30
Poverty in Curry County ...................................................... 33
  Poverty and Youth .......................................................... 33
  Profile – Christian Help – Snack Pack Program ................. 33
Emergency Food Services .................................................... 34
  Food Banks, Pantries and Meal Sites ............................... 34
  Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ................. 35
Food Waste .......................................................................... 36
Profile – Brookings Harbor Community Helpers Emergency Food Bank ....... 36
# Table of Contents

Recommendations for Food Access.......................................................... 38

Community Food Efforts........................................................................... 39
  Food Centered Community Organizations............................................. 39
  Allcare Health Plan............................................................................. 39
  Wild Rivers Local Food Collaborative.................................................. 39
  Eat Fresh & Local Action Team.............................................................. 40
  Port Orford CommUnity Co-Op.............................................................. 40
  Profile – Curry Watersheds Partnership................................................. 40
  Profile – Curry County FEAST.............................................................. 41

Accessing Food in Curry County.............................................................. 42
  Restaurants.......................................................................................... 42
  Profile – The Cape................................................................................ 43
  Retail Outlets....................................................................................... 44
  Profile – Port Orford CommUnity Co-Op.............................................. 44
  Rural Grocery Store Owner Surveys....................................................... 46
  Farmers’ Markets................................................................................ 47
  Community Supported Agriculture....................................................... 49
  Profile – Valley Flora Farm Harvest Baskets......................................... 49
  Profile – Otterbee’s CSA.................................................................... 50
  Farm to School..................................................................................... 52
  School Gardens................................................................................... 53
  Community Gardens............................................................................ 53
  Profile – Port Orford Community Garden.............................................. 54

Recommendations for Community Food Efforts....................................... 56

Works Cited............................................................................................. 58

Appendix A – Rural Grocery Store Owner Survey.................................... 60
Appendix B – Curry County Consumer Questionnaire............................ 65
Appendix C – Otterbee’s Farm & Fungi Harvest Calendar......................... 68
Development of Assessment

A Community Food Assessment for Curry County

The purpose of conducting this Community Food Assessment is to examine the current state of the Curry County food system. The assessment is meant to be the first step in understanding the complex nature of our food system. Once this information is available, communities within Curry County can use this document to identify the next steps in creating a stronger, more resilient food system.

Our food system, with its many opportunities and challenges, is dynamic, complex, and ever-changing. Therefore, this assessment is meant to be a working document that can be revised and reshaped into the future. The assessment is limited in its coverage, and there is much that can be contributed by others in the future.

In order to conduct the assessment, multiple methods were utilized for gathering quantitative and qualitative data. The basis of the assessment was formed using qualitative data, including formal and informal interviews, conversations, and group meetings.

From September 2013 to July 2014, informal and formal interviews were conducted with local farmers, ranchers, fishermen, food bank and pantry managers, grocery store managers, community and school garden coordinators, school officials, concerned citizens, and more.

Additional qualitative data derived from group meetings, including Community Food Conversations. At these meetings, the community identified food resources and opportunities to strengthen their community’s food system. Lastly, informal conversations with various stakeholders from the communities were conducted.

Quantitative data was gathered from distributing and collecting Consumer Access Surveys and Rural Grocery Store Owner Surveys throughout Curry County. The Consumer Access Survey was administered from February to June 2014 with 104 surveys completed. The surveys were created to assist the author in identifying and quantifying food access, affordability, and acquisition for local consumers.

The Rural Grocery Store Owner Surveys were created by the Kansas State University Center for Civic Engagement. These surveys were distributed to grocery store owners and managers throughout Curry County. The purpose of the survey was to identify and better understand the challenges, needs, and opportunities for growth for rural grocery stores.
Introduction

Curry County is situated in a pristine, wild, and very rural location comprised of many stunning geographic features, including the ocean, mountains, rivers, lakes, creeks, and state and national forests. In addition to the geography, the county hosts a mild, wet climate, all of which provide plentiful farming, ranching, fishing, and foraging opportunities for locals.

In the past, the Native Americans were able to live off the rich resources of the land by gathering food, fishing, and hunting. To an extent, the foraging lifestyle and culture remains true to this day, even as the area has grown more developed.

At the same time, throughout the years, more commercialized and larger scale farming, ranching, and fishing has become the norm. The food system transformed from localized production, processing, and distribution to food items being harvested locally and then transported out of the area to process and consume elsewhere.

Because of this change, we are finding a startling number of Curry County consumers are growing more disconnected from their community food resources. Overall, people are growing less food for their own consumption. Many residents do not know who their local producers are or where to purchase their products. Additionally, locals are purchasing from stores that mostly acquire food from distant areas.

Fortunately, many residents are interested in bridging the knowledge and skill gap to create a stronger, more resilient community food system. One way is through the creation of this Community Food Assessment, which will better inform and educate residents on the current state of the Curry County food system. Gaining a better understanding of the complex nature and interconnectedness of our food system will allow locals to engage in a focused approach to create a more integrated and sustainable food system.
Agriculture in Curry County

Brief History

Unfortunately, there is not a great amount of written record predating the arrival of pioneers back in 1851. The first evidence of animal agriculture was recorded in 1851 with Captain William Tichenor credited with introducing swine and horses into Port Orford (Schroeder, 1998).

As the population in the area quickly increased, so did the number of livestock being raised, including chickens, cattle, and hogs. By 1880, there was an assessment completed to count the number of livestock in Curry County. The assessment reported a total of 22,000 sheep, 4,000 cattle, and 800 hogs (Schroeder, 1998).

Surprisingly, one area Curry County was well-known for back in the day was dairy production. In the 1920’s, dairy farming became popular with pioneers, and by the late 1920’s, there were 400 dairy farms. After peaking in the 1920s, dairy farming began to steadily decline, and in 1996, there were only 2 dairy farms left (Schroeder, 1988).

Another considerable change was the production of cereal grain. In the past, large quantities of cereal grain were produced; nowadays, cereal crops tend to be used as cover crops instead of being harvested for grain (Schroeder, 1988).

Due to Curry County’s rich soils, mild climate, and year-round pastures, the area has been considered a paradise for farming, ranching, and foraging. Most pioneers were very self-sustaining as they grew their own gardens and also raised a few livestock for at home consumption. Those who were not able to grow their own gardens bartered or purchased food from their neighbors who grew more than their families could consume. This is drastically different from the food system of today.

Farming Today

According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, there are 197 farms located in Curry County. These 197 farms contain a total of 63,342 acres of land, with the size of farms averaging out at around 322 acres. Compared to the 2007 Census, there was only a 1% increase in the number of farms in Curry County, though there was a 15% decrease in both the land in farms and the average size of farms: from 74,336 acres of farmland to 63,342 acres of farmland with the average size decreasing from 381 to 322 acres.

Curry County farms compared to state of Oregon:

According to Oregon Agriculture: Facts and Figures for 2012, there are 38,100 farms throughout Oregon. At 197 farms, Curry County makes up just .005% of the total farms in Oregon. The size of farms throughout Oregon average out at 433 acres, and Curry County’s average farm size is about three quarters of the average farm in Oregon. The average age of the farm operator in Oregon is 57.5, while the average age...
Agriculture in Curry County

Average for Curry County is 61.5.

The total agriculture production value for Oregon is around $5.4 billion. Out of 36 counties, Curry County ranks 32 in the total gross farm and ranch sales in Oregon at $33,782,000. Compared the data collected from Oregon Agriculture: Facts and Figures for 2007, Curry County has increased the total gross farm and ranch sales by $1,394,000, but dropped by 2 in the county rankings from 30 to 32.

Finances and Ownership:

According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, the market value of products sold for Curry County was $21,357,000. This marks an average 8% increase from 2007, when the total was $19,722,000. The average reported sales per farm was $108,409. This marks a 7% increase from 2007, when the average was only $101,140.

As for government payments, Curry County received $524,000 in 2012 from the federal government, which was an increase of 7% from 2007. Meanwhile, the amount of money received per farm averaged at $15,408, a 20% increase from 2007. In comparison, the average amount received per farm throughout the state of Oregon averaged at $16,054 in 2012.

As of the 2012 Agriculture Census, the top five crop items include:
- Forage-land
- Land in berries
- Cranberries
- Bulbs, corms, rhizomes, and tubers – dry
- Cuttings, seedlings, liners, and plugs

The top five livestock inventory items include:
- Cattle/calves
- Sheep/lambs
- Layers
- Pullets
- Goats

“Agriculture in Curry County is a wondrous thing. We grow great food in our little corner of Oregon. The South Coast grows all of Oregon’s cranberries. We have great grass-fed beef, tasty lamb, and a long temperate climate for producing high quality vegetables here to feed the locals, the tourists, and people in other states and countries.”

- Harry Hoogesteger, South Coast Watershed Council Coordinator
Berries
According to the 2012 USDA Census, there are 44 berry farms in Curry County covering 1,102 acres. Out of this number, 1,087 acres are devoted to farming cranberries. Many farmers interviewed for this assessment mentioned the cranberries grown on Oregon’s Southern Coast are some of the best in the United States, if not the world. The coast’s rich soils and longer growing season due to our mild climate create a sweeter berry with deeper red coloring.

However, Oregon’s South Coast cranberries are not recognized by the public as a superior berry. This could be due to many cranberry farmers choosing not to process and direct market their products to consumers. Instead, many sell their cranberries to Ocean Spray, where their products are mixed with other berries that are grown in the United States, or local handlers. The split between Ocean Spray growers and independent growers in Curry County is fairly even.

According to Scott McKenzie of Seaview Cranberries, having producer handlers is uncommon in the cranberry industry as a whole, but it happens to be fairly common in Oregon. Producer handlers are independent growers who are finding markets for their own berries either selling them to other local handlers or to processors.

“Oregon has a bit of an independent streak that way compared to other growing areas,” explained McKenzie.

Ten years ago, the market for independent growers was considerably better with the price of fruit averaging at $1.00 a pound. Nowadays, the cranberries are averaging mid-teens to $0.20 a pound, which was a dramatic drop for independent growers. The drop in prices correlates with the supply of cranberries.

The production of cranberries in the USA and Canada has increased considerably in the last 20 years or so, while the demand for cranberries has remained flat. Therefore, there is a surplus of product; estimates are about a year supply of cranberries are in freezer storage. This has caused a drop in prices.

To stabilize the market, the Cranberry Marketing Committee (CMC) voted in February to place a volume regulation on the amount of cranberries a farm can sell. Growers are limited to selling only 85% of the average of the best four of the last six years.

“So let’s say you average selling 100,000 lbs. off your farm. You are only allowed to sell 85,000 cranberries this fall,” explained McKenzie.

McKenzie believes farmers will most likely put fewer inputs into their farms so they will just grow a little less. Or, farmers will produce the same amount and dispose the 15% by dumping the cranberries or donating them to a food bank. If producers donate berries, they at least have the option of a tax write off.

“It’s not a lot but it is something. Something is better than nothing,” stated McKenzie.

Another farmer mentioned that Oregon’s cranberry production has remained the same over the last few years, so our growers have not contributed as much to the surplus. Unfortunately, the Cranberry Marketing Order from the CMC includes all growing areas, so even though Oregon has not contributed as much to the surplus, our farmers would still have to participate in the volume regulation. Many Oregon cranberry
Agriculture in Curry County

farmers do not agree with this, so they are writing letters to the Secretary of Agriculture and contacting their elected officials to petition the regulation. On a separate note, there is one berry processing plant in Curry County, though it is not in operation at this time. As is a challenge for many farmers in our region, the owner had difficulties finding skilled and dependable labor to manage the processing plant. The plant is currently for sale, along with multiple cranberry bogs on the farm.

This is a great opportunity for someone wanting to invest in cranberry farming and berry processing. The buyer has the chance to create and market value-added products, such as sweetened and dried cranberries, using local cranberries and could also provide processing for other local berry producers. Additionally, this could be an opportunity to brand the Oregon cranberry as a superior product with its deep red hue and sweeter taste.

Vegetable Production
While distributing the Consumer Access Surveys throughout Curry County, a few individuals commented that growing a vegetable garden or farm on the Southern Oregon Coast is nearly impossible. They mentioned the winter months consist of too much rainfall and even the summer months are difficult because of the strong wind.

However, there are many individuals and families growing thriving vegetable gardens for their own consumption. Additionally, the USDA Census states there are 16 farms that harvest vegetables for sale at farmers markets, grocery stores, and restaurants. These growers are not situated in just one area in the county but are located all along the coast.

Abby’s Greens in Langlois sells 26 varieties of salad greens to restaurants and grocery stores in Coos and Curry Counties. Sweeter Valley Farm has a farm stand on Wednesdays in Gold Beach and also sells to Barnacle Bistro and Tu Tu Tun Lodge. Troy Livingston Farms in Agness sells greens, tomatoes, garlic, carrots, potatoes and more to Tasty Kate’s and Saltwater. Sylvia’s Farm ffresh Produce has a vegetable booth at the year-round Wednesday Farmers Market in Brookings.

Also, Curry County hosts two popular Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs where fresh produce shares are available to members once a week during the harvest season. The CSA programs are available through Valley Flora Farm in Langlois and Otterbee’s Farm & Fungi in Brookings.

The wind and heavy rainfall are still factors to take under consideration when establishing a garden. A few farmers utilize hoop houses and greenhouses to protect their crops from environmental factors and extend their growing season. Valley Flora Farm uses both greenhouses and hoops houses to extend their season.

