

Participants in the 2015 Mid-Valley Food Summit learned about local food efforts in Marion & Polk counties and engaged in the exciting collaborative plans to improve the Mid-Willamette Valley food system. There was a keynote speaker, breakout sessions, informational booths, and a local lunch.

Agenda:

8:30-9:00am – Registration

9:00-9:15am – Welcome, Background

9:15-9:45am – Community Food Assessment Presentation

9:45-11:00am – 5-Minute Community Talks

11:00-11:15am – Break

11:15-12:15pm – Keynote presentation/activity with Lauren Gwin, OSU Small Farms

12:15-1:00pm – Lunch

1:00-2:00pm – Breakout Session 1

2:00-2:15pm – Break

2:15-3:15pm – Breakout Session 2

3:15-4:00pm – Closing

Breakout session 1:

- Linking producers & buyers: making local food connections
- Creating access to local food for all
- Growing food & community: building a garden network in the Mid-Valley
- Why buy local? Where to buy local? – Understanding the economic impacts of local purchasing

Breakout session 2:

- Building the local food economy in the Mid-Valley
- Understanding rural challenges to food access
- Teaching the next generation: youth & the local food system
- Who's picking our food? –Learning about the farmworker movement

Breakout Session Descriptions:

Linking producers and buyers: making local food connections

How can we get more locally produced food into our retail markets, schools and other institutions? Farmers will share what they have learned about selling to wholesale and institutional markets; buyers will discuss how they purchase from and contract with area growers. We will also explore what it takes for farmers to enter these larger

markets, and potential infrastructure or support needed locally in order to increase local food connections.

Moderator: Amy Garrett, OSU Extension

Presenters: Bon Appetit, the food service management company at Willamette University, will share about their commitment to sustainability and how they work with local farmers through their Farm to Fork program. Fresh and Local Foods will share about how they work with area farmers as they produce healthy, locally sourced food at affordable prices for schools, hospitals, and other institutional buyers. Farmers connected to each business will share their experiences.

Creating access to local food for all

Local food access can be limited for many reasons. Some of the biggest are the connections to low wages, poor working conditions, and limited access to fresh, local food. This breakout session will focus on some of the systemic reasons why there is such a problem accessing local food and identify efforts taken by community and statewide organizations to help connect local communities with nutritious, local food.

Moderator: Surabhi Mahajan, Community Food Education Coordinator, Marion-Polk Food Share

Presenters: Chloe Eberhardt with Partners for a Hunger Free Oregon will discuss SNAP match programs that are happening across the state of Oregon. Kaely Summers with Adelante Mujeres in Forest Grove will discuss the Forest Grove Farmers' Market, prescription Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, and more. Josie Riggall will discuss her work with the WIC (Women Infants and Children Federal Nutrition Program) with outreach at the Salem Saturday Market. Elise Bauman will talk about the creation of Salem Harvest and the connection between the farmers, volunteer harvesters, and the Marion-Polk Food Share.

Growing food & community: building community gardens in the Mid-Valley

At the Marion-Polk Food Share, one of our strategies to end hunger is to "shorten the line" at emergency food assistance areas through community gardens. Community gardens help people grow a portion of their own food and become more food secure in a more nutritious way. This session will explore the different community garden structures that exist in Marion and Polk counties and give models of how community gardens help the fight to end hunger.

Moderator: Jared Hibbard Swanson, Farm & Garden Manager, Marion-Polk Food Share

Presenters: 3-4 seasoned community garden coordinators from across Marion and Polk counties

Why buy local? Where to buy local? – Understanding the economic impacts of local purchasing

How does local purchasing really impact our communities? Where can I buy local meat? What is a CSA share? All of these questions and more will be answered during this interactive session. The focus of this session is twofold: first to create a shared understanding of the economic impacts of buying local food. Then there will be a question and answer portion for attendees to ask two local experts all of their questions about where and how to buy local food products.

Moderator: Spencer Masterson, Community Food System Manager, Oregon Food Bank

Presenters: Spencer Masterson will explain the economic impacts of local purchasing, drawing on institutional research as well as examples from across the state of Oregon. Nate Rafn, founder of Rafn's Restaurant, and Minto Island Growers will discuss where and how community members can purchase local food – whether it is from local retail stores, directly from farms, or other cooperative models.

Building the Local Food Economy in the Mid-Valley

Where is the intersection between local economic development and food system work? How can we join forces to strengthen markets for farmers, create jobs, and link more consumers to local food? In this breakout, we will explore the Food Hub model, learn about other economically oriented food system efforts happening locally and statewide, and connect with tools that can support food system projects in your own community.

Moderator: Lexi Stickel, Community Food Systems Coordinator, Marion-Polk Food Share

Presenters: Ecotrust will discuss their new REDD Food Hub in SE Portland; Rural Development Initiative's (RDI) will share about their food system work in rural communities across Oregon, and specifically their Wealthworks model; and the City of Salem will present about the early stages of a Food Hub/Mercado project on Portland Rd.

Understanding rural challenges to food access

How far do people have to travel to visit a grocery store? What happens when public transportation is unavailable? While the mid-Valley is rich in agriculture, there are still high levels of food insecurity across the region. Rural communities are at greater risk for food insecurity for a plethora of reasons. Public transportation, lack of full-service groceries, higher food costs at smaller stores, lack of access to fresh fruits and vegetables, lack of economic opportunities, and other barriers will be discussed

in this informative session. Methods to increase access to food in these rural areas will also be examined.

Moderator: Sharon Thornberry, Rural Community Liaison, Oregon Food Bank

Presenters: Francene Ambrose, the coordinator of Iskam MekMek Haws (the food pantry in Grand Ronde), and Jennifer Ohren, the coordinator of the Mission Benedict food pantry in Mt. Angel, will both discuss the unique challenges that community members in their communities face.

Teaching the next generation: youth & the local food system

Across Marion and Polk counties there are several efforts that are connecting the next generation with their community food system and sustainable agriculture. Some of the most food insecure people in the United States are children. Thus this connection has the impact of increasing local food security to children right now as well as creating a future system where people have the experience necessary in maintaining the local food system they grow into. This session will explore these efforts and their impact on youth in Marion and Polk counties.

Moderator: Aaron Poplock, FoodCorps Fellow with Oregon Department of Agriculture

Presenters: Each presenter will describe their work with unique involvement and methods for connecting our community's youth with the local food system. Emily Griffith is the Coordinator for the Youth Farm with Marion-Polk Food Share. Dean Anderson will discuss the Dallas Youth Garden project in Polk County. Molly McCarger of Pearmine Farms will explain the Adopt a Farmer program.

Who's picking our food? – Learning about the farmworker movement

Marion and Polk counties are rich agricultural areas with large-scale farming operations that sell on the international markets. Farmworkers play an essential, and frequently undervalued, role in our food system. Often they are tending, growing, harvesting, and packing food in the Willamette Valley that they cannot afford to buy from the grocery store. In this session, three local experts who work with farmworkers will discuss their work and the history of the farmworker movement in Oregon.

Moderator: Aileen Careaga Cutz, Latino Program Coordinator, Merit NW

Presenters: Jaime Arredondo will tell the history of the farmworker movement in the northwest with the formation, triumphs and struggles of PCUN (one of three farmworker unions in the United States), and Dan Quinones with WorkSource Oregon will discuss his work with farmers and farmworkers. Frances Alvarado will speak of her work with farmworker families in Woodburn.