

# SHARING FOOD DOWN THE ROAD



Prepared by National Farmers Union Local 316



Local 316 of the  
**national farmers union**  
*In Union Is Strength*

**FOOD DOWN THE ROAD**   
*Toward a Sustainable Local Food System for Kingston and Countryside*

# CONTENTS

## **1 / INTRODUCTIONS**

- 1 / Who Are We?
- 2 / FDTR in a Nutshell
- 2 / A Timeline
- 4 / Our Goal
- 4 / Food Security and Social Justice

## **5 / BEFORE FDTR**

- 5 / The Soil
- 6 / About You
- 7 / The Seeds
- 8 / Leadership from Farmers
- 10 / Farm Issues Are Food Issues
- 10 / Unifying Principles
- 10 / Sustainability

## **12 / LEADING UP TO FDTR**

- 12 / Getting Started
- 12 / Building the Whole System
- 13 / Regular Meetings
- 14 / NFU Feast of Fields
- 15 / Time to Grow
- 16 / Getting Funding

## **17 / “FOOD DOWN THE ROAD”**

- 17 / The Year
- 17 / Meeting Groups and Organizations
- 18 / Meeting the Community: Marketing an Idea
- 19 / Tools don't do the job. People do.
- 19 / Volunteers

- 20 / Media
- 20 / Partnerships

## **22 / MANY WAYS TO TAKE PART**

- 22 / The Research Network
- 23 / The Food Down the Road Community Council
- 23 / Local Food Declaration
- 24 / Engaging Local Government
- 24 / Institutional Buying
- 25 / Community Gardens
- 25 / Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
- 26 / Nothing Succeeds Like Success
- 26 / Events
- 27 / The FDTR Spring Series
- 30 / The Local Food Summit
- 32 / Challenges and Lessons
- 35 / Short-term objectives achieved during the project
- 40 / What Next

## **44 / APPENDICES**

- 44 / Appendix 1: Excerpts from the AMI Application of September 2006
- 46 / Appendix 2: Excerpts from the First Year Report
- 49 / Appendix 3: Take Action Bookmark Text
- 50 / Appendix 4: Local Food Summit Program

## **53 / ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

# INTRODUCTIONS

*“Food is our common ground, a universal experience.” —James Beard*

This booklet is our way of sharing a community project called **Food Down the Road: Towards a sustainable local food system for Kingston and countryside** (FDTR).

For many years a number of organizations, groups, and individuals in Kingston and surrounding area have worked towards this kind of initiative from various directions. The National Farmers Union (NFU) Local 316 as well as the Sisters of Providence has worked for years, cultivating a systemic approach to ensuring that healthy, affordable food is available to everyone.

Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Public Health have also contributed to FoodNet, a vital tool and resource.

The National Farmers Union’s public forums and workshops, Feast of Fields events (with their intentional awareness and education components), Save our Seeds campaign and local food logo initiative addressed the problems of the food system from different directions.

The Sisters of Providence and other food community partners met on May 11, 2005, and the NFU organized and hosted a meeting on January 7, 2006. A further, more focused meeting on February 6, 2006, identified a small group of farm and food activists to develop the idea of a local food conference for that fall. This group eventually became a smaller team (the majority of whom are local directors of the NFU) who developed an Agricultural Management Institute project proposal for NFU Local 316 that included a series of momentum-building events and a local food conference and a strong farm and food network-building component to it. Once funded, the NFU initiated Food Down the Road.

## Who Are We?

By this point in our story “we” are many people: almost entirely volunteers; a couple of half- time coordinators (working more than full-time); a handful of short-term, specially skilled, contract people; and

.....  
FDTR was funded as a one year project (Dec. 06 –Nov. 07) but our intention is that it be the beginning of an ongoing and growing movement. This account, based on detailed documentation and interviews, was written for us by a consultant at the end of that first year.