With the use of a greenhouse, Sylvia’s Farm ffresh Produce grows year around. “They aren’t many people with big greenhouses like ours. Here we can plant lettuce, kale, and chard, and we can grow it through the winter. There are a variety of things we can grow through the winter time because we have a greenhouse,” stated Sylvia Yock.

For those interested in starting their own gardens, Kathleen Dickson from Otterbee’s Farm & Fungi created a Harvest Calendar for the Brookings-Harbor Foodshed that encompasses a 150-mile radius. Forty-three fruits and vegetables are included in the calendar. The calendar is located in the appendix section.
Agriculture in Curry County

**Poultry**
According to the 2012 USDA Census, there are 18 poultry and egg farms in Curry County, which is a 5 farm increase from 2007. There are no state licensed poultry processing plants in Curry County. The nearest facility is located in Sutherlin, which would take a Gold Beach rancher 6 hours to drive there and back to process their poultry.

Fortunately, the Poultry Bill was passed in 2011. Under this Bill, farmers who keep the number of poultry below 1,000 birds annually are exempt from having to process the birds at a state certified facility. Farmers are allowed to butcher the birds themselves on the farm they are raised. As long as the farmer raised the poultry starting from 2 weeks old, the birds are sold in its whole form, and consumers travel to the farm to purchase the poultry, there is no need to obtain a license to sell the birds (Oregon Department of Agriculture, 2011).

Diana Swenson from Coastal Hills Pasteurized Poultry follows the 1,000 bird exemption and sells pastured, free range turkeys out of her farm. Last year, she butchered about 120 turkeys and has sold out each year with consumers asking for more. So far, Swenson has not had issues with the poultry regulations. She has a great customer base and does not want to expand so much as to sell to other markets.

“I think the regulations are real doable unless you want to move them and sell them through farmers’ markets (or) stores…” explained Swenson.

**Egg Production**
Raising layer chickens for eggs is a popular farming method practiced throughout Curry County. Many raise these chickens for personal consumption of eggs. Others choose to sell the eggs to food service and retail establishments or directly to the consumers from off the farm.

In order to sell eggs to retail or food service establishments, producers are required to obtain an egg handler’s license. This license costs an annual fee of $25.00. If producers choose to sell the eggs directly to the consumer via farmers’ markets or from off the farm, the producer does not need to obtain a license.

Rick Hazard checks for eggs, which he sells at the Port Orford Farmers’ Market.
Agriculture in Curry County

Beef
According to the 2012 USDA Census, 85 out of the 197 farms in Curry County are raising 11,229 beef cattle. The majority of these cattle are sold to feedlots, which means the farmers do not direct market their product and the meat will not be available for local consumers to purchase.

Ranchers can consume the beef they raise themselves or sell their animals by the quarter, half, or whole by processing the meat at a state-certified facility. There are two state certified animal processing facilities in Curry County. Legacy Meats out of Gold Beach is owned and operated by Judy Klus and Mike Overdevest. It is an onsite butcher shop that provides slaughtering, processing, cutting, and packaging of animals. The second is Bussman’s Mobile Slaughtering in the Langlois/Bandon area. At Bussman’s, the employees travel to the ranch to slaughter the animal and transport it back to their facilities for processing. Both state certified facilities process a wide range of animals, such as wild game, beef, and sheep.

Unfortunately, not many families can purchase animals by the quarter, half, or whole as they may not have the appropriate freezer space. Additionally, the state certified facilities do not allow meat to be sold or donated to food banks or pantries.

In order to sell or donate meat by smaller, individual cuts that most families have freezer space for and food banks can accept, farmers must process their animals at a USDA certified processing facility. Ranchers then have the option of selling the beef directly to consumers or through retail markets.

Oregon Grassfed out of Langlois processes cattle at a USDA certified facility and direct markets products to consumers. Oregon Grassfed Beef is featured in restaurants and grocery stores, including Langlois Market and Rays Food Place out of Port Orford.

There are no USDA certified processing facilities in Curry County. The nearest facility is in Mohawk Val-
Agriculture in Curry County

Agriculture in Curry County

ley Meat Processing in Marcola, which is a three hour drive. This is cost prohibitive for many local ranchers, as they cannot afford to transport their animals to and from Marcola, in addition to the price of processing animals in the facilities and finding the time to market products.

Oregon Farm Direct Bill

As previously mentioned, it can be confusing and time consuming for producers to sort through all the regulations they must follow in order to market their products to consumers. Fortunately, with the passing of the Oregon Farm Direct Bill on January 1, 2012, regulatory requirements on certain foods were reduced. Now, it is easier for producers to sell their products directly to consumers at community supported agriculture drop sites, farmers’ markets, buying clubs, and roadside stands.

This bill grants producers the ability to make value-added acidic products in an unlicensed kitchen. Acidic products include pickles, jams, jellies, salsas, and sauerkraut. There are still requirements to follow, such as the fruits and vegetables used to make the value added products must be grown and processed on the producer’s farm. Additionally, there is an annual limit of $20,000 in sales deriving from these products.

Not all products under the bill have to be value added or have sales limits. Other products that can be sold directly to consumers include grains, seeds, eggs in shells, whole vegetables, whole fruits, and unadulterated honey. All food sold must bear the labels "This product is homemade and is not prepared in an inspected food establishment," and "Not For Resale" (Oregon Department of Agriculture, 2012).

It is important to note, if producers decide to sell their products to grocery stores, co-ops, restaurants, or other institutions, they do not fall under this exemption and must get the required licensing.

Other Agriculture Challenges

Regulations are not the only challenges our producers face. One non-regulatory challenge includes our small to medium sized farmers dealing with competition from large-scale producers who can sell their products for cheaper prices.

“It’s difficult dealing with the big stores. You are in one day and you are out the next day. I get in. I have a good price. Then, here comes one of the really big conglomerates who come in with a better price and I’m out,” described one Curry County producer.

“The one thing I could grow a lot of would be strawberries and even then it would be hard (to sell)... We are still in competition with the rest of the farming world... There are distributors bringing in other organic crops that are being sold at lower prices as they are much bigger farms and can sell for lower prices. There are times our accounts won't purchase something from us, because it is more expensive from us then they can get out of California,” explained another Curry County producer.

Troy Livingston of Troy James Livingston Farms sells bulk goods for home preservation.
Additionally, many smaller-sized producers mentioned it is difficult to make much of a profit farming these days.

“(Farming) is not difficult, but it’s also not easy. You can’t make any money. You can have a wonderful quality of life, but you can’t make any money. You can’t even save for retirement,” explained a Brookings producer.

A number of producers interviewed for the assessment mentioned they were interested in expanding their farm. However, they were not sure how to pay for or even find dependable and skilled labor in order to be able to expand.

“We realized it was very expensive and time consuming to try and run a farm. We couldn’t expand because we were having a hard time keeping up with it. Last year we had a hard time… we were going to hire an intern, but we couldn’t find anybody,” explained a Brookings producer.

“Labor was sort of a challenge our first few years until we found help. He loves the farm, and he is great at his job. If labor was at the top of our list, we would be very stressed out, because that is a huge deal,” said a Langlois producer.

**Storage**

As one rancher mentioned during an interview, there are not many local options for cold storage, which is unfortunate as storage is an essential element of the food system. This rancher stores his product in FDA approved freezers owned by a cranberry farmer. The freezers are insured for the cranberries, though the rancher is not certain if the insurance carries over to his products.

“I’ll just wish nice thoughts that the insurance would cover my stuff if something happens. I’m not sure if that’s true though. It is kind of scary,” stated the rancher.

Another farmer mentioned that having access to scale appropriate storage is one of the factors keeping smaller producers from growing and raising more in our county. He mentioned producers have the capacity to grow and raise more, but they do not have anywhere to store it. It can be challenging for producers to obtain the capital to invest in their own storage, which would make available local storage a good option for those who cannot or will not invest in their own.

One local option available to the public is the Port of Brookings Harbor cold storage facility. According to the employees, there is a lot of space available. The facility is open to anyone after completing an agreement form at the office. Both dry and wet goods are accepted with the fee determined by the weight of the product and the amount of time storage is needed. In order to store, your product must fit inside box totes as they are easily stackable. If you do not have box totes, there are some available for purchase.

**Distribution:**

There are limited commercial food distribution systems in Curry County as most grocery stores and restaurants use multiple vendors that source food products mainly outside the area. A few restaurants and grocery stores in the area use Day Ship out of Coos Bay to supply their food needs.

There are a few stores that order healthy, organic, and environmentally friendly food online from Azure Standard. Azure Standard delivers products via semi-truck drop off or UPS. Semi-truck deliveries for the Southern Oregon Coast are done on regularly scheduled monthly visits. Brookings Nutritional Foods Buyers Club out of Brookings orders through Azure and receives products via UPS, and the Port Orford Community Co-Op receives semi-truck deliveries from Azure.
Agriculture in Curry County

When you are a farmer in a very rural location, it pays to think creatively about distribution. Valley Flora Farm out of Langlois was having difficulties distributing their CSA shares to Gold Beach and produce to Port Orford. They formed a relationship with Oregon Coast Community Action (ORCCA) at the Curry County FEAST. ORCCA now picks up and transports the CSA shares to Tututun Lodge and Barnacle Bistro in Gold Beach and produce to the Port Orford Community Co-Op.

There are a few options producers have the opportunity to experiment with in regards to distribution of products. One example is contacting Curry Public Transit Coastal Express whose buses travel Monday through Friday from North Bend, OR to Smith River, CA. People who have traveled via Curry Public Transit Coastal Express have mentioned the bus has very few passengers during the runs from North Bend to Smith River. This is an option for producers who have time to form a relationship with Curry Public Transit and see if this could work as a distribution outlet.

Additionally, Port Orford Sustainable Seafood (POSS) delivers Community Supported Fishery shares to Port Orford, Bandon, Coos Bay, Roseburg, Eugene, Corvallis, Salem, Beaverton, Portland, Cave Junction, Grants Pass, Jacksonville, Eagle Point, Medford, and Ashland. POSS is open to discussing the delivery and back-hauling of food products.

Profile: Hastings Natural Beef

Natural, humane, and product consistency are three themes Hastings Natural Beef follows daily in their mission to provide the best tasting and best treated beef to the Brookings area. Hastings cattle are both grass-fed and pasture finished. The cattle are raised naturally with no steroids, antibiotics, or hormones and are treated humanely during handling in a low-stress environment. When the cattle are processed, there is great product consistency with the beef all coming from a single-source.

Hastings Inc. was established in 1945 by Dick Hastings and Bud Hastings. While Easter Lily’s has always been and continues to be their biggest crop, Hastings has grown several different crops over the years including reforestation seedlings, cranberries, elephant garlic, potatoes, lamb, poultry, and beef. This year, Hastings is raising farm fresh, pastured pork for the first time.

Presently, Hastings Natural Beef sells their beef, lamb, and pork directly out of their office. Zeke Harms, Field and Livestock Specialist, mentioned there have been opportunities in the past to sell the products to restaurants and stores in the area.

However, Harms was hesitant to do so for a few reasons, one of them being too small of a profit margin, considering the great amount of time and money that goes into raising, transporting, and processing each animal. This is especially true when considering the humane and natural methods Hastings utilizes, which were mentioned previously. Additionally, Hastings uses only prime beef cattle.

“We are not butchering cull cows and dairy animals. Everything we’re doing is 20 to 28 month old steers and heifers. They are all prime cuts,” explained Harms.
Agriculture in Curry County

In order for Hastings to sell beef by the cut, Harms has to transport their cattle to the nearest USDA processing facility, Mohawk Valley Meats in Eugene, which is 237 miles away.

“It costs a fortune to ship back and forth from Mohawk… It costs me about $300 bucks to go up there and $300 bucks to get them back here,” stated Harms.

Hastings is very supportive of the local food structure and wants to contribute to making it stronger, which is why

Profile: Sylvia’s Farm ffresh Produce

Who says you have to start big? Sylvia’s Farm ffresh Produce started out as a small inflatable swimming pool with vegetables growing inside. Since then, Sylvia’s Farm has expanded to supply a wide range of fruits and vegetables at the year-round farmers market and for the Community Supported Agriculture shares in Brookings.

For Sylvia and Raymond Yock, owners and operators of Sylvia’s Farm, farming food crops is a part time venture they started a few years ago. Their main focus has always been hydrangea farming. Interestingly, an unfortunate hydrangea venture led to the Yocks discovering how strong the demand for local products was, which eventually led them to farming food crops and selling at the farmers market.

After hydrangea plant breeders changed their minds about purchasing 250 potted plants, Sylvia decided to see how well they would do selling the plants on the farm along Highway 101.

“They sold like hotcakes. You won’t believe how fast they sold!” said Sylvia.

Since hydrangeas were so popular, Sylvia was curious to see how strong the demand for food would be. Sylvia purchased watermelons from a farm in California and resold them outside their own farm. Just like the hydrangeas, the watermelon sold surprisingly fast. Sylvia discovered she had a knack for selling products and wanted to eventually form a large garden and greenhouse to begin selling at the local farmers market. But first, she had to start small and happened to have an unused inflatable swimming pool available for growing.

It did not take long for Sylvia’s Farm to expand from the produce pool to growing on rotated portions of land previously used for hydrangea farming and also in a greenhouse. With the use of the greenhouse, Sylvia’s Farm is able to grow year around. Their products include broccoli, kale, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, carrots, beets, cabbages, parsnips, turnips, green beans, and snow peas.

