

# Making the Connection Between Local Foods and Main Street?



# Local food impact

## Legend



**Inner ring** – food system components



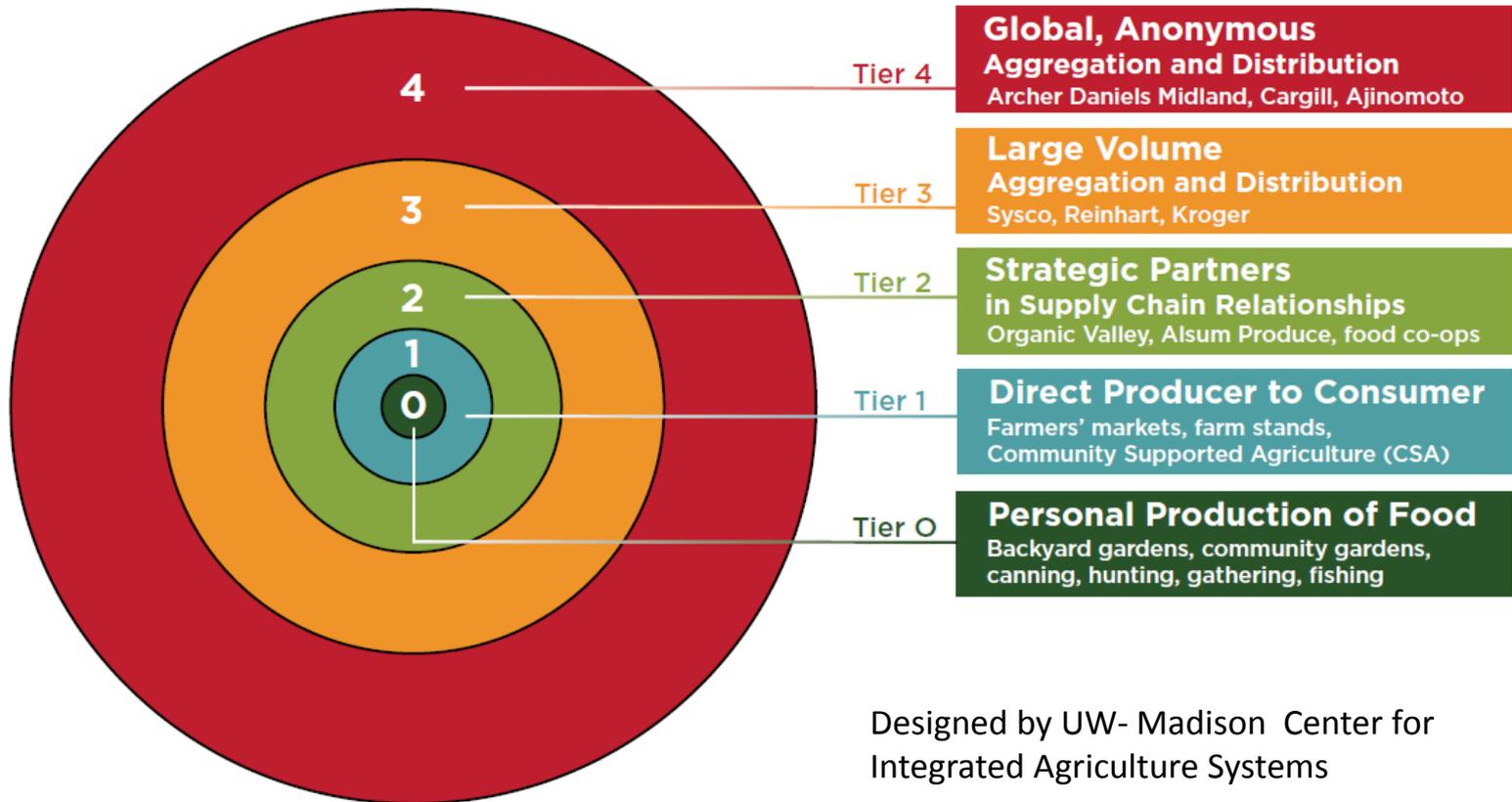
**Outer ring** – community-based food system outcomes



Food Connections, prepared by the C.S. Mott group for Sustainable Food Systems, available at

<http://www.mottgroup.msu.edu/uploads/files/59/CACfoodprofile.pdf>

# Food System Tiers





# KEN METER STUDY

## DID YOU KNOW?

If Central Illinois consumers bought **just 15% of their food** directly from local farms, our farms would generate **\$639 million** of new income annually.