.....  
“The Sisters of Providence have felt compelled to work to overcome the root causes of poverty, in keeping with our mission statement of seeking to empower others, especially the poor and oppressed, to achieve a quality of life in keeping with their human dignity.”  
For more information go to <http://www.providence.ca/justice/>

.....  
Welcome to FoodNet, the internet-based resource centre of the [Food Security Workgroup](#) at the [Ontario Public Health Association](#) (OPHA). This electronic network links public health units and other organizations involved in food security in Ontario, allowing members to share information about food security programs, policy and research initiatives, community action and advocacy efforts. It is a way for people involved in food security to communicate and work more collaboratively with one another.  
<http://www.opha.on.ca/foodnet/initiatives/kingston.html>

.....  
This is the story of FDTR not of the people behind it. Different individuals and groups in various combinations have all made vital contributions.

.....  
Early on we agreed to use the word 'eaters' instead of 'consumers' because 'consumer' tends to commodify people and the food we require to sustain life.

.....  
The National Farmers Union is a dynamic general farm organization representing the interests of small and medium-sized farms. The NFU is structured to take direction from the grassroots. At the local, regional and national levels, farmers make farmer-friendly policies for farmers. At all levels, the NFU collaborates with other like-minded organizations on important issues which affect the sustainability and viability of farms. The NFU also invites non-farmers to become associate members of the NFU and work side by side together, because food issues are farm issues, and farm issues are food issues!

a steadily growing community of interested and supportive folk in the Kingston region. The ages, backgrounds, and experiences of the people involved are as diverse as are the people who eat food. Absolutely everyone is an eater and therefore everyone is a part of the food system.

Central and essential to the creation and implementation of the FDTR project itself is Local 316 of the National Farmers Union which represents farm families in the counties of Frontenac, Lennox & Addington and the City of Kingston in Eastern Ontario. (To learn more about the NFU, or to join, go to [www.nfu.ca](http://www.nfu.ca))

**FDTR** has been funded by the Agricultural Management Institute (AMI), a joint provincial, federal government program. ([http://www.adaptcouncil.org/current\\_programs/ami.asp](http://www.adaptcouncil.org/current_programs/ami.asp))

## **FDTR in a Nutshell**

**Food Down the Road** is a broadly based community effort committed to nurturing the growth and encouraging the development of our local food system to work better for everyone without damaging the environment on which it depends.

## **A Timeline**

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| September 2006          | Applied to AMI for funding                        |
| October 11, 2006        | Notified we received funding                      |
| Late November 2006      | Put out Project Coordinator Request for Proposals |
| December 9 and 11, 2006 | Interviewed applicants & engaged Wendy and Andrew |
| December 2006           | Began FDTR  |
| March 10, 2007          | Speakers' Series Event 1                          |
| March 28, 2007          | Speakers' Series Event 2                          |
| April 23, 2007          | Speakers' Series Event 3                          |
| May 10, 2007            | Speakers' Series Event 4                          |

## **2 - Sharing FDTR**

### **Food Down the Road Quick Stats:**

- Organized four Spring Series events and a 3-day Local Food Summit (Total attendance at Spring Speakers Series and Local Food Summit topped 1200).
- Mobilized 80-plus volunteers, 12 consultants, 10 FDTR Community Council members with support from 36 participating and partner organizations.
- Coordinated by consultants.
- Launched a FDTR website and developed a database.
- Wrote and published the 70-page ***From the Ground Up: A Primer for Community Action on Kingston and Countryside's Food System.***
- Published the second edition of *The Local Harvest*.
- Updated and distributed the *Eating Close to Home* directory.
- Delivered 78 NFU/FDTR presentations, displays, courses and workshops.
- 79 media stories about FDTR.
- Created an inventory of the local food system.
- Wrote reports on the Eat From Kingston's Countryside brand, FDTR itself, and on food charters and food councils across Canada.
- Created a Local Food Summit Declaration that will lead us towards a food charter for our region.
- Brought, for the first time, a presence for local food to Taste of Kingston 2007. This year had several restaurants featuring "local food" through collaboration with FDTR.
- Chilifest 2007 had its first "local chilli" made by Liaison College featuring local ingredients.
- FDTR was the subject of a feature item on CBC's Fresh Air, with food columnist Anita Stewart.