Sylvia’s Farm grows for the Wednesday Farmer’s Market at the Grange in Brookings-Harbor and for the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) baskets for Otterbee’s Farm & Fungi. There is still an ever-increasing demand
Sylvia and her husband are debating whether to continue to expand as a produce farm in conjunction with the ever increasing demand for their products.

Time and money are two challenges holding them back from expansion. Increasing the time devoted to farming food crops while still working full time hydrangea farming would be too exhausting. Additionally, as Sylvia points out, hydrangea farming pays much better than growing produce.

“We could never ever make as much money (produce farming) as the hydrangea farm,” said Sylvia.

Sylvia and her husband have considered hiring part time labor, which would allow them to expand. However, finding skilled and reliable labor in the area is challenging and paying for additional labor would be difficult.

So for now, Sylvia’s Farm fresh Produce is perfectly content supplying the CSA and the farmers market. They have come quite a long way from the small inflatable swimming pool of produce.

Profile: Legacy Meats

Legacy Meats is an onsite butcher shop that provides slaughtering, processing, cutting, and packaging of animals. Judy Klus and Mike Overdevest, owners and operators of Legacy Meats, are proud to announce the recent addition of a smoke house to provide curing and smoking to customers.

Legacy Meats is part of Full Circle Farm, also owned by Judy and Mike, which raises lambs, hogs, and cattle. Clients have the option of bringing in their own animals or purchasing animals raised on Full Circle Farm to process at Legacy Meats. Legacy Meats accepts wild game, including elk, bear, pheasant, and deer, along with locally raised animals, including lamb and cattle.

Judy and Mike believe it is very important to practice the humane slaughtering of animals. Clients transport their animals a few days before slaughter, where they are settled and fed to make the animals comfortable.

“People today are very aware of how much adrenaline and/or stress can do to the taste of the meat. Also, people just do not want their animals stressed,” explained Judy.

Judy and Mike encourage their customers to participate in the process of preparing their order. This way, customers can become more knowledgeable about the steps it takes to get the animal from the hoof to the dinner table. Additionally, customers can get their meat exactly the way they want it.
Agriculture in Curry County

“Mike talks to them and runs the meat through the band saw and asks what size of thickness they want it… It’s really fun to have people here and hopefully everybody goes home happy,” said Judy.

Because Legacy Meats is not a USDA certified processing facility, once the meat is slaughtered, processed, cut, and packaged, the meat must be used for at-home consumption. Customers cannot take the meat and sell it to other customers, institutions, restaurants, etc. When asked if they would like to expand into a USDA certified processing facility, Judy and Mike said they are content with the services they currently provide the community.

“We made a huge investment in building this place. I’m not looking to get rich at doing this. We want to provide our service for our friends and local community,” explained Judy.

Recommendations for Agriculture

1. Facilitate and increase institutional purchasing of local food - By creating a connection between local farmers, ranchers, and fishermen and the institutions in our region, food production at a local level will have a greater capacity for growth and new markets can be created.
   - Identify institutional buyers throughout Curry County and beyond – K–12 schools, Head Start programs, colleges, hospitals, assisted living facilities, and restaurants.
   - Identify producers throughout Curry County (Curry County Local Food Guide can assist with this).
   - Identify barriers for producers in selling products to institutions and for institutions in purchasing products from producers.
   - Address ways to overcome barriers to local purchasing.
   - Establish a platform to connect farmers with institutional buyers.

2. Identify, encourage, and provide information for producers interested in value added opportunities of their raw food products.
   - Producers who can benefit from value added products include farmers, ranchers, harvesters, and fishermen.
   - Identify the economic value and impact of value added products (provide more local food options for local consumers, increase income for producers, etc).
   - Identify value added grant opportunities and connect potentially interested farmers with opportunities.
   - Connect producers with value added trainings and webinars.
     - One such example: Webinar: Value Added Food Production & Marketing, https://carmenconnect.osu.edu/valueadded.
     - Local and value added curriculum including classes and workshops has been developed by NeighborWorks Umpqua in Douglas County. This is a chance to partner and utilize their resources or create similar curriculum for Curry County.

3. Identify, examine, and promote the economic impact of sourcing local food for the county.
   - Not everyone realizes or understands the positive impact distributing and purchasing local food can have on the local economy. This topic has been researched in other communities and should be addressed in Curry County. There could be a study conducted to research the extent of the effect of local food purchasing. This would provide more information and a better case for marketing the importance of local food purchasing to the county.
4. Generate farmer-to-farmer networking opportunities, especially for small-scale farmers and beginning farmers.
   - A common theme when talking with farmers throughout Curry County was a desire to connect with each other and have more learning opportunities such as workshops, farm tours, equipment sharing, work parties, identifying funding opportunities, potlucks, and more.
   - Farmer-to-farmer networks provide opportunities for farmers to generate and pool ideas and learn techniques and skills from one another.

5. Conduct feasibility studies for meat processing and for cranberry marketing.
   - A feasibility study was conducted in 2011 for the construction of a USDA Inspected Meat Processing Plant in Coos and Curry Counties. Unfortunately, the family business interested in taking on this project decided the venture was too expensive.
   - An alternative to this large venture could be forming satellite cut and wrap operations. How it works is local quarter and half beefs are purchased from slaughterhouses and cut and wrapped by local butchers for local retail sale. Laura Gwin at Oregon State University would be a great contact to discuss the feasibility of satellite cut and wrap operations for Coos and Curry County.
   - According to local producers, the Oregon South Coast cranberry is a superior product with its deeper red hue and sweeter taste. There could be research conducted on our cranberries confirming this belief and a feasibility study to determine alternative marketing potential for our cranberry product.

6. Continue to update and expand the Curry County Local Food Guide.
   - The main goal of creating the guide is to assist Curry County residents and tourists in accessing fresh, locally produced food and help local producers market their products to consumers. The guide could expand to include restaurants that serve local foods, processors, more local producers, farm stands, and U-pick options, map of producers, and much more.

7. Identify storage and processing facilities available in Curry County and research the feasibility of building larger-scale storage and processing facilities.
   - There may be enough small-scale storage and processing facilities available in Curry County. However, the facilities may not be well advertised and locals may not know they exist or how to access them. Creating a list of storage and processing facilities throughout our area and marketing the list could be beneficial for producers.
   - After identifying what exists, we may find there is not enough of these facilities to fulfill the needs of our producers. A feasibility study for larger-scale storage and processing could be conducted.
Fishing Industry in Curry County

Commercial Fishing Industry

Being a commercial fisherman on the Southern Oregon Coast is described by many as an attractive, unique, and fascinating way of life. On the other hand, it can also be described as intense and dangerous. The seafood derived from commercial fishermen in Curry County is from wild caught fisheries; this form of fishing is one of the last wild sources of food for human beings.

A few fishermen mentioned the commercial fishing industry is one of the few industries left where people have the potential to make a decent living and support a family. Additionally, they believe commercial fishing is a lifestyle that fits in well with Curry County.

“As intense and competitive as fishing is, it is also very laid back and easy going. Fishing meshes well with Curry County,” stated a Port Orford fisherman.

Changes in the Industry

Many fishermen discussed the numerous changes the commercial fishing industry has experienced over the last forty years.

“When I first started fishing, the season opened and you went fishing. There was not much drama as far as strikes and the like and you never worried about much of anything besides going fishing,” explained a Curry County fisherman. “The seasons never stopped or chopped off and regulations were not bad. It was easy.”

Around the 1980’s, overfishing contributed to the collapse of certain fisheries, including the ground fish and salmon stocks.

“When that happened… it triggered massive amounts of regulations and cutbacks. It completely changed the way we fished,” explained a Curry County fisherman.

Many of those who continued to fish commercially in the Brookings-Harbor, Gold Beach, and Port Orford fleets transitioned into portfolio fishermen. This means the fleets are fishing from multiple different stocks and are not dependent on any single fishery. This method is a wise approach to fishing in terms of both economics and ecology.
Fishing Industry in Curry County

“You don’t want to hammer at one fishery exclusively into serial depletion so having a good number of portfolio fishing boats here is a good thing,” explained Port of Port Orford Commissioner Tom Calvanese.

Becoming portfolio fishermen meant the fleets had to expand their skillset and knowledge about fishing methods for each type of fishery. The younger fishermen turned to more experienced fishermen for advice and they also engaged in a lot of experimentation.

“We kept evolving… I remember baiting our tubs with 5-7 different styles until we hit one that worked… you asked around a little but it mostly was trial and error,” said a Port Orford fisherman.

Portfolio fishing also helped the fleets adapt whenever certain fisheries are at a low point in their cyclical pattern. Every fishermen interviewed mentioned fisheries are cyclical in nature. Both fishermen and researchers mentioned Dungeness crab is a popular example of a fishery that follows a very cyclical pattern.

In California, Oregon, and Washington, “harvests have ranged from 8 million to 54 million pounds, peaking approximately every 10 years,” (Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, 2012). By portfolio fishing, the fleets can still make money from other stocks when the cycle is down and it is not a successful crabbing year.

“(Cyclical fisheries) forces us all to catch other fish basically. I think we are in a better position to survive in case something collapses. It gives us options to move around to different stocks instead of staying on one (fishery) the whole time good or bad,” explained a Curry County fisherman. “If we are not catching too many rockfish, we will concentrate more on salmon. If salmon season is really bad, we will go catch something else.”

Where’s the Seafood?

In the past, seafood was considered a more affordable form of protein. Presently, people are rediscovering the numerous health benefits from consuming fish and many are willing to pay a high price for seafood.

“More and more now than ever, people are valuing, by valuing I mean paying for, really good fish,” observed a Curry County fisherman. “This is something that has changed a lot in the (last) decade.”

Seafood typically caught by our fishermen includes Albacore tuna, Chinook salmon, lingcod, black cod, halibut, cabezon, and rockfish and Dungeness crab. The Brookings-Harbor fishing fleets also catch pink shrimp.

Most of the seafood caught from our area fishermen are sold on the dock to fish buyers, such as Hallmark Fisheries and Norcal Fisheries, and distributed to distant markets. For the most part, what is stocked in the local grocery stores and markets is not fish caught by the local fishing fleet. Port Orford Sustainable Seafood and Fishermen Direct are trying to change this approach to seafood. Their goals are to make fresh, locally caught seafood available to our local consumers at the lowest possible price.
Fishing Industry in Curry County

Profile: Fishermen Direct

100 years of combined commercial fishing experience by four dedicated owners makes Fishermen Direct the place to go for quality, local seafood. Fishermen Direct opened in 1998 by partners Scott and Dixie Boley, John Wilson, and Jeff Werner. All four owners were active salmon fishermen out of Gold Beach. Before they opened shop, the price per pound offered for commercially caught salmon was only $1 a pound, which the four fishermen believed was unreasonable for such a high quality product. Therefore, the four fishermen decided to open their own store and direct market salmon.

Fishermen Direct has expanded significantly from their original focus selling salmon. “We realized we had to expand our choices for people,” said Boley. But first, in order to expand, Fishermen Direct had to invest in the right equipment. This equipment included an ice machine, which produces about a ton of ice a day. Also, they purchased a freezer, which increased their capacity for quick freezing product. They also invested in live crab tanks, which can hold about 1000 lbs. of crab. Additionally, they built their own processing facility.

Thanks to their equipment upgrade, they now have a cooler full of smoked lingcod, smoked oysters, and Alder Smoked Chinook Salmon. Their freezers carry Black Rock Fish, Wild Coho Salmon, and Albacore Tuna Loins. Also, their shelves are lined with canned tuna and canned Chinook salmon. There is an online store where they can ship seafood.

Fishermen Direct tries to keep their shelves lined with local seafood, with local meaning fish caught by fishermen in Port Orford, Gold Beach, and Brookings-Harbor. However, sometimes getting enough local seafood can be difficult. “Getting enough product has always been the hard part,” explained Boley.

One reason is due to the limit of our ports. For example, Gold Beach does not have a 12 month bar. It usually closes off during the winter, which means limited fishing days during crab season. “So we have to go outside our area to get most of our crab,” said Dixie.

Additionally, certain fisheries have shorter seasons, so fishermen have a limited amount of time to catch. For example, halibut season is limited to one or two days, so getting enough halibut from our area for the year is not possible. A third reason is some fisheries are not available to catch in our area, so Fishermen Direct has to source certain products elsewhere, like quality prawns and scallops.

Fishermen Direct has a mission to educate people about the commercial fishing industry and the products they sell. “Eating in season is one of the educational pieces we are trying to get across,” said Boley. Along with eating in season, they try to teach people the proper names of the seafood they sell and even have recipes available for ways to cook what they purchase.
Profile: Port Orford Sustainable Seafood

Port Orford Sustainable Seafood (POSS) was established to provide local consumers access to seafood caught by local fishermen. In order to do this, POSS started small by selling seafood at farmers’ markets in 2009. After effectively building relationships with consumers interested in supporting a local, sustainable model, POSS’s seafood is now featured in numerous restaurants and retail stores throughout Oregon. Additionally, POSS has established a successful Community Supported Fishery (CSF) model, which was the first CSF venture to take place in Oregon.

The CSF model is similar to the Community Supported Agriculture model. Members agree to pay in full up front for seafood shares. By investing in this model, consumers help offset Port Orford fishing businesses’ operating costs. Additionally, consumers are able to experience eating seafood in accordance with the variable fishing seasons. This can lead to a better understanding of and respect for the local commercial fishing industry.