## MULTIPLIER EFFECT:

A dollar spent locally generates **two to seven times as much** income for the local economy as a dollar spent at a local chain.



# OBSTACLES TO CREATING A MORE SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM IN ILLINOIS

- Inefficient transportation system
- Not enough farms producing fruits and vegetables
- Lack of a coordinated marketing and data management system
- Education

**FARM  
FRESH  
NOW!**

# LOCAL FOOD TIME TICKER

Eating locally is more than a trend. Peak season, fresh-picked produce gives you the best taste, and maximum nutrition, making it the best value for your food-dollar. Below, we give you just a few of the many reasons and seasons for choosing fresh produce from your local farms.

A strange thing happened on the cross-country trip to your grocery store:

On average, "fresh" vegetables **LOSE UP TO 45%** of their nutritional value between being picked and landing on a grocery shelf.

Source: Institute of Food Research (IFR Extra, Ltd.)



24 HOURS LATER



WITHIN 1 WEEK



**Locally-grown produce** is allowed to come to peak ripeness on the plant, so it has higher levels of many phytonutrients. It often gets from the farmer's field to your table in less than 24 hours — so it tastes better, *and* is better for you!



time since harvest **0.5 days**  
distance traveled **50 miles**

VS.

time since harvest **13 days**  
distance traveled **1500 miles**



**day 3**

A majority of fresh vegetables have lost at least 1/3 of their nutrients.

Source: Rich Pirog, et al, "Food, Fuel, and Freeways." (June, 2001)

# Project Goals

- Form partnerships
- Form a co-op grocery store = Green Top Grocery
- Study the feasibility of a Food Innovation District
- Create the Central Illinois food hub network
  - Commissioned a feasibility study
  - Awarded USDA- Rural Development grant
  - Arthur – May 2014



# What's a Food Hub?



# Farmers markets 2.0

- Market as a food hub
- How can you provide the best value for vendors?
  - Cross promotions between farmers markets and Main Street businesses
- Potential for vendors to become storefront business
  - Bushel and Pecks in Beloit, WI
  - Station 220/Epiphany Farms in Bloomington
  - Farm Market Kitchen in Algoma, WI
  - Food Innovation Kitchen in Mineral Point, WI

# What can you do to promote local foods?

- Hold a retail promotion for local restaurant that features local foods – Local Flavors- Illinois Stewardship Alliance
- Chef/Farmer mixer
- 10 percent challenge
- Start researching Food Innovation Districts/Culinary Arts District
- Talk to farmers to see if there are potential business opportunities.



# Food Innovation District

- Economic Gardening Tool
- Definition: “geographic concentration of food oriented businesses, services, and community activities that local governments support through planning and economic development initiatives in order to promote a positive business environment, spur regional food system development and increase access to local food,” Northwest Michigan Council of Government
- Culinary District – Bridgeton, New Jersey

# Resources for food system work

- National Good Food Network – Wallace Center
- Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems – University of Wisconsin
- Leopold Center – Iowa State University
- Center for Regional Food Systems – Michigan State University
- DCEO/Family Farmed.org/USDA partnership
- Stewards of the Land/Legacy of the Land – Livingston County, IL
- USDA – Know your Farmer, Know your Food Compass

# Good time to be in local foods

- Several Community Supported Agriculture – [www.localharvest.com](http://www.localharvest.com)
- Central Illinois Buy Fresh, Buy Local Guide – IL Stewards
- U of I Extension – Small farms & local foods educator
- Illinois Farm Bureau Local Food and Regional Food Summit – November 12, 2013 at Heartland Community College
- Beginning Farmer training
- Growing interest by community colleges to support local foods

# Thanks & Any Questions?

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