



DANE COUNTY FOOD COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2008

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Dane County Food Council
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2008 marked the development of a strategic plan for implementing future goals of the Dane County Food Council (DCFC). To facilitate the process, the council participated in a planning exercise conducted by Carol Roth of *Starfish Consulting Inc.* As a result of the exercise, the council decided to reduce the number of its subcommittees and instead pursue initiatives through an expansion of outreach and collaboration efforts.

One of the primary issues the council focused on was hunger. Jane Voichick, DCFC member and retired professor of nutritional sciences, served as the council's representative on the Wisconsin Food Security Consortium. The consortium sponsored four regional hunger forums around the state. Five council members participated in the first forum in the series, titled "Ending Hunger in Wisconsin: Setting the Table for Action," held in Richland Center on September 23.

In follow-up to the forum, Jane facilitated a meeting at Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin to explore local responses to issues of hunger and food insecurity. The event highlighted the four "table legs" of food security: family economic security, access to affordable and healthy food, federal nutrition programs, and emergency food assistance. Over 30 members of the community attended.

INSTITUTIONAL FOOD PURCHASING INITIATIVES

The council is pleased to report significant progress on implementation of county board resolution 257, 2006-07, which calls for exploring options for Dane County and other institutions to purchase locally produced foods. Over the past two years, the county's economic development planner, Olivia Parry, has worked with Badgerland Produce Auction and numerous local institutions to develop the Institutional Food Market Coalition (IFM). IFM facilitates large volume purchases of locally grown food by connecting public and private area institutions with local producers through the Badgerland Produce Auction in Montello, WI.

In 2009, IFM anticipates doubling the number of participating institutions to over 30, and sourcing 200,000 to 400,000 pounds of produce from area farmers. Expansion of the program is being assisted by a grant through the state's "Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin" program.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH EFFORTS

The council is continuing to develop outreach materials designed to increase awareness of local food and agricultural issues in the community. Council members Sarah Artz and Gerry Campbell worked closely with volunteer Judy Stadler to create a core presentation on sustainable food systems to use locally at various events and meetings.

Improvements are currently being made to the council's webpage, which will assist our outreach and coordination efforts. The redesigned site will serve as a clearinghouse for information about local food organizations and initiatives, and provide individuals and groups with convenient access to the many innovative projects taking place locally.

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The council also challenged its members to individually develop and lead special educational meetings on topics related to food issues in our county. The meetings and/or presentations were designed to engage citizens and encourage discussion within the community. The first of the presentations was the hunger meeting discussed above. Additional meetings are planned for the 2009 calendar year.

In addition, the Community Food Security Coalition offered a midwest regional training for emerging food policy councils on February 29th through March 1st in Milwaukee. Martin Bailkey, DCFC member, facilitated the event.

PLANS FOR 2009

The council plans to continue partnerships and collaboration with other local groups on hunger, nutrition, and food access issues throughout 2009. Moreover, DCFC hopes to continue its education and outreach efforts through the improved website and by making presentations at local businesses, community centers, churches, and meetings. The council will also build upon successful recent meetings that included discussion of distribution problems for local farmers and businesses in February and a bus trip in March to Growing Power and Walnut Way in Milwaukee to learn about urban agriculture.

Budget issues continue to affect DCFC. Although a new Dane County/UW-Extension Food System coordinator job description was created, the position was never filled. Therefore, the council went without staff for the entire year. The position has been approved once again in the 2009 county budget, but the council continues to wait on confirmation. The staffing issue continues to be a major concern for DCFC members and will affect our ability to effectively work on our initiatives in 2009.



MISSION

To explore issues and develop recommendations to create an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable local food system for the Dane County region.

MEMBERS

Sarah Artz

Martin Bailkey
Vice Chair

Gerry Campbell

Judy Hageman

Jerry Kaufman

Amanda Petrie

Robert Pierce

Ken Ruegsegger

Dale Secher

Ruth Simpson
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Jane Voichick

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