Because Port Orford has a year-round fishery, the CSF shares are available all year. Aaron Longton, Coordinator of POSS, tries to keep prices reasonable so all consumers can access seafood, while still paying top dollar to the fishermen who catch the product. There are full shares and half shares available. The shares are delivered once a month in Port Orford, Coos Bay, Portland, Eugene, Corvallis, Roseburg, and Salem. POSS recently expanded their CSF into the Rogue Valley.

POSS has made many efforts in supporting the community. POSS had donated seafood for community events, hosted free cooking classes for consumers interested in learning how to prepare seafood, and helped write the Farm-to-School grant that was awarded to Port Orford-Langlois School District. Also, POSS accepts SNAP benefits.

Longton is very proud of the great strides POSS has taken since its humble beginning.

“Even though we started in 2009 during the lowest point of the economic decline, we were able to establish ourselves, and we have nearly doubled our sales each and every year since then,” explained Longton.
Port of Port Orford at a Glance
The Port of Port Orford differs from the Gold Beach and Brookings-Harbor ports because its infrastructure includes a dolly dock where cranes lift boats into and out of the water. Port Orford’s fishery is limited due to the port’s existing physical infrastructure, which limits the size of the boats hoisted into and out of the water to a maximum of 44 feet. Because of the smaller boat sizes, fishermen cannot use nets and instead must catch fish via the hook and line method. The smaller boat size limits the amount of time fishermen can spend in the water to mostly day trips. This smaller amount of time limits the fisheries our fishermen target. All of these things benefit and limit the Port of Port Orford fleet.

“You gain from being able to focus your effort and promote a wise approach to fishing. At the same time, you are limited by those factors described: geography, time, space,” explained Port of Port Orford Commissioner Tom Calvanese.

Calvanese mentioned these factors generally drive a higher value per unit fisheries. “We’re undergoing a sort of transition from the old school model that was more based on maximizing catch to a new school model which is focused on targeting higher value product. Often times this gets captured into the phrase, fishing smarter not harder.”

The hook and line method utilized by the fishermen provides a great marketing opportunity for the Port Orford commercial fishing industry. This method is in line with the sustainability movement happening across our nation.

“The Port Orford fleet has the most environmentally friendly fishing methods anywhere,” stated Gary Anderson, previous Manager of the Port of Port Orford.

This year, the Port of Port Orford received federal funding for dredging equipment, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued Curry County 1.2 million dollars to dredge. Also, Representative Wayne Krieger helped the Port of Port Orford received $400,000 to redevelop the cannery building. Lastly, the port is in the midst of creating and implementing a strategic plan.

Port of Gold Beach at a Glance
Along with acting as a landing site for commercial fishing activities, the Port of Gold Beach also manages commercial facilities including the Cannery Building, the Gold Beach Airport, and Huntley Park Riverside Campground and R.V. Park.

“You are not a lot of other ports that also manage an airport. We are really diversified… I definitely learn something new almost every day,” stated Port of Gold Beach Manager Debbie Collins.

Another fact about the Port of Gold Beach is all of the fishermen sell live fish to Nor-Cal Seafood Inc. If the fish are no longer alive by the time they make the sell, they sell their fresh fish to Fishermen Direct Seafood.
“All of their catch is bought right off the dock,” explained Collins.

The Port of Gold Beach does face some specific challenges. One challenge includes the bar access which typically closes off during the winter, which means limited fishing days during crab season. Many of the fishermen travel to other ports for crab season.

Port of Brookings-Harbor at a Glance
The Port of Brookings-Harbor is the largest of the three ports in Curry County. The port is not limited by the factors that affect the Port Orford and Gold Beach fishing fleets, including the limited size of boats and poor access issues. In fact, Brookings-Harbor is known for having “one of the safest entries to the ocean on the west coast.” (Port of Brookings Harbor, 2012) Therefore, the Port of Brookings-Harbor has had greater development which has led to a more diversified commercial fishing industry.

The Port of Brookings-Harbor is in a unique location as it is closest to the California border. This means fish and game regulations from both states impact the fleet because there are a lot of duo permit holders and duo fishers working in both states.

At this time, the Port of Brookings-Harbor is working on reinstituting fish processing. Twenty years ago, there were three fish processing plants at the port, which contributed greatly to the local economy. At that time, a plan was adopted by the port district that discontinued the use of the processing plants. Ted Fitzgerald, Port of Brookings-Harbor Manager, would like to reinstitute the processing plants, so fishermen can take fish landed from the boat to the end user without the seafood ever leaving the area due to processing.

“A lot of people in the town would benefit from it,” said Fitzgerald.

Along with the ports in Port Orford and Gold Beach, the Port of Brookings-Harbor is creating and implementing a strategic plan, and the port will be dredged with the $1.2 million dollars issued to Curry County by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Challenges:
The commercial fishing industry faces a vast number of challenges. Many fishermen will agree that one of the biggest challenges to the industry is federal regulations, which also serve as one of the biggest changes that have affected the previously unregulated commercial fishing industry.

An example of a problematic regulation is the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration designating Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCA) along the west coast in regards to canary rockfish. RCA boundaries do not allow fishing in selected areas in order to reduce the accidental by-catch of groundfish. Canary rockfish were put on the endangered species list.

Since 2002, our local fishermen have not allowed to catch this particular species within the RCA boundaries. One fisherman mentioned he and many other Port Orford fishermen regularly caught canny rockfish as the stock was plentiful and it was a popular source of protein.

“The RCA came in and decided they are endangered and won’t let us catch them at all,” said the fisherman. While at one time the fisherman believed the regulation was needed, he no longer thinks this is the case. The stock has become overpopulated that it is difficult not to accidentally catch this fish. Even so, NOAA is
not budging on their stance.

“They are so thick, you can’t keep them off your hook in certain spots now,” said the local fisherman. “At some point, you’re going to have to feed people, and it’s a source of protein that is going to have to be utilized. There are a lot of them to catch.”

Another Curry County fisherman agrees. “There is getting to be so many in the RCA and they are pushing out into where we fish. When we catch them, we get penalized for catching them even though you can’t stay away from them.”

An additional challenge fishermen face is simply struggling to stay up-to-date on the ever-changing regulations.

“It is hard to keep track of what you even can catch anymore,” said one Curry County fisherman. “We are not even notified a lot of the times what the changes are, but you are expected to know.”

Besides regulations, there are still many challenges fishermen face. One such challenge is dealing with competition from other fishing boats outside of Curry County. These boats land their hauls in the waters Curry County fishermen use to land seafood and then leave without utilizing Curry County port facilities.

This negatively impacts the community because these boats are able to land a greater amount of seafood in a much shorter amount of time it takes for the smaller Curry County boats to land. Additionally, there is no positive economic impact for our communities as the larger boats do not use our facilities.

“What I would like to do is encourage more of the harvest and end use to be done within the community. I think it would be healthier for the community and for the species as well,” said Ted Fitzgerald.

One last challenge is Curry County fishermen are impacted by limited access to markets.

“We are about as far from the market as you can get from end user markets. There are not many places on the coast that are harder to get to than Brookings or Port Orford.”
- Ted Fitzgerald, Manager of Port of Brookings-Harbor
Fishing Industry in Curry County

Opportunities within the Commercial Fishing Industry

1. The ports in Port Orford, Gold Beach, and Brookings are currently creating and implementing strategic plans focused on renewing and improving infrastructure to primarily support the commercial fishing industry, but also recreational fishing.
   - The strategic plans were not available to the public during the time the assessment was first written. Including this information in the assessment would help better identify opportunities for the fishing industry.

2. More education and outreach about the commercial fishing industry should be provided to schools and to the community. There should be more information about types of fisheries caught in Curry County, where to buy local seafood, fishing seasons, regulations, and cooking classes focused on how to prepare seafood.

3. Certain fish, such as Albacore tuna, can be sold by the fishermen directly off of their boats if the fishermen have the correct licenses. More marketing efforts should be made to inform the public about fishermen who sell directly off their boats to consumers, the types of fish available for purchase, and the timeframe this usually occurs.

4. Investigate Boat to School grant possibilities for school districts.

5. A thorough assessment focused directly on the local commercial fishing industry could be conducted to identify feasible projects.
   - Identify grants available to fishermen.
   - Improve communication and engagement among the public, local government, and commercial fishermen.
   - Identify access to market opportunities for local fishermen.
Barriers to Access

Food is a basic human right as everyone needs to eat in order to survive. However, the cost of food, distance to food sources, low income, cost of transportation, and disability are just a few of the many and varied factors preventing members of our community from accessing food.

This section will examine the findings from the Consumer Access Surveys, poverty in Curry County, barriers to food for youth, and the programs and organizations trying to improve access to food issues.

Curry County Consumer Access Surveys
A survey was created and distributed to Curry County consumers to better understand the accessibility and affordability of food for our area. The survey also provides insight into consumers’ opinions about the seriousness of hunger in their community, their shopping habits, distance traveled to purchase food, and reasoning behind purchasing or not purchasing local food. One hundred and four individuals completed the survey during the fall of 2013. Below are some of the questions and results from the surveys. The survey can be found in the appendix section at the end of this assessment.

Comments on food accessibility:
- “(It is accessible) thanks to the food bank.”
- “Not all varieties of food are accessible but most are.”
- “Only because I grow a lot of my own food.”
- “Better in summer with markets.”
- “As long as you don’t have any specialty requirements – such as soy cheese.”
- “Yes, it is accessible but not healthy food.”
- “High quality healthy food is not.”

Comments on food affordability:
- “I am fortunate to have food stamps, or food would be too expensive.”
- “If people shop right.”
- “Need more organic food at cheaper price.”
- “It’s hard to make ends meet.”
- “Prices are too high.”
- “Depends on what store you go to and what is on discount.”
- “Rays and Co-Op (in Port Orford) are very expensive.”
- “Only to some. Very expensive for our poverty stricken community.”
Barriers to Access

After asking whether or not consumers believe food in Curry County is accessible, it was important to delve deeper into the issue by identifying the factors that affect consumer’s ability to access the food they need.

For this next question, consumers had the option of choosing multiple answers for where they purchase their primary groceries.
Barriers to Access

When asked how serious hunger in your community is, 62 consumers responded that hunger is somewhat of a serious issue, 25 responded extremely serious, 12 said hunger is not an issue, and 5 people did not know.

Comments on seriousness of hunger:
- “Hunger is everywhere.”
- “The (Brookings) food bank is serving 2,000 people a month. We have the largest food bank in Coos & Curry Counties.”
- “Times are tough, money is short and food (good food) is expensive.”
- “Because food stamps don’t last until the end of month.”
- “There are many poor, and there are few industries.”
- “High unemployment, high cost of living, lack of education on cooking, growing, sourcing, (and) seasonal food.”

The next two questions examine local food purchases. In order to encourage more people to buy local, it is important to discover what types of local foods consumers are currently purchasing. Additionally, it is important to find out the reasons consumers do not purchase local foods often or at all.
Poverty in Curry County
Addressing Hunger – SNAP in Oregon Counties paints an unsettling and eye-opening picture of poverty in Curry County. In 2010, there was a total population of 21,419. Out of this number, 7,837 people were living at or below the 185 percentile of poverty, which equaled 36.6% of the population. Statewide, the poverty rate was at 13.5%. In 2010, the percentage of people in Curry County who were living in poverty was almost three times that of the statewide percentage.

Poverty and Youth
According to Addressing Hunger – Federal nutrition Programs for the year 2010, there were 3,858 children between 0 and 18 years of age in Curry County. The number of children who were living at or below the 185 percentile of poverty was 1,919.

For the 2013-2014 school year, there were a total of 2,313 students enrolled in the Curry County school system. 64.1% of students were eligible for free or reduced lunches. Driftwood Elementary School and Pacific High School make up the Port Orford-Langlois school district. At Driftwood, 83.9% of students were eligible for free or reduced lunches, while 69.9% of students at Pacific were eligible. Their combined total was 78.9%.

At Central Curry School District located in Gold Beach, 69% of students were enrolled in free or reduced lunches. Gold Beach High School contained 65.6% while Riley Creek Elementary School is at 70.8% of students.

Brookings-Harbor School District consists of Azalea Middle School, Brookings-Harbor High School, and Kalmiopsis Elementary School. 62% of students at Azalea were eligible for free or reduced lunch, with the high school’s total at 58.1% and the elementary school at 61.5%. The Brookings-Harbor School District had a total of 60.5% students enrolled in the free or reduced lunch program. (Oregon Department of Education, 2014).

Profile: Christian Help - Snack Pack Program
Due to the high amount of need in Curry County schools and the limitations of the National Snack Pack Program, Christian Help out of Gold Beach decided to develop its own Snack Pack Program for students.

About five years ago, Christian Help was going to sign onto the National Snack Pack Program to provide weekend packages of food to students. However, the structure of the national program was too stringent and the number of students who could participate was limited to Kindergarten through fourth grade.

“We couldn’t do it. Our area is so economically depressed. 75 percent of kids in the schools are on reduced or free lunches,” explained Sylvia Lopez, Manager of Christian Help.

Therefore, Christian Help decided to launch their own snack pack program to meet the needs of the town. Originally, the Christian Help snack pack program covered students in Kindergarten through fourth grade at Riley Creek. Each year during the first three years of the program, Christian Help expanded the reach of the program to include one or two more grades until they extended to the 8th grade. Additionally, teachers or parents can refer students to the program if needed. Though the snack pack program does not include high school students, if a teacher notices a
high school student is not getting enough to eat, they will send a few packages over.