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| October 16, 2007   | FDTR Media Conference (World Food Day)  |
|                    | Released <i>From the Ground Up: A Primer for Community Action on Kingston and Countryside's Food System</i> |
|                    | Announced Local Food Summit   |
| November 2-4, 2007 | Local Food Summit   |
| December 21, 2007  | Local Food Summit Declaration   |
| November 30, 2007  | End of start up year  |

.....  
 For background information we suggest that you take a look at, *From the Ground Up: a Primer for Community Action on Kingston and Countryside's Food System*. We have hard copies of it or you can get this document, as well as *The Local Harvest* newspaper, and lots of other resources from our website [www.food-downtheroad.ca](http://www.food-downtheroad.ca).

From time to time in this document we point the way to specific sections in *From the Ground Up*.

## Our Goal

**The goal of the FDTR project is to strengthen the connections between local farmers, food processors, distributors, retailers, social justice advocates, cooks, and eaters of all income levels, so that each part of the local food system is in harmony with the other parts and with the whole, for the benefit of all.**

## Food Security and Social Justice

**The prime purpose of a food system is to feed people, all the people. No amount of hunger is acceptable, and decent nutrition, the kind that can be had from fresh local food, is a fundamental human right.** Food security and social justice have always been on our agenda. For more information on these vital elements and the various issues related to them see *From the Ground Up*, page 9, and links to the websites of the Sisters of Providence and KFL&A Public Health, given above.

# BEFORE FDTR

## The Soil

We aren't alone. Other regions have embarked on local food initiatives and we have consulted with them and learned from their experiences. We are developing relationships with some as part of a network or in collaboration on specific projects.



Just Food Ottawa:  
[www.spcottawa.on.ca/ofsc/](http://www.spcottawa.on.ca/ofsc/)

Eat Local Sudbury:  
[www.eatlocalsudbury.com](http://www.eatlocalsudbury.com)

LOCAL FOOD PLUS: Let's go the distance so our food doesn't have to. Local Food Plus (LFP) is an award winning non-profit organization that brings farmers and consumers to the table to share in the benefits of environmentally and socially responsible food production. We are committed to building and fostering local sustainable food systems by certifying farmers and processors and linking them with local purchasers. For more on LFP go to [www.localfoodplus.ca](http://www.localfoodplus.ca).

Many other communities, large and small, have put a lot of energy into improving their local food systems and eagerly offer a wide range of ideas and initiatives which are working for them and can work for us: **Farmers' markets, local logo programs, Community Supported Agriculture initiatives, institutional buying, community gardens** etc. (See sections on [pages 24-26](#)) There has also been extensive work done on the development of **local food charters** and **food policy councils**.

There is also valuable academic research (See Further Reading in **From the Ground Up**, page 62) and a wealth of hands-on experience available.

Communities are not in competition with each other for local markets but rather, all benefit from a broader appreciation of local food. The way is clear for cooperation and mutual support. While there will

For a detailed discussion see: *Canadian Food Charters and Policy Councils: A Preliminary Assessment* - a report that was compiled for the **Food Down the Road Community Council**. To get a copy of the full report contact the NFU at [info@fooddowntheroad.ca](mailto:info@fooddowntheroad.ca)

.....

An ongoing and pre-existing program initiative of the NFU in our area is the Eat from Kingston's Countryside logo program. Similar programs are in effect in a number of other communities and have proven effective in helping shoppers identify, and therefore choose local food. Farmers within the defined area, in our case within 100 kilometres of Kingston, sign onto the program annually and get access to the logo to identify their products as local.



.....

By local did we mean our county, our bio-region, our watershed? Some communities already have a food based identity like the Holland Marsh or the Annapolis Valley. We chose to define "Local" as being within 100 km of our major urban market, Kingston, because it fairly effectively described our region. To see how we chose to define "Sustainable" see the section on [page 10](#).

.....

