

A photograph of a person in a blue cap and light-colored shirt working in a field. The person is in the background, slightly out of focus. In the foreground, a shovel with a red handle and a metal head is stuck in the ground. A white piece of paper lies on the ground near the shovel. The background shows a house and trees under a blue sky with some clouds.

Digging Deeper into Some of the Issues Confronting Local Food Policy and Councils

Presented by Kate Clancy
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Center for Farmland Policy Innovation,
and Agroecosystems Management Program

FPC Policy Activities

- Identify problems that can be addressed through policy
- Educate public about food policy issues
- Develop policy proposals
- Lobby for specific proposals



(Scherb, Palmer, Frattaroli, and Pollack, 2011)

Barriers to FPC Involvement and Policy Work

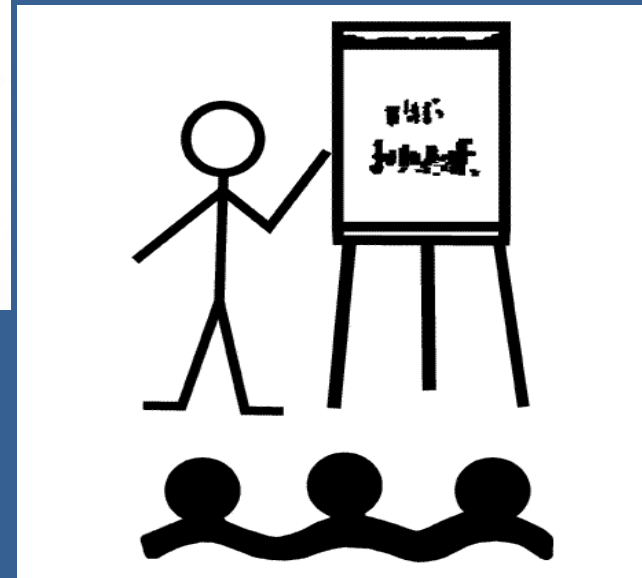
1. Lack of time



2. Lack of financial support



3. Lack of training or skills

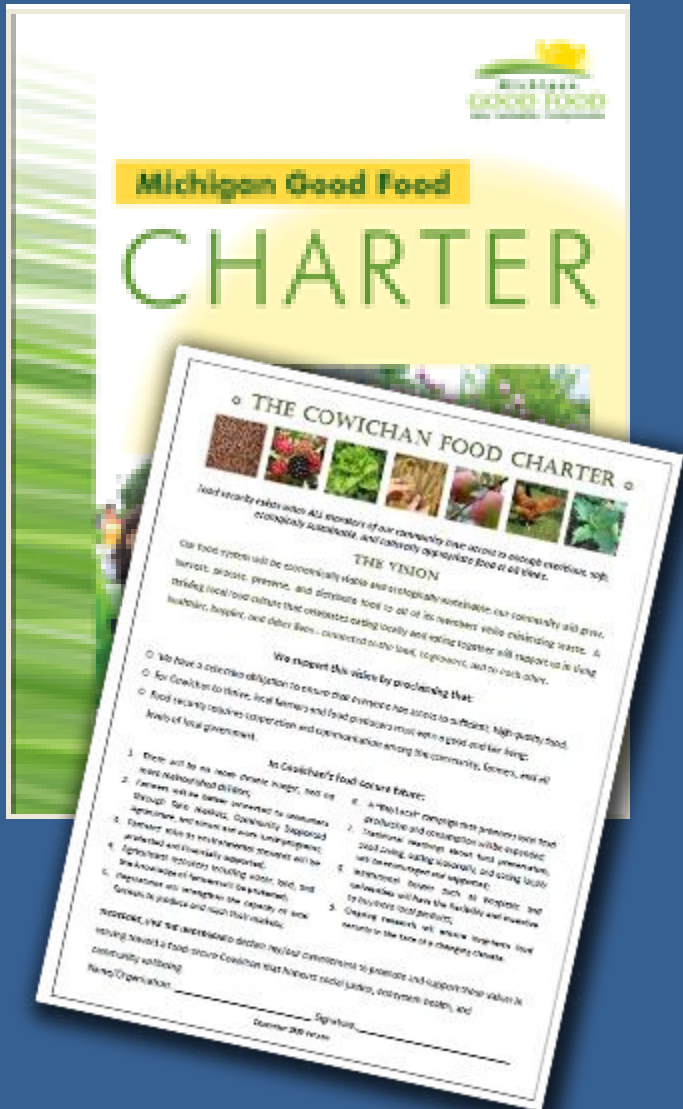


Local Food Policy Targets (1)

- Food production (e.g., gardens, farms, animal ordinances, land-use plans)
- Food sales (e.g., carts, farm to various institutions, farmers markets, local preference, on-farm processing)
- Retail markets (e.g., HFFI, corner store programs)



Local Food Policy Targets (2)