In order to be eligible for the snack pack program, students must qualify for the free or reduced breakfast/lunch program. Each weekend during Riley Creek’s school year, approximately 213 students are served a snack pack on Fridays to provide sustenance for the weekend. Snack packs typically include a few of the following: peanut butter crackers, cheese crackers, beef jerky, cheese, fruit snacks, juices, pudding, Jell-O, fruit cups, granola bars and more.

When deciding what items to purchase, Lopez explains they try to select a healthy combination of food. However, she realizes this can be difficult as the program does not have refrigerated space and many healthy items tend to be perishable.

“We try to make it as healthy as we can so they are getting calories and nutrients in their food,” said Sylvia Lopez.

Since the snack pack program is not through the national program, Christian Help has to acquire funding to cover the costs. Not surprising, the Gold Beach community has been very fond of the program. Funding for the program is met through community fundraisers and donations.

“It is a pretty good program… we are proud of ourselves,” said Lopez.

**Emergency Food Services:**

Food banks, food pantries, and meal sites make up the emergency food services for Curry County. Emergency food services’ role in communities is to meet the immediate food needs of individuals and families. Even though it does not address the long-term needs of communities, these services are necessary. Without these services, many people in our local communities would be at a critical risk of hunger. This is why strengthening our community food system is vital, so these services are not used as a primary food source for consumers.

Below is a list of food banks, food pantries, and meal sites throughout Curry County:

**Langlois Food Banks, Pantries, and Meal Sites:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Pantry</td>
<td>Langlois Food Pantry</td>
<td>94284 Hwy 101, Langlois, OR</td>
<td>2nd &amp; 4th Mon. from 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm</td>
<td>541-348-2110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Port Orford Food Banks, Pantries, and Meal Sites:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Pantry</td>
<td>The Common Good</td>
<td>1405 Idaho Street, Port Orford, OR</td>
<td>First four Weds. of month from 10 am – 12 pm and 1 pm – 3 pm</td>
<td>541-332-1365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meal Site</td>
<td>Port Orford Rotary Open Hearth Dinner</td>
<td>421 11th Street, Port Orford, OR</td>
<td>Once a month from 5:30 to 6:30 pm</td>
<td>541-253-6515</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Barriers to Access

Gold Beach Food Bank, Pantries, and Meal Sites:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Bank</td>
<td>Gold Beach Christian Help</td>
<td>29813 Colbin Street, Gold Beach, OR</td>
<td>Mon. and Wed. from 9 am – 3 pm; Thurs. from 9 am – 12 pm</td>
<td>541-247-4054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Pantry</td>
<td>Gold Beach SDA Food Pantry</td>
<td>94191 3rd Street, Gold Beach, OR</td>
<td>Tues. from 9:30 am – 1 pm</td>
<td>541-247-5103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meal Site</td>
<td>Gold Beach Senior Center</td>
<td>29841 Airport Way, Gold Beach, OR 97444</td>
<td>Mon. – Fri. from 9 am – 2 pm 3rd Sat. from 8 am – 11 am</td>
<td>541-247-7506</td>
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Brookings Food Bank, Pantries, and Meal Sites:

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<tr>
<td>Food Bank</td>
<td>Brookings Harbor Community Helpers</td>
<td>522 Hemlock, Brookings, OR</td>
<td>Mon. – Fri. from 10 am – 1 pm</td>
<td>541-469-6988</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meal Site</td>
<td>Outreach Gospel Mission</td>
<td>15701 Hwy. 101 S., Brookings, OR</td>
<td>Mon. – Sat. from 10 am – 4 pm</td>
<td>541-412-0278</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meal Site</td>
<td>Brookings 7th Day Adventist Church</td>
<td>102 Park Avenue, Brookings, OR</td>
<td>Mon. from 12-1</td>
<td>541-469-3030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meal Site</td>
<td>St. Timothy's Episcopal Church</td>
<td>401 Fir Street, Brookings, OR</td>
<td>Tues. from 12-1</td>
<td>541-469-3314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meal Site</td>
<td>Star of the Sea Catholic Church</td>
<td>820 County RD, Brookings, OR</td>
<td>Weds. from 12 - 1</td>
<td>541-469-2313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meal Site</td>
<td>Brookings Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>540 Pacific Avenue, Brookings, OR</td>
<td>Thurs. from 12 -1</td>
<td>541-469-3725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meal Site</td>
<td>Trinity Lutheran Church</td>
<td>1200 Easy Street, Brookings, OR</td>
<td>Fri. from 12 -1</td>
<td>541-469-3411</td>
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Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

In 2009, 6,476 individuals throughout Curry County qualified for SNAP benefits. If all those who were eligible for SNAP would have signed up for the program, it would have brought $7,098,567 federal money into Curry County for the year. However, only 3,452 individuals signed up and received SNAP benefits, which only brought $4,955,281 into Curry County.

If all those who qualified to receive SNAP would have participated in the program in 2009, it would have meant benefits for an additional 2,824 individuals. These individuals would have had the spending power of an additional $2,143,286 to use at Curry County grocery stores and farmers markets.

Encouraging an increase in SNAP participation will benefit those who are at risk of hunger; it will bring more federal money to the area; and it will support stores and farmers markets where SNAP benefits are accepted (Addressing Hunger, 2010).
Barriers to Access

Food Waste
During conversations with community members, many brought up the topic of food waste. They referred to food waste in terms of fruits and vegetables left unharvested to spoil and go uneaten. Residents believe this is a shame as the food is available and ready to be picked. If the farmers have no use for the surplus food, this is a perfect opportunity to distribute food to the many community members who are in need.

There could be multiple reasons why food is left unharvested. Owners may not have the time or ability to pick all of the food themselves. They may not have money to hire labor to pick the rest of the food. Or, owners may have already picked all the food they wanted for that season and decided to leave the rest.

At this time, there are no formal gleaning groups in Curry County, though several people have showed interest in starting one. Gleaning groups form relationships with local growers and obtain permission to pick surplus fruits and vegetables off the grower’s property. Most of the time, these gleaning groups donate the extra food to community organizations or food banks and pantries.

If there is not enough interest to create a formal gleaning group, one day gleaning parties could take place at local farms. In a matter of hours, community members would come together to harvest, package, and distribute the food to area food banks. This could serve as an opportunity for locals to learn about the various types of foods that grow well along the coast and how to harvest certain fruits and vegetables. Participants would also be picking food that would otherwise be wasted, along with learning more about the food needs of community members.

Last fall, Cathy Boden from Curry Watersheds Partnership partnered with the Port Orford CommUnity Co-Operative in contacting a local cranberry farmer about a gleaning opportunity. The farmer was thrilled the group contacted him about gleaning the surplus cranberries in his bog. The machines used to knock the cranberries off the vines cannot reach the very edges of the bog. Hiring the labor to pick the cranberries off the edges would cost more than it would be worth, so these cranberries go to waste. When the group arrived on the property, the farmer gave them a tour of his property and described the work behind cranberry farming. The group then picked over 90 pounds of cranberries in an hour; half the cranberries the group was allowed to keep while the other half were donated to the Co-Op.

Profile: Brookings Harbor Community Helpers Emergency Food Bank

“There is a real need here in Brookings. It’s just incredible how many hungry people there are here,” said Mary Boshart, Board Chair for the Brookings Harbor Community Helpers Emergency Food Bank.

Taking just the year 2013 into account, the food bank distributed 3,482 food boxes to 10,528 clients. The food bank had 1,133 new clients requesting food assistance. For many, food boxes were not enough, and supplemental food was given to 11,094 clients. For a smaller sized population, these numbers are startling.

The food bank was established in 1984 after concerned residents saw there was a great need in the area for food.
Barriers to Access

assistance. Since then, the food bank has expanded to meet the increasing needs of hungry individuals and families from Pistol River to the border of California.

Food boxes can be picked up at the food bank once a month. A food box is proportionate to family size feeding individuals, couples, or families for four to five days. The food box is considered an emergency source of food. Boshart has noticed clients typically access the food boxes as a fill-in after food stamps or social security runs out for the month.

“What we found is the last week of the month and the first week of the month seem to be the time period when people run out of food. The food bank is busiest during those two weeks. That is when the need is the highest, between food stamps and social security checks,” explained Boshart.

Along with food boxes, the food bank offers daily food items to help with a meal in between boxes. Both the food box and the daily meal utilize the shopping style method. This method allows customers to walk through the pantry aisles and select foods they will consume. Along with providing clients personal selection, this method reduces food waste. “This way, they get to pick and choose what they want,” says Boshart.

The third main program the food bank offers is a snack sack program for students up to 12 years of age during spring, summer, and winter breaks. Boshart recognizes many of the youth in the Brookings’ schools qualify for the free or reduced cost lunch programs. Additionally, she believes some students may depend solely on the school meals distributed throughout the week. Because of this, the food bank established the snack sack program to make sure the students are fed during school breaks.

Overall, the community recognizes the current state of hunger for many Brookings-Harbor residents, which is why the community is very involved in contributing time, food, and monetary donations to the food bank. For example, the middle and high school students host food drives at the grocery stores in town, community members host yard sales and donate the profits, and businesses and, churches and clubs are involved in assisting the food bank keep its doors open. Sometimes parents of children having a birthday celebration ask for donations of non-perishable food in lieu of gifts. The food bank is very grateful for the community’s awareness of and determination to help individuals and families who need ‘a hand up, not a hand out.’
Recommendations

Recommendations for Food Access

1. Encourage an increase in participation for those eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
   - In 2009, 6,476 individuals qualified for SNAP benefits, but only 3,452 individuals signed up and received benefits. If all who qualified to receive SNAP would have participated in the program, it would have meant benefits for an additional 2,824 individuals, who would have the spending power of an additional $2,143,286.
   - Encouraging an increase in SNAP participation will benefit those who are at risk of hunger; it will bring more federal money to the area; and it will support stores and farmers’ markets where SNAP benefits are accepted (Addressing Hunger, 2010).

2. Encourage stores and farmers’ markets that do not accept SNAP benefits to do so.
   - Identify barriers to accepting SNAP and host workshops for managers to help address these barriers.
   - Encourage farmers’ markets and stores that accept SNAP to provide more outreach about how to use SNAP at the market.
   - Recruit one new farmers’ market to accept SNAP by 2015. (For example, Curry Grown and Crafted out of Gold Beach would like to accept SNAP at the farmers’ market, but the manager mentioned she is not sure what to do.)

3. Increase nutrition and cooking education throughout Curry County.
   - Identify organizations currently providing nutrition and cooking education in Curry County, such as OSU Extension with their food preservation program. Provide marketing assistance so there is greater outreach to the public about what is currently being offered.
   - Identify the gaps in nutrition and cooking education for the county.
   - Partner with existing organizations to develop curriculum to cover the gaps. Or, find already developed curriculum from organizations, such as Share Our Strength with their Cooking Matters at the Store Tours.

4. Increase educational efforts for local foraging opportunities.
   - Curry County has an abundance of options, including clamming, fishing, mushroom foraging, and wild game hunting. For those experiencing barriers to accessing food, foraging allows individuals the opportunity to access food, usually just for the price of a license.
   - Identify foraging classes and educational materials available in the community to assist community members in acquiring foraging knowledge and skills.

5. Explore the feasibility of creating a gleaners group.
   - As previously mentioned, there are no formal gleaning groups in Curry County, though several people interviewed showed interest in being a part of one. Gleaning groups pick surplus fruits and vegetables off the grower’s property and donate the extra food to community organizations, schools, food bank, or food pantries.
   - Identify if there is enough interest to create a formal gleaning group and who could coordinate the group.
Community Food Efforts

Food Centered Community Organizations
In conjunction with the local food movement, there have been a number of food related organizations and public health projects that have developed in Curry County. These organizations focus on improving and strengthening our Curry County food system in relation to community health, food literacy, food system education, or agritourism.

1. Allcare Health Plan: Community Health Improvement Plan
2. Wild Rivers Local Food Collaborative
3. Eat Fresh & Local
4. Port Orford CommUnity Co-Op Nonprofit

Allcare Health Plan: Community Health Improvement Plan
AllCare is a Medicaid Health Plan located in Grants Pass that provides high quality health care in Southern Douglas, Jackson, Josephine, and Curry Counties. AllCare has been conducting a Community Health Improvement Plan for Jackson, Josephine, and Curry Counties to measure the health of individuals, families, and communities.

Similar to this assessment, the plan evaluates the current state of public health in these counties by distributing and collecting surveys, hosting public meetings, and working with focus groups.

Once the current state is examined, AllCare will identify the health services already being provided in the community, support existing projects, and create new projects as needed.

“We are doing an assessment to see where we are in the community in terms of health services delivery, what community partners exist, (and) what kinds of projects are in place. Then, we are identifying the gaps of where we need to do better, where we can support existing projects in the community instead of recreating the wheel, and what new projects we might want to bring forward to support the community,” explained Kari Swoboda, CCO Liaison.

For this plan, three main strategies have been outlined: Healthy Beginnings, Healthy Living, and Healthy Equity. These strategies include matters such as food insecurity and healthy food and physical activity. The strategies are being implemented by an advisory council consisting of community members throughout Curry County.

“We’re going to put together specific work plans to address the issues. One of (the issues) that came up is learning more about the community gardens in Curry County and how we can support them. Also, one of our projects is... working with school based health centers to improve access to healthy food for kids,” stated Swoboda.

