Columbia County Community Food Assessment

Food in the Farmscape
We do research and outreach exploring the nature, history and culture of the agricultural landscape in Columbia County.

Ultimately, it's about fostering a sense of connection.
Guiding Questions

- What does the Columbia County food system currently look like?
- What would Columbia County look like if more people ate “real food?”
- What are the gaps, barriers, synergies and opportunities?

Where have we been? Where are we now? Where do we want to be?
Exploring how food is grown, distributed, processed, bought, shared, and eaten in a community.

Reveals inter-relationships, gaps, synergies, opportunities

Needs & Strengths

Participatory & Collaborative
In other words... the “food system”
Community Food Security

A condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice

- Hamm and Bellows 2003

Goals

- Everyone has enough good, healthy food
- Food is grown sustainably and justly
- The community has greater self-reliance

Why do a Community Food Assessment?
Knowing where we are so we can create the kind of future we want
Columbia County Current Picture: Some numbers*

- # of farms: 554
- # of farms with direct sales: 125
- Number of farmers' markets: 9
- Adult Obesity Rate: 27%
- Number of fast food restaurants: 35
- Child Poverty Rate: 15.6%
- Percent of Children on SNAP (Food Stamps): 11%

Where have we been?
Some of what we've been exploring....
The Changing Face of Agriculture in the Country

Intensity of Agriculture – Darker Green means more land in farms.
The Changing Face of Agriculture in the Country

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1870

(c.a. peak of agriculture in the County)
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Columbia County

1930
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Land Development in Columbia County: Structures Built Along Rt. 9 Corridor

- structures built before 1948
Land Development in Columbia County: Structures Built Along Rt. 9 Corridor

- structures built before 1948
- between 1948 and 1980
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- structures built before 1948,
- between 1948 and 1980,
Columbia County relative changes in farm production

- Wheat
- Rye
- Hay
- Apples
- Milk
- Sheep
Columbia County Change in Farm Size & Number of Farms

Consolidation of dairy farms

Rise of market gardens?
Still to be explored...
Changes in other aspects of the food system

- Grocery Stores
- Other food outlets
- Emergency Food Programs
- Processing Facilities
- Distributors
What do these changes mean for community food security?