One of the fastest ways to exclude people is to assume that they know particular background information and terms. We want to be as inclusive as we can here, and that may mean that some of this description will seem obvious or simple to some of you.

## 6 - Sharing FDTR

always be a need and room for innovative thinking, the road to a sustainable local food system is well marked and increasingly well traveled.

So, the big challenge was not to invent a whole new way of growing, buying, selling, and eating food but rather developing the public awareness, the political will, and the community organizational capacity to get us all moving in the same direction.

At the same time, **we had to be moving and be seen to be moving**. To many people talk, however fruitful, is just talk. Right from the start our efforts needed to include practical, tangible improvements in the system: developing local markets and producing and processing capacity so that food doesn't have to travel hundreds or even thousands of kilometres when we could, or already do, produce the same food locally. (See the **Results** section on [page 32](#))

For these and other changes to really take root and become elements in a truly coherent and sustainable system, however, the "human soil" had to be prepared. The social nutrients of understanding and trust needed to be drawn to the surface.

A lasting local food system can only grow from common ground, shared language, perceptions, and visions. We needed to use many different kinds of communication, including frank talk and honest listening, in many different settings (e.g. one to one, between groups, and in public). We also needed to define each and every one of our terms.

Cultivating, nourishing, harvesting, and sharing that communication is what **FDTR** is about.

### About You

We're guessing that you already know, perhaps all too personally, about the crisis of the family farm (See **From the Ground Up** page 20) and about the degradation of soils.

**We want to show you how and why we got started, what we decided to do, how it turned out, and to talk a little as we go about some of the thinking that happened along the way.**



.....  
**Left:** A spread of heritage tomatoes for tasting at the National Farmer's Union Feast of Fields. (Photo: Wendy Luella Perkins)

.....  
*Putting an end to soil degradation has become an important part of ensuring that farming continues to be economically viable. Thus soil conservation is part of the overall challenge of sustainable agriculture, along with manure management, and wise use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers.*

—From *Agriculture Soil Conservation in Canada*,  
 A report to Parliament. For the whole report go to [http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection-R/LoPBdP/MR/mr151-e.htm#INTRODUCTION\(txt\)](http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection-R/LoPBdP/MR/mr151-e.htm#INTRODUCTION(txt))

## The Seeds

Naturally, there is no clear starting place for processes like this one. They grow organically, rooted in history. Wanting to get our food from farmers closer to home is a new idea for many. It is part of a rapidly growing movement that sees sustainable local food systems as a vivid expression of a larger shift in how we think about and relate to food and community. There are compelling arguments that decentralized food systems can be an important part of preparing for the looming consequences of Global Climate Change and fossil fuel depletion while reducing our contribution to these problems.

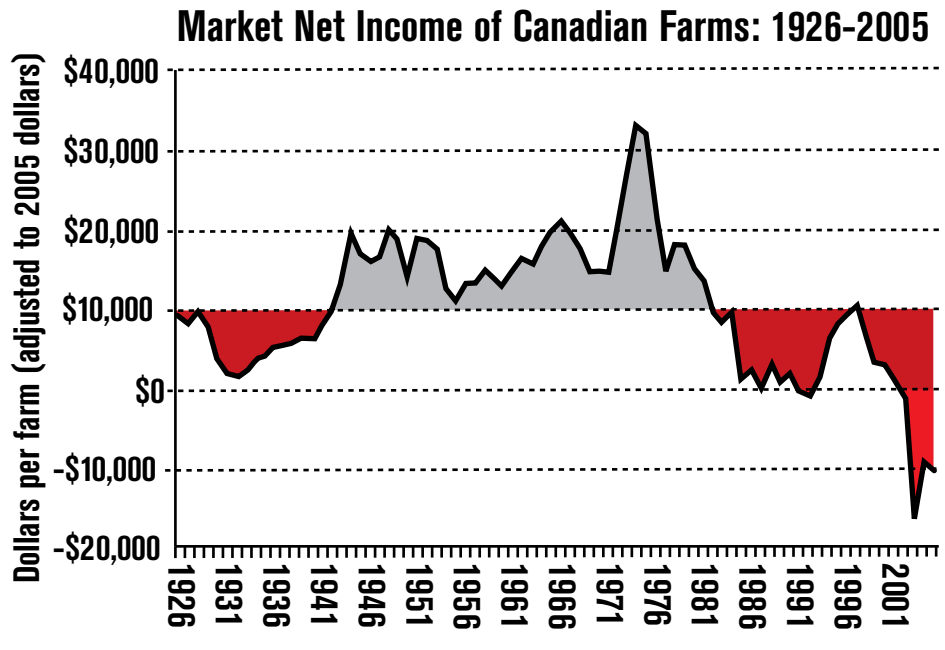
There are also personal reasons:

- Far too many people cannot access or afford fresh, wholesome food;
- Farmers need to be able to feed their families if they are going keep feeding everyone else;
- We all want food that is delicious and nourishing; more and more people want to get their food from somebody they know and can trust; and many people crave a fuller relationship with

.....  
**Should We Fear the Factory Farm?**

Massive livestock operations are raising troubling questions about water safety and food quality caused by the current corporate dominated agri-business food system, with its massive dependence on cheap fuel, synthetic “inputs” and “outputs”, and global distribution.

.....  
 See the Local Food Summit section on [page 30](#) and Thomas Homer-Dixon's website at <http://www.homerdixon.com/>.



both nature and neighbours and see connecting through food as central to satisfying that desire.

**For all these reasons this document is more about encouragement than persuasion, more about ideas than arguments, and more about hope than fear.**

## Leadership from Farmers

*There is a quiet revolution happening in the U.S. and it is connected to local food. Whether in family meals or in restaurants, Americans are enjoying the delicious taste of local dairy, vegetables and fruits. Farmers markets are springing up in towns and cities across the country. Parents and teachers are supporting more local food in school cafeterias. Community gardens and urban farming are growing food in cities, and more and more soup kitchens and food banks are using produce from local and regional farmers to meet the emergency needs of hungry Americans.*

—Peter Mann, World Hunger Year’s International Director.

.....  
 Farming is more than a business or even a passionate personal commitment to an ideal. It is far more than a lifestyle, something you put on and off like a fashion accessory. Farming is a fundamental human activity, as basic as loving and eating.

.....  
 For the complete Peter Mann article go to [www.worldhungeryear.org/fslc/faqs/ria\\_052.asp](http://www.worldhungeryear.org/fslc/faqs/ria_052.asp)

*The frenzy for ever-ripe food flown in from colossal farms thousands of kilometres away is feeding an earth emergency. It's time to embrace the seasons, heal the planet and fuel regional economies by becoming true locavores. Here's a guide to doing it right, plus tips on ensuring local edibles earn their green card.*

—Cover story. "EAT LOCAL". *NOW Magazine*. Toronto. Oct.11. 007

Local food movements are gaining momentum as are the increasingly linked movements towards healthier, sustainable living, often expressed through food choices.

There are a number of communities much further down the road than ours and we urge you to find out about them.

While it is painfully true that farm incomes are desperately low (see graph at left) and that farmers and the work they do is so undervalued that lack of social recognition is often given as one of the reasons the children of farmers are unwilling to carry on with the family farm, it is also still true that farmers have a well deserved reputation for personal integrity, good sense, and commitment to community. **Their numbers may be dwindling but farmers are still part of the social bedrock.**

However, the NFU has brought credibility to this effort in Kingston and countryside, as well as lifetimes of intimate engagement with the soil, the water, the weather, and the subtle processes by which food -- the beautiful stuff with which we nourish and celebrate our bodies, our hearts, our families, and communities -- is patiently conjured out of them. Farmers, especially those committed to ecological farming practices, have a comprehensive grasp of complex, interdependent, living systems. They are deeply and urgently motivated to change the current system because it is rapidly consuming them.

Although far too many of us are not food secure, we all participate in the food system every day. Our participation is passive. We choose just how active we want to be. Some of us work with food and so are more directly engaged in the system, but farmers live and breathe it.

No one element in a system defines or owns it, but **farmers are so integral to the food system that any effort to bring about a degree of fundamental change cannot succeed without them and is much, much stronger when it comes from them.**

For the rest of the NOW Magazine article go to [http://www.nowtoronto.com/issues/2007-10-11/cover\\_story.php](http://www.nowtoronto.com/issues/2007-10-11/cover_story.php)



### Local Hero campaign

CISA's 'Be a Local Hero, Buy Locally Grown' program was initiated in 1999 and has become the nation's longest running comprehensive multi-media buy local campaign. Read about it online: <http://www.buylocalfood.com/Local%20Hero.htm>

### FarmShare

CISA has been providing shares of the local harvest to low income seniors since 2004. Read more about this program online: <http://www.buylocalfood.com/FarmShare.htm>

.....  
The realization that farm issues are food issues may seem obvious, but it marks a very important shift in the frame through which many of us see the situation. It means that the problem is no longer seen as “us”, the 2% of Canadians who are farmers, against “them” the 98% who aren’t and seem to not understand or care. Instead it means that “we”, the 100% who are vitally connected to food every day, have to take a hard look at “our” food system, because it is in the nature of complex, interdependent systems that they have to work all the way around or they don’t work at all.

Realizing that farm issues are food issues also means accepting that the story isn’t only about farmers and that other people have issues with and expectations of the food system that need to be addressed if the whole thing is to work.

.....  
To us, food is so much more than a commodity or nourishment or a sensory pleasure, although of course it is all three. Food is a fundamental expression of life itself and by pretty much any definition of the word it is sacred. We come together over food to celebrate, comfort, and renew ourselves, our families, and our communities. The life cycle of food is inseparable from our own.

.....  
The term “Sustainable growth” has been variously understood to mean many things, from achieving self sufficient stability to all consuming growth everlasting.

## **Farm Issues Are Food Issues**

Everyone involved has a different story of how they came to see the need for what became **FDTR**. For some it was the simple but profound realization that farm issues are food issues.

The current food system is working well for the shareholders of a few corporations. It isn’t working for the environment, or the public, and it sure isn’t working for farmers. It isn’t even working for itself. It can’t last the way it is. (***From the Ground Up***, page 13)

## **Unifying Principles**

*“There is no love sincerer than the love of food.”* —George Bernard Shaw

The big secret, the one and only way that large numbers of widely diverse people and groups with very different experiences, needs, and situations can come together and form an effective network, a community capable of unified action, is if they share at least one clear defining principle, a value against which all ideas and positions can be measured. That principle keeps the whole complex thing on track, it is a beacon to attract new people and it sustains those already involved.

**The unshakable core that unites, inspires, and sustains everyone involved in FDTR is a passionate belief in the beauty, power, and importance of food.**

## **Sustainability**

*Sustainability rests on the principle that we must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Therefore, stewardship of both natural and human resources is of prime importance. Stewardship of human resources includes consideration of social responsibilities such as working*

*and living conditions of labourers, the needs of rural communities, and consumer health and safety both in the present and the future. Stewardship of land and natural resources involves maintaining or enhancing this vital resource base for the long term.*

—“What is Sustainable Agriculture?”

We never did arrive at a precise and fully shared practical definition of “Sustainable Farming Practices”. It describes a principled intent to consider and try to minimize environmental impacts.

To an understandably sceptical farmer the word “sustainable” might seem to mean “good for the environment in general but expensive for me.”

While vagueness isn’t usually seen as a strength, in this case it allowed agreement to form around an important idea. As our local food system evolves, this question will continue to be an important topic of discussion.

One thing we do all agree on is that **for practices to be truly sustainable they have to be sustaining**. They have to sustain the people involved every bit as much as they sustain the quality of the food, air, soil, and water. It’s a package deal. Just as the soil can only give for so long before it gives out, everybody, including you, needs encouragement, nourishment, and reward. Sometimes that comes as pay or profit, other times it is in the form of recognition, learning, personal satisfaction, enhanced community, good food