For more information, contact AllCare at 1-888-460-0185.

Wild Rivers Local Food Collaborative (WRLFC)
After the Curry County FEAST event, a few participants from the Brookings-Harbor area had meetings on their own to discuss the possible formation of a Brookings-Harbor food group. There was enough energy and support, and the participants quickly formed into a community food organizing group called Wild Rivers Local Food Collaborative. The group is a nonprofit and with a focus on food literacy and security education.

The WRLFC mission is working together with our community to grow, harvest, store, and prepare food. Goals for the group are to facilitate collaboration between groups and individuals committed to the issues relating to local food production and community food education, independence, and security.

For more information, contact AllCare at 1-888-460-0185.

WRLFC has been identifying locations that could be utilized to establish community gardens, demonstration gardens, or food share gardens. For the food share gardens, food is being harvested and donated to the Brookings Harbor Food Bank, community kitchens, and other food related services in the community.

WRLFC will be conducting a Cooking Matters at the Store tour to help low income individuals and families gain knowledge and skills to stretch their budget for food.
Community Food Efforts

Eat Fresh & Local Action Team
Back in October 2013, the Rural Tourism Studio through Travel Oregon facilitated ten workshops focused on supporting and bolstering sustainable tourism development for the Wild Rivers Coast. The Wild Rivers Coast includes Bandon, Langlois, Port Orford, Gold Beach, and Brookings-Harbor.

One of the workshops focused on Culinary and Agritourism Development. The Eat Fresh & Local Action Team formed out of this workshop.

Eat Fresh & Local Action Team is currently creating a fifteen year strategic plan to identify the team’s projects and goals. One project the group will be working on includes coordinating farm tours with local farmers and ranchers. Also, the action team will be hosting events to connect producers, restaurants, and grocery stores. The goal of these events is to create networking opportunities in the hope of expanding the availability and access of local food. Additionally, the action team will be creating Wild Rivers Coast foodie itineraries for tourists looking for something exciting to do on their vacations.

Port Orford CommUnity Co-Op Nonprofit
The Port Orford CommUnity Co-Op is a for-profit business that has a supply of fresh and healthy foods available for purchase. However, the Co-Op is in the process of creating an educational nonprofit organization. This organization will teach people food literacy and education and general sustainable living practices. More information about the Port Orford CommUnity Co-Op can be found on page 44.

Profile: Curry Watersheds Partnership
Many students in Curry County do not know where their food comes from. There are a few types of foods grown locally that several students have never heard of or tasted. As food, especially local and fresh food, is vitally important to our health and wellbeing, Curry Watersheds Partnership thought it was imperative to bring foodshed education to the Curry County school system.

Adding foodshed education to the agenda was not difficult for this organization, as they already work with farmers and ranchers in the area in implementing sustainable agricultural practices. Additionally, watershed classes have been conducted by Curry Watersheds Partnership employees in the school system for many years now, so establishing relationships with teachers and staff was simple.

“The next step was to jump onboard with education… to teach kids more about food and where it comes from and the impact it has on the watershed,” said Cathy Boden, Foodshed Coordinator at Curry Watersheds Partnership. The foodshed classes were established in 2010 in conjunction with the local food movement occurring through the Curry Wind Gardens project.

Working for Curry Watersheds Partnership, I always felt lucky to know the area farmers and be able to access fresh local food. The Eat Fresh & Local Action Team takes these potential opportunities and works towards turning them into experience for locals and tourists.

-Cathy Boden, Foodshed Coordinator for Curry Watersheds Partnership and Co-Coordinator of Eat Fresh & Local Action Team

Cathy Boden, Foodshed Coordinator, preps the Riley Creek school garden for K-8th garden education
Community Food Efforts

out this region.

“As the local food movement gained momentum, we thought it was important to jump on board with educating kids about where their food comes from, the cost of transportation, and the effects it has on watersheds,” explained Boden.

Along with foodshed education in the classroom, Curry Watersheds Partnership created the website, curryfoods.org. This website connects farmers and ranchers with consumers to spread awareness of the food resources of the area. The organization produced a cranberry video to help promote Oregon’s South Coast cranberry industry.

Lastly, Curry Watersheds Partnership teamed up with Resource Assistance for Rural Environments AmeriCorps and Oregon Food Bank to hire an AmeriCorps member to conduct this Community Food Assessment, create a Curry County Local Food Guide, and assist with other food-related projects. There will be a second-year AmeriCorps member for 2014-2015.

Profile: Curry County FEAST

Because Curry Watersheds Partnership had food related connections within the county, the Oregon Food Bank approached the organization about hosting a FEAST event in Curry County.

Around 100 Curry County residents attended the Oregon Food Bank Community FEAST event on April 24, 2013 in Port Orford. FEAST stand for Food Education Agriculture Solutions Together. These events, which are occurring throughout Oregon, provide an opportunity for food-associated stakeholders in the county to gather together and engage in a conversation about the local food system.

The Curry County FEAST was facilitated by Oregon Food Bank Community Food Systems Manager Sharon Thornberry. The FEAST provided an opportunity for attendees to listen to stories from a panel of local producers and ask questions about the panel’s experiences.

Additionally, attendees created a list of community food assets and challenges. After examining the assets and challenges, the attendees produced a food system priorities list and formed into small groups to further discuss this list. Then, the small groups created a community foods organizing plan to focus on what residents could do to make the improvements they wanted to see.

While there are many benefits to hosting a FEAST event, the main benefit is bringing different stakeholders into one room to organically form connections and partnerships. For example, before the Curry County FEAST, Valley Flora Farm out of Langlois was having trouble transporting their CSA shares to Gold Beach. At the FEAST event, Valley Flora Farm met and quickly formed a connection with Oregon Coast Community Action (ORCCA).
Community Food Efforts

Valley Flora Farm’s transportation issue was solved as ORCCA now picks up and transports CSA shares to Gold Beach.

Additionally, a few interested and concerned citizens from Brookings attended the FEAST. They have since established the Wild Rivers Local Food Collaborative, a nonprofit organization out of Brookings which will focus on food literacy and security education.

Overall, FEAST provides an opportunity for the community to make connections and work toward solutions together in order to create a more sustainable and resilient local food system. Participants at the FEAST included farmers, ranchers, fishermen, government officials, concerned citizens, policy advocates, and interested residents.

Accessing Food in Curry County
In the last section, the barriers consumers face in accessing food were discussed. This section will focus on the various food outlets that provide local food options to our local consumers. These outlets include: restaurants, grocery stores, farmers’ markets, community supported agriculture programs, farm to school programs, and community and school gardens.

Restaurants
There are a few restaurants in Curry County that are committed to sourcing local food on their menus. Restaurants offer a chance to introduce local foods that grow in the Curry County area to locals and tourists. Because the restaurant chefs are professionals, they have the knowledge to prepare the local foods in tasty and innovative fashions. This can encourage retaiunteers to locate and contact local producers to purchase their food and try on their own.

Evan Boley, owner and chef of Barnacle Bistro out of Gold Beach, alters his menu based on what he can purchase in season from local producers. A few of the local producers include Valley Flora Farm in Langlois, Arch Rock Brewery in Gold Beach, Sweeter Valley Farm in Gold Beach, Oregon Grassfed Beef in Langlois, and Fishermen Direct Seafood in Gold Beach.

Barnacle Bistro’s menu is a great example of customer education. It explains their process of sourcing local. For example, they explain how they only use quality 100% grass-fed and grass finished beef from Oregon Grassfed in Langlois. They explain how they source fresh vegetables and salad greens from Valley Flora Farm and Sweeter Valley Farm on a seasonal basis, which is during the summer months. They also briefly explain the fish they provide on their menu is season dependent, so when there is not local fish available to purchase, they may choose not to serve those menu items containing fish or they will get the freshest they can find.

There are also restaurants that have expressed interest in sourcing local food, though they are not sure if they will be able to overcome the challenges associated with this process.

The most common reasons for not using local foods in restaurants include: price, seasonality and availability of products, receiving adequate supply to meet restaurant needs, difficulty of transportation, lack of ease and efficiency of ordering and payment compared to other vendors, unaware of local food options, and too great of a time commitment tracking and contacting local farmers.
Community Food Efforts

Profile: The Cape

Kathy and Scott Brace, owners of The Cape, choose the foods for their menu the same way they choose to eat: as much organic and local as possible.

After their first attempt at opening a dinner house in Gold Beach, Kathy and Scott closed the business and reopened as a market for local food distribution, a café, and a small scale catering business.

“We closed it down and I opened it up with something I felt I would want to see in this town,” explained Kathy.

While many restaurant chefs and owners feel they do not have the time or resources to source local products, the Braces are determined to keep their menu flexible to fit with the area’s growing seasons. The best way Kathy found to source local products was by going directly to the producers at the farmers’ markets in Brookings-Harbor, Gold Beach and Port Orford.

“I built my menu around foods I could find easily…I spent a lot of time going to the market's and introducing myself to some of the vendors…and asking them questions about their products,” said Kathy.

This investment of time and energy in relationship building is well worth it to the Braces as it directly correlates with The Cape’s mission of providing organic and local products. Additionally, a few local producers are willing to tweak their growing to help The Cape. If Kathy and Scott need something, they will approach a producer they have already worked with and tell them what they need. If it is something they already grow, they will grow more of it. If they do not grow and are not able to grow it, they will give them the contact information for other producers who have that item available.

There are a few challenges to sourcing locally. One challenge The Cape faces includes agreeing on prices. A few farmers are willing to sell their products at wholesale prices, but the majority of farmers prefer to sell at retail prices as they make more money for their product.

“It’s hard for me to pay retail. I’ve done it a lot, but it’s hard for me to do it on a regular basis,” said Kathy.
Community Food Efforts

However, after maintaining that relationship with the growers for a steady period, some farmers relaxed on the prices.

“A lot of the people I’m dealing with now give me a pretty good price on things,” said Kathy.

Along with a menu full of organic and local items, The Cape’s market section contains a good mix of products, including coffee from Capt. Beans out of Agness, Local Cranberries & Blueberries, Local Honey, Freddy Guy's hazelnuts out of an organic farm outside of Roseburg, fruits and vegetables from, Northern California, Oregon and Washington, and jams, jellies, applesauce, and dried fruit made from right inside The Cape by Kathy herself.

Retail Outlets
As Curry County is a relatively isolated and small sized county, there are a limited number of retail outlets in the area. As well, only a small number of the retail outlets carry locally sourced food. If they do, for the most part, it is not a considerable amount. Store owners mentioned a few challenges sourcing local products, while producers have stated difficulties supplying stores with food.

One challenge is deciding on wholesale or retail prices with producers preferring to sell their products at a retail price so they receive more for their product. Meanwhile rural and small stores find it difficult to pay retail prices and would prefer wholesale.

Another challenge is due to some stores stricter payment systems. Some stores are interested in sourcing more local foods, but the farmers complain that the payment system takes too long and they need to be paid quicker.

Getting local products into stores requires the farmer and the store owner taking the time to build a relationship. Unfortunately, both farmers and store owners are hard-pressed for time, which is cited as a reason why local products have a hard time reaching the shelf.

Profile: Port Orford CommUnity Co-Op
The Port Orford CommUnity Cooperative began as an idea shared among friends interested in more wholesome and healthy food alternatives to compliment what was available in town. This idea grew more feasible as community organizations joined in on the conversation and formed a steering committee. After a USDA grant was awarded, which helped determine a food co-op would be a viable business in Port Orford, corporate papers were filed, a building was purchased, and the Port Orford CommUnity Co-Op was open for business in 2012.

Along with providing healthy food to the public, the Co-Op’s goals include providing a space to attract local producers and local buyers in Port Orford and throughout Curry County.

“Buying local supports our local economy. That’s part of the Co-Op’s foundation, principals, and goals,” said
Community Food Efforts

Pamela Berndt, member of the Co-Op steering committee and Board member.

Local products available at the Co-Op include salad greens and vegetables from Valley Flora in Langlois, locally caught and processed seafood from Port Orford Sustainable Seafood, Circle Star Ranch beef and pork, In-House baked breads, bagels, and cookies, In-House deli sandwiches, salads, and soups, and Q-House Bakery croissants.

Currently, there are over 170 members who all own a share in the Co-Op and help in decision-making by voting on matters brought forth at meetings. The Board of Directors encourages members to get as involved as possible. Members have had the opportunity to partake in a farm tour where cranberries were gleaned from a local producer’s bog and cleaned and sold at the Co-Op. Additionally, both members and regular customers have a choice in the food selection at the Co-Op.

“It’s empowering to be member owned and to be able to have a choice in what we select for our foods,” explained Berndt. “The Co-Op is always open to allow members to request products… When we do our ordering, we take that into consideration and try to get the best price. A part of our guiding light is local loyalty, and we try to provide a really reasonable price.”

The Co-Op is located along the corner of Hwy 101 and 8th Street in Port Orford. It is one of only two grocery stores in town. Due to its rural location, the Co-Op faces the challenge of food distributors not delivering products directly to the store. Instead, volunteers have had to drive 30 miles to pick up the products and deliver them to the Co-Op. Other challenges include more general startup business issues such as figuring out what products to carry and how much to spend each week on inventory.

Along with a grocery selection, the Co-Op also provides a place for community members to gather and mingle, volunteer, use Wi-Fi, and grab a healthy bite to eat. Soon there will be an educational component to the Co-Op. A steering committee has formed to create a supporting nonprofit organization, which will provide nutrition education to the area.

