

Simcoe County Regional Food Distribution Hub

The study

How we got to the study.

- Food Partners' Alliance established fall 2008
 - June 2009 Bringing Local Food Home
 - Winter 2010-11 survey done By Georgian College
Local food to Institutions -Food Policy good idea
 - April 2011 “Food Matters–Growing Our Strengths”
 - Food and Agriculture Charter development initiated.
 - Visioning Day February 2012

How we got to the study.

continued

- The Food and Agriculture Charter of Simcoe County proclaimed: 2012
 - Key areas:
 - Access to healthy local food
 - Long term economic growth and prosperity
 - Agricultural sustainability

How we got to the study.

continued

- Simcoe County Farm Fresh Marketing Association
 - Started in 2005 and Incorporate as non- profit in 2007
 - Member based organization
 - 2008 Savour Simcoe event
 - 2011 Growing Links – Gaining Access to the Broader Public Sector (**Institutions**)

The GAP

It was quite clear that there was a gap identified.

How do we connect local producers and the purveyors.

A Food Distribution Hub?

The Study

- Through the leadership of the Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture and many commodity partners as well as with the support of the County we launched a study to look at a “Food Hub” essentially to fill the GAP.
 - It was to be a business model not social model
 - It was to be a feasibility study not a final business plan
 - It was not to have a preconceived location or form

The Study

continued

- To include the aggregation and distribution from multiple producers and multiple buyers
- It was to include both produce and proteins

The aim of the potential hub:

increase the distribution and delivery of local food products to local and regional buyers in order to enhance economic and community development within the County.

What did we look at?

Suppliers: Producers

Buyers: Restaurant, hotels, resorts & golf

Broader Public sector

Distributors & Aggregators

Agricultural Trends

Consumer food trends

The food supply chain

What did we look at?

CONTINUED

- The models:
- Flow Through
- Direct Purchase
- Distribution Integration
- Governance
- Economic impact

What did we find out?

- There are few examples in Canada
- There is virtually no comprehensive current information on the agricultural sector for the County and for that matter, the Province.
- There is “no” information on the movement of food stuffs into and out of the County

What were the challenges?

- I think that many people could not answer the basic question “What’s in it for me?”
- Although by design, it is hard for people to conceptualize about an intangible entity.
- Chicken and egg : Which comes first the commitment to ramp up production or the development of a facility?

What do we need?

- Current agriculture and food inventory data.
- To better educate and inform people on the benefits of such a facility.

Recommendations

- Find a champion of the cause : Leadership
- Review new research requirements, priorities and costs
- Determine the best ways to support existing community hubs/ aggregators.
- Create a County food & agriculture strategy with hubs in mind
- Develop a communications strategy for stakeholders

Recommendations

- Watch the U.S. With its well established food hubs
- Determine timeframes, budgets and procurement needs

What's next?

- For now we are in a holding pattern. We need more data and that hopefully will come sooner than later.
- Until then we can get more people thinking about how a hub could benefit them.

Thank you