- Food waste (e.g., composting, recycling)
- Institutions (e.g., food policy councils, funding sources)
- Plans (e.g., charters, food system and food policy plans at all levels)
- Rural (e.g., farmland protection)
- Other – climate action and transportation

Components of a “Systems Approach” to Food Systems (1)

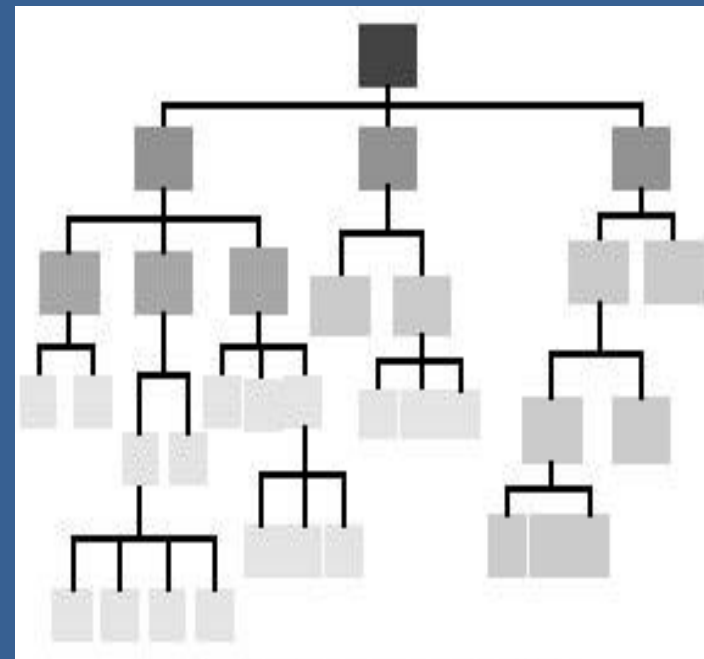
Complex adaptive systems

- The coevolving agricultural ecosystems and socioeconomic systems that comprise the present agriculture and food system
- These are constantly changing and require adaptive management to maintain a systems resilience
- Adaptive management places a high premium on learning about systems over time

Components of a “Systems Approach” to Food Systems (2)

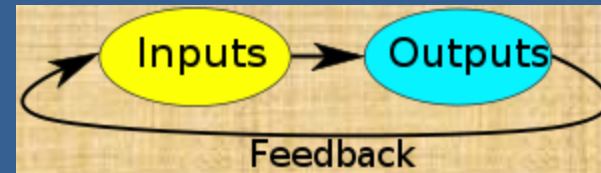
Scale

- A system contains nested scales from the largest down to local subscales
- Many scales must be engaged to successfully reach community resilience
- Nested scale structure is central to the resilience of complex adaptive systems provided the scales “talk to each other”
- Effective adaptive comanagement requires collaboration and a shared set of purpose across scales



Components of a “Systems Approach” to Food Systems (3)

Feedback loops



- Influences or messages that send information back to source and can act as control devices
- Feedback may not occur because it can't be detected, is disregarded, or is not measured
- An effective loop matches observation scales to process scales
- Patterns measured locally do not necessarily hold at larger scales

Evaluation

- How will feedback loops function?
- Very few programs or policy changes are being evaluated or given oversight
- Improvements in one outcome may be at the cost of another – this requires empirical investigation

Urban Agriculture

- Hotbed of activity around country – including Kaptur bill
- Defined as agriculture in or near cities



- Studies leading to misleading headlines (UDL 2011; Grewal 2011)
- Multiple benefits – but many are unmeasured

Some System Questions

- What percentage of an urban population's need can be met through urban farming/gardening?
- What percentage should be produced over what period of time?
- What are the total costs of self-reliant production?

Some System Questions

- What are other viable uses for urban space?
- What percentage of food that is or could be produced by nearby farmers will be displaced?



- What food system roles are cities most suited for?
- How do local, regional, and state systems talk to one another?

Should Urban Areas Care About Farmland Preservation?

- Little discussion in many documents and plans
- Essex et al.
15 periurban counties
No networking of farmland preservation groups with farm viability



Local Government Engagement with Farmland Preservation

- City, county, and regional comprehensive plans
 - Madison and Dane County, WI
 - Santa Fe, NM
 - Marin County, CA
 - Boston Metro Planning Council
 - Southern CA Regional Council of Governments
- Food system plans
 - Buffalo, NY
 - New York City
 - Greater Philadelphia / DVRPC
 - Seattle Local Food Action Initiative

Some System Questions

- Given urban development and population growth, will present policies regarding farmland preservation work?
- How can feedback loops work between large-scale urban agriculture and periurban and rural agricultural production?

A Few Recommendations

- Consciousness of bigger picture
- More strategic evaluation
- More critical analysis of problems and best solutions
- Someone designated to begin the institutional networking