“We want to add an educational portion which will teach people sustainable living practices,” explained Berndt.

Overall, the Board of Directors, members, volunteers, and customers are pleased with the Port Orford Community Co-Op and what it has brought to the community.

“We are all really proud. There has been a lot of team effort to get to this point. I will say that the general feeling when people walk through the door is they love what is happening at the Co-Op and that the Co-Op is part of the community… That is a really good feeling,” said Berndt.
Rural Grocery Store Owner Surveys

The Rural Grocery Store Owner Survey used in this report was created by the Kansas State University Center for Civic Engagement. These surveys were distributed to grocery store owners and managers throughout Curry County. The purpose of the survey is to identify and better understand the challenges, needs, and opportunities for growth for these stores as they provide the greatest access to healthy and affordable food for communities.

For the smaller, independent grocery stores, minimum buying requirements have been problematic. One owner responded that some of the distributors they work with will not ship their product unless there is a minimum order of $150 or more. Another owner responded that one of their distributors does not allow them to order each week, which causes an issue when a product has run out. Customers have to then wait two weeks before they are able to re-order. A third owner responded that their distributors minimum order is $500, which causes issues as they are a newly formed store with little money in the bank at this time.

Not surprising considering our rural location, each store surveyed responded that they have had problems getting products delivered because of their location. One owner responded the farthest one of the distributors delivers is to a town 30 minutes away. Additionally, for some items, they have to have volunteers drive all the way to Crescent City, an hour and a half drive, to pick up certain items.

Another owner responded that the major supplier is not able to drive to their area and return to their home base without violating the driving hour regulations. When they deliver to Gold Beach, the driver is required to spend the night in town, which is expensive for the supplier. Additionally, this owner stated other vendors simply will not deliver products, so the owner must truck the goods to the store himself. Meanwhile, other vendors will deliver biweekly, but they require large orders from multiple nearby merchants.

Other major challenges for rural grocery stores include:

- High inventory costs/low turnover
- High operations costs (utilities, building, lease, repairs/maintenance, etc.)
- Low sales volume
- Narrow profit margins
- Required minimum buying requirements from vendors
- Shoplifting/bad checks/internal theft/unpaid accounts

Most of the rural grocery stores accepted SNAP benefits, though only the bigger stores surveyed accepted WIC. As Curry County has high poverty rates, it is important for all grocery stores to accept SNAP and WIC benefits to customers. One owner went so far as to state for his grocery store, “not accepting food stamps/WIC would have a VERY negative impact,” as a great amount of the customers rely on these benefits to purchase food.

Many of the stores did sell locally-produced food in their store. However, in the survey, the definition of local is not given. Therefore, local could qualify as anything produced within Curry County, within the state of Oregon, within the region, or farther as it is not clarified. Those that do sell local products listed similar foods: tomatoes, berries, eggs, greens, and coffee. One owner replied he does not believe there is a lot of local to buy due to our coastal climate not being conducive to growing.
Community Food Efforts

Farmers’ Markets
As the demand for local products in Curry County grows, small and medium sized producers are becoming more motivated to direct market their products at area farmers’ markets.

There are four farmers’ markets operating in Curry County. Brookings-Harbor is home to two farmers’ markets, Gold Beach has one, and there is one in Port Orford. The Brookings Harbor Farmers’ & Artisans’ Market is the only year-round market.

There are many benefits for communities that support farmers’ markets. Farmers’ markets:

- Provide area producers an opportunity to direct market their products
- Provide producers a chance to connect and network with other area producers
- Provide a place for consumers to meet the farmer and get in depth information about their products
- Encourage community members to purchase fresh and local food
- Grant grocery store owners, restaurant chefs, and other institutions a chance to connect with producers and source local foods in their stores and on their menus
- Provide a sense of community
- Aid the local economy in that markets bring the community ‘downtown’ and encourages people to continue to shop at other businesses in town
- Nurture the growth of small time gardeners/farmers

Ron Bossi from Bossi Mushroom Farm in Gold Beach has participated in the Crescent City, Brookings-Harbor, Gold Beach, and Port Orford farmers’ markets. Bossi has been able to sell his mushroom products consistently at these markets, which has encouraged his positive outlook on markets. “So far, the farmers’ markets have been doing pretty well,” stated Bossi.

His does have a concern over the travel required to reach the markets and payment.

“I would say my biggest production expenses are…traveling back and forth for farmers’ markets and paying for the booth space,” explained Bossi.

A Curry County rancher mentioned he is hesitant to participate in farmers’ markets, because he is not sure if the profit he could make would be worth the effort put into preparing for and selling at the market. He calculated out what it would cost to just pay for an employee to work at the market: Let’s say he pays an employee $10 an hour to work at the market for a total
Community Food Efforts

of 8 hours. 4 hours are dedicated to actually selling product at the market and the other 4 hours are set aside for preparing the product, travel, set up, and clean up. To just be able to pay the employee, the person would have to make $80 in 4 hours. The rancher figured out in order to just pay for the employees time, he would have to sell $800 dollars’ worth of meat.

Another vendor acknowledges that the farmers’ market is not for those who are expecting to get rich quick. Even considering the work put into preparing for the market, she is still a supporter of local markets. “I think it is worth it because it is fun and I feel a sense of community.”

The farmers’ markets also face challenges. These challenges include:

- Limited vendors and customers – Many potential vendors do not want to commit to the market without a set number of vendors and high customer flows. These potential vendors believe that having more vendors lead to more customers coming to the market to access food as customers do not usually attend the markets unless there are enough vendors to make the trip worthwhile.

- All of the farmers’ market managers who were interviewed mentioned they would like to see more vegetable vendors participating in the markets.

- SNAP issues – All farmers’ markets in Curry County should accept SNAP benefits as the potential income derived from the program is great. However, not all markets accept it. Or, if the market does accept these benefits, not many market attendees know about it or utilize it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Port Orford Farmers’ Market</td>
<td>25 May until November, Saturdays from 9 am – 12 pm</td>
<td>Located on the corner of Highway 101 and 8th Street in Port Orford</td>
<td>Laurie Prouty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:portorfordfm@gmail.com">portorfordfm@gmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>541-287-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curry Grown and Crafted</td>
<td>July—Oct, Every Saturday from 9 am – 2 pm</td>
<td>On the lawn next to the GoldRush Center, 29692 Ellensburg Ave. Gold Beach</td>
<td>Susan Golay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>541-247-0818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday Farmers’ Market</td>
<td>Year-round, Wednesdays from 10am to 3pm</td>
<td>Chetco Grange Community Center (corner of Highway 101 and Zimmerman Way, Harbor)</td>
<td>Linda Stimson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:linda@riyescott.com">linda@riyescott.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>541-469-3005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brookings Harbor Farmers’ &amp; Artisans’ Market</td>
<td>May 26 – Oct 20, Saturdays from 10 am – 4 pm</td>
<td>Located at the Boardwalk, Lower Harbor Road off Hwy. 101 in Brookings</td>
<td>Kathleen Dickson</td>
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Community Supported Agriculture
During the summer harvesting months, Valley Flora Farm in Langlois and Otterbees Farm & Fungi in Brookings-Harbor offer Community Supported Agriculture, commonly referred to as a CSA, to Curry County residents. In a CSA, members receive weekly shares of fresh, local produce grown directly from the local farmer. Items included in the shares vary depending on what is ready to harvest that week. Items typically found in a share include apples, peaches, potatoes, tomatoes, beets, beans, onions, peppers, squash, zucchini, peas, and more.

In a CSA, members pay for a share at the start of the season as this tends to be the time when the biggest input expenses occur for the farmer. By investing in a CSA, the farmers can afford many of the items needed to be financially stable for the season. By paying upfront, the CSA members share in the risk farmers face each year.

Valley Flora Farm accepts SNAP benefits, so everyone has the option of purchasing and eating fresh, healthy, and local produce. However, members who use their SNAP benefits with a CSA have to abide by slightly different rules compared to using SNAP benefits to purchase food at a grocery store. Instead of investing fully in the upfront costs of the producer, members with SNAP use their benefits each time they pick up their share.

Otterbees Farm & Fungi would like to accept SNAP benefits in the future. For more information on the rules of SNAP use in association with CSA, contact a SNAP Retailer Service Center at 1-877-823-4369.

Profile: Valley Flora Farm Harvest Baskets
Farming has been the center of the Betsy, Abby, and Zoe Bradbury’s universe for as long as they can remember. “There was always a need to connect with the dirt somewhere,” said Zoe.

This need to connect with the land eventually led to the formation of their Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program, Harvest Baskets, sold at Valley Flora Farm in Langlois. Betsy, Abby, and Zoe each contribute to both Valley Flora Farm and the Harvest Baskets while focusing on different niches.

Betsy focuses her attention on the greenhouse where she grows tomatoes, summer squash, cucumbers, and peppers. Abby, who started up Abby’s Greens, focuses on the production of salad varieties for local restaurants and stores. Zoe with Groundswell Farm focuses on outdoor crops including berries, asparagus, carrots, broccoli, strawberries, and more. Zoe is the main coordinator behind the Harvest Baskets.

Members who sign up for Harvest Baskets purchase fresh produce directly from the local farmer. Produce in the Harvest Basket vary according to what is ready to harvest that week, but items typically found include potatoes, tomatoes, beets, beans, onions, peppers,
Community Food Efforts

squash, zucchini, apples, peas, and more. Membership lasts from June to December with members signing up and paying in advance. Drop off sites are in towns in both Coos and Curry Counties: Coos Bay, Bandon, Langlois, and Port Orford.

Valley Flora offers additional shares including Abby’s Greens Salad Share, Candace’s Egg Share, and Juana's Homemade Tamale Share. Additionally, Winter Garden Kits are available to folks in late July, so that they can get their winter garden going in time to have produce in late fall, winter, and early spring. This start-up kit encourages members to build their own winter garden and contains 12 six-packs of garden starts.

Though Valley Flora’s products do not have the certified organic label, Betsy, Abby, and Zoe follow organic farming methods. They do not use synthetics or chemical sprays, and they pay the premium for organic methods. As most of their clientele is located within 100 miles, they feel becoming certified organic is not necessary because their clients trust their farming methods.

“Our clientele is so close to home and local that people can come to the farm and see what we are doing and believe in our integrity. We are really committed to it. It is the benefit of the truly local farm,” said Zoe.

Profile — Otterbee’s Farm & Fungi CSA

Otterbee’s Farm & Fungi is a multi-farm Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) with products coming in from other farms in Brookings-Harbor and the Rogue Valley.

“When we started our CSA, we never intended to grow everything ourselves. We already had contacts in Medford, and we built contacts here in town,” explained Kathleen Dickson, Coordinator of the CSA.

Otterbee’s CSA began in 2008 with 20 members and two share sizes - medium and large. From the beginning, the farms that contributed to the CSA were strictly local, which Otterbee’s considers within 150 miles from Brookings-Harbor. The CSA spanned 20 weeks with payment given up front and in full by the end of May and pickup starting in mid-June.

Since the first year, the CSA has gradually increased to 70 members. Due to customer requests, Otterbee’s has added a small sized share.

“We found lots of people are single households. So, we created a single share, couple share, and family share,” said Dickson.

One great feature of the multi-farm CSA is it allows farms to focus on what they grow best. For the CSA, Dick-
son grows kale, kohlrabi, garlic, and carrots. Riyescott Ranch out of Brookings-Harbor grows salad mix, along with chard, tomatoes, and beans. Sylvia’s Farm ffresh Produce out of Brookings-Harbor offers broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, and strawberries. Beebe Farms and Seven Oaks Farm out of Central Point offer cantaloupe, corn, tomatoes, nectarines and apples, and Meyer Orchards of Talent supplies peaches and pears. Dickson believes the success of this program is due to the collaboration and hard work from all the farms involved.

Dickson mentioned the concept of a CSA is hard for some members to adjust to right away. Many are introduced to new produce and have to learn how to chop, fix, and cook the product. Fortunately, most members view this as an adventure, though not all agree. To help people adapt to the CSA structure, Dickson has hosted educational opportunities for the members, including farm tours and open houses.

Another challenge Otterbee’s is facing is the CSA has reached capacity at 70 members. Dickson believes membership size it at the perfect level, and it would be difficult to grow much larger. However, the demand for the CSA has her weighing the pros and cons of expanding.

“You hit a threshold in business where you have to grow. But because you are making little to nothing here, to grow you have to put out money to get to that,” explained Dickson. “You always have to weigh how big do you want to be and how much can you afford. Then if you get bigger, you have to consider if you can afford to pay labor to take on some of the extra work.”

At the end of the day, what keeps Dickson motivated to continue the CSA are the members.

“The reason we do this is because of our members. When those members show up for their boxes, they are like kids at Christmas time. They love what we’re doing. They love what we bring them… They love each other,” said Dickson.
Community Food Efforts

Farm to School
In its simplest form, farm to school can be described as connecting students with locally grown and harvested food. Generally, students have been connected to local food through meals served in the cafeteria. However, farm to school efforts can also connect students to food/garden related educational opportunities, including building or strengthening of school garden programs, cooking classes utilizing local foods, and field trips to area farms.

Presently, there are two farm-to-school initiatives taking place in Curry County. The Port Orford-Langlois School District was awarded funding from the 2013 Oregon Farm to School & School Garden Grant. This grant funding covers both educational efforts and the sourcing of locally harvested goods. In this case, local is defined as produced and harvested within Oregon.

The grant provides funding for the school district to source local food from September 2013 to May 2015. So far, the foods that have made it to the cafeteria include seafood and dried cranberries. Soon, there will be local salad greens and blueberries on students’ plates.

The educational side of the grant included the creation of a Farm to School Calendar. In order to create the calendar, students took field trips to local farms to meet the farmer, gather information about the specific foods they produce, and take photos. Also, students took a field trip to the Port of Port Orford, where they climbed into a fishing boat and interviewed a local commercial fisherman. These field trips were great outside the classrooms learning experiences for students, as a few commented how they had never been on a boat or picked and ate a cranberry from a bog before.

The grant also provided a fundraising opportunity, as money collected from the sales of the printed calendars went toward the procurement of a lean-to greenhouse. This greenhouse will provide access for students to garden and learn year-round. Also, the food from the greenhouse will be used in the cafeteria. Other educational efforts the grant has provided the Port Orford-Langlois School District includes a cookbook project, which will include recipes using local foods, and cooking classes, which teach students how to properly cook seafood.

South Coast Head Start, an early childhood education program covering Coos County and Curry County, is the second school that has begun to procure local foods for their menu.

Farm to School initiatives are not without challenges. Much of the growing season in Curry County is during the summer months. Unfortunately, this does not tie in well with the school year, as they have summer breaks. Another challenge is centered on internal administration. Schools are required to report their food purchases to the Oregon Department of Education. This reporting process is very complex on its own, which makes adding farm to school bills an extra ef-
Community Food Efforts

fort to an already difficult process.

Additionally, coordinating purchases between the farmers and the school requires time and effort. Most schools do not have a person who has time dedicated to sourcing local food. For example, for the farm to school grant allocated to the Port Orford-Langlois School District, there were six people associated with just the school involved. It has been difficult coordinating among those six people associated with the school, much less coordinating with the farmers in the area.

School Gardens
School gardens provide numerous hands-on approaches to learning for students. Through school gardens, many students are introduced to new fruits and vegetables and are able to learn basic gardening skills. Teachers and volunteers can incorporate math, science, and other learning concepts while students work in the garden. At the Driftwood School Garden in Port Orford, salad greens harvested from the garden are served at lunch. Students take pride in the salad greens and are more likely to eat them. Additionally, volunteers have come to the classroom and taught students how to create recipes from what is produced in the garden.

Currently, Driftwood School, Riley Creek, and Kalmiopsis Elementary School have implemented school garden programs. Pacific High School in Port Orford has a greenhouse that is currently used as storage space. Gold Beach High School has a greenhouse that the Master Gardeners are utilizing to grow plant starts, along with teaching interested students about gardening practices. Azalea Middle School and Brookings-Harbor High School do not have school gardens.

Much like community gardens, school gardens are challenging to establish and sustain. Finding teachers or school volunteers who have the time and resources to supervise school garden programs is a very difficult task for many school districts.

Due to the many educational and health benefits of having a school garden, it is important for schools, partners, and organizations to find resources and work together to make school gardens possible in each school district. Possible partners include the volunteers from the Master Gardeners program out of Oregon State University Extension and community garden club volunteers.

Community Gardens
Community gardens provide citizens an opportunity to grow produce when they may not have access at their places of residence. Additionally, demonstration gardens provide a learning opportunity for those not familiar with gardening. As of now, there have not been many community garden or demonstration garden projects established in Curry County, though interest is growing among locals.

Port Orford has one community garden located near Buffington Park and a demonstration garden at the Senior Center. This community garden is very popular among residents with the garden at capacity with 43 beds. At this time, Gold Beach does not have a community garden though community members have attempted this project in the past. Some community
Community Food Efforts

When asked why there are not more community or demonstration gardens in Curry County, a few residents mentioned community gardens are difficult to establish but even more challenging to sustain. One challenge mentioned includes lacking a manager responsible for supervising community members with reserving beds, making sure fees are paid, making any needed upgrades or expansions to the gardens, and promoting the garden each year to the public.

Another challenge is getting enough locals signed up for beds each year. One resident mentioned that once a community garden is established, there tends to be a lot of interest and the majority of the beds are reserved. He noted how after a few seasons, interest begins to fade and many of the beds are left unattended.

In conclusion, there is room for growth in Curry County in regards to community and demonstration gardens. Identifying methods to sustain the gardens long into the future is important to the success of community gardens.

Profile: Port Orford Community Garden

The Port Orford Community Garden was constructed thanks to the collaboration among community members, the city of Port Orford, and the Rotary Club.

“It’s a real community project and something the whole community has worked really well together on,” said Pat McArdle, member of the Port Orford Community Garden.

After discovering there was great interest in the area for a community garden, the city and Rotary searched for a suitable piece of land where the garden could remain long into the future. After a few strikeouts, a plot of land on city property right next to Buffington...
Community Food Efforts

Park was selected. This land required a lot of work to clear and prepare for a garden.

“You wouldn’t have recognized it from a few years ago. The Scotch Broom was bigger than a person. It was a jungle,” said McArdle.

In order for the land to be suitable for a community garden, the city and the Rotary removed the Scotch Broom, dug a trench, piped water over from Hubbard’s Creek, and added faucets. Next, the Rotary provided the labor and materials necessary to construct all of the beds. They also provided the material needed to erect the fencing around the community garden.

To this day, community collaboration and generosity remain as strong as ever. Every spring, community members provide sheep manure and mulch. It has been a challenge to keep the grass and weeds contained, but community work parties have helped control the invasive weeds.

Additionally, there are a few beds reserved each year for the local food pantry, the Common Good. Local gardener extraordinaire Laurie Prouty has been in charge of the two reserved beds where all of the produce harvested is donated to the Common Good.

“They just love it when I roll up and have handfuls of greens. They are thrilled to have fresh greens,” said Laurie.

The community garden is in its fourth year of production. Each year, the garden has grown. The first year there were 20 and now there are 43 garden beds. Garden tools, wheelbarrows, two small portable greenhouses and a variety of seeds are available for any gardeners to use. There have been other additions, including the construction of a garden shed, which was recently painted with a beautiful mural of vegetables by local artists.

Garden beds are available to rent for one year with registration starting in April. There is a limit of one bed per person, though renting a second is possible if there are extra beds available at the end of the registration period. Renting a bed is very reasonably priced at $10 per year with unlimited water access for growers. For more information on the Port Orford Community Garden, contact garden managers Bill McArdle at billmcardle@charter.net or Laurie Prouty at laurieprouty@gmail.com.
Recommendations

Recommendations for Community Food Efforts

1. Create and support a food system council or coalition of regional stakeholders.
   - The council should be comprised of stakeholders from all facets of the food system including farmers, ranchers, fishermen, nonprofit organizations, city government, interested citizens, retailers, and distributors.
   - As there will be one Resource Assistance for Rural Environments AmeriCorps member next year for Coos and Curry Counties, it was decided the coalition should represent a united Coos & Curry food system council.
   - Those involved with creating the council should host planning workshops to gather interested stakeholders and create a strategic plan for 2014-2015.
   - Identify needs within the county that are not currently being addressed by other organizations. Focus on finding ways to address and take action on those needs.
   - This council could serve as an incubator to help initiate regional food system projects.

2. Increase communication and partnerships between all involved in the food system.
   - Increase communication between existing food-oriented organizations.
   - Create one website for everything Coos/Curry Foods.
   - Continue to update the Curry County Local Food Guide.

3. Increase community food system outreach and education.
   - Plan service-learning opportunities and field trips to share gardening strategies for citizens interested in learning about growing in their own backyard garden.
   - Sponsor community meals featuring locally sourced food where attendees can learn about area farmers who supplied food, where to access these local foods, how to cook what is being served nutrition of foods being prepared, etc.
   - Organize informational booths at Farmers’ Markets, fairs, festivals, and other community events.
   - Continue to update and expand Curry Local Food Guide
   - Continue to manage Curry Local Foods Facebook page
   - Continue to update and manage Curry Local Foods website

4. Increase visibility of local food in grocery stores, co-ops, and markets.
   - The grocery stores, co-ops, and markets throughout Curry County do provide local foods for purchase. It would be a good idea to assess the foods that are currently stocked in each of the retail outlets in the county.
   - Retail outlets could increase marketing around those local foods, such as having a ‘local food only shelf’, in-store displays listing the local food options and profiles of the farms, and in-store samples of the local foods available for purchase.

5. Community Outreach
   - Nurture food-based educational opportunities through existing organizations and groups.
   - Coordinate events and programs around local foods (expert speakers, Farm dinners, Farm tours, gleaning opportunities.
   - Write press releases, newsletters, Facebook pages, and Website updates.

6. Increase food systems and garden education to school districts throughout Curry County.
Recommendations

- Increase support for school gardens.
- Create lesson plans around produce that can be grown in our region.
- Increase community support for the garden throughout the summer months.
- Coordinate with cafeterias to include garden harvests in meals.
- Assist school districts in incorporating more locally produced food into their menus.
Works Cited


Appendix A

Rural Grocery Store Owner Survey
Oregon Food Bank
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.

   ___ ATM Bank
   ___ Books/cards/gifts
   ___ Cafe/restaurant
   ___ Catering
   ___ Delicatessen
   ___ Fuel
   ___ Groceries
   ___ Other (specify) __________________________________________________________________________
   ___ Hunting/fishing/camping supplies
   ___ Institutional supply (school, hospital)
   ___ Pharmacy
   ___ Photo development
   ___ Pre-packaged snacks
   ___ Self-serve snacks/drinks
   ___ Video rental

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?

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
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:

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.

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

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

12. Do you collaborate with other small independently owned stores?
    - yes     no
    If yes, for which purposes? Check all that apply.
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?

| 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. |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 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?

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?

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
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<td>Sun</td>
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Appendix

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality of food</th>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<td>Availability of food (variety, brand choices)</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prices of items offered</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Customer service</td>
<td>Not Very Well</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business hours</td>
<td>Not Very Well</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buying locally</td>
<td>Not Very Well</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting Food Stamps/SNAP and WIC</td>
<td>Not Very Well</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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Which of the above do you feel is the most significant for you and your store?

____________________________________________________________________________________
Appendix

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@oregonofoodbank.org, Megan Newell-Ching, Community Resource Developer, Oregon Food Bank, 1-800-777-7427 x2270 or mnewellching@oregonfoodbank.org.
Curry County Consumer Questionnaire
Oregon Food Bank - Community Food Assessment Project

We are gathering information on the food needs of consumers in Curry County. The results of the anonymous survey will be used in the 2014 Curry County Community Food Assessment. For more information, please contact Carrie Courtney at Curry Watersheds Partnership at 541-332-5039 or carrie.courtney@currywatersheds.org.

1. What community do you live in? _____________________________

2. What is your gender?
   • Male
   • Female

3. What is your age?
   • Under 25
   • Between 25 and 54
   • Over 55

4. Is food accessible in Curry County?
   Yes   No     Comments _______________________________________________

5. Is food affordable in your community?
   Yes   No     Comments _______________________________________________

6. In your opinion, how serious is hunger in your community?
   • It is not an issue
   • Somewhat serious issue
   • Extremely serious

7. Why serious/Why not serious?
   ______________________________________________________________________

8. What factors, if any, affect your ability to get the food you need? (Check all that apply)
   • Distance to food source
   • Cost of food
   • Lack of transportation
   • Cost of transportation
   • Low income
   • Availability of quality/variety of food
   • Rising cost of household expenses
   • Medical costs
   • Disability prevents you
   • Childcare costs
   • Unable to use non-cash funds (SNAP, WIC, etc) to buy food at retail outlets nearest you

Other ______________________________
9. Are you eligible for government food assistance?
   - Yes
   - No
   - I do not know

10. 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

11. Where do you primarily get your food from? (Check all that apply)
    - Grocery Store
    - Farmers Market
    - Convenience Store
    - Food Pantry/Bank
    - Hunting
    - Fishing
    - Natural/Specialty Store
    - Grow your own
    - Community Supported Agriculture
    - Community Supported Fishery
    - Restaurants
    - Outside Curry County
    - Other: __________

12. How far do you travel to purchase your main source of food?
    - 0-5 miles
    - 6-10 miles
    - 11-25 miles
    - 26+ miles

13. Do you buy food that is produced within Curry County? (Check all that apply)
    - Fruit
    - Vegetables
    - Milk
    - Poultry
    - Meat
    - Eggs
    - No, I do not

14. If not, what is the main reason you do not purchase local food? (Check all that apply)
    - Not available
    - Too expensive
    - Do not know where to purchase it
    - Not food I like
    - Other ____________________________
15. Which of the following do you think we need more of in this region?

- Farmers' Markets
- Farm Stands
- Community Supported Agriculture
- Community Supported Fishery
- U-Pick Opportunities
- Local Food in Restaurants or Grocery Stores
- Co-Ops/Independent Grocery Stores
- Community Gardens
- Farm to School Programs
- Food Pantries
- Meal Sites
- Other________

16. Do you participate in a community garden in your area or have your own food garden in your yard?

- Yes
- No

17. Which of the following educational opportunities would you be most interested? (Check all that apply)

- Growing food in a home garden
- Cooking healthy food
- Shopping for food on a budget
- How to apply for SNAP (food stamps), WIC, Free/reduced school lunch/breakfast
- Local food for schools/school gardens
- Community Gardens
- Other_________________
Appendix C

Harvest Calendar for Brookings-Harbor Foodshed
(Encompasses approx. 150-mile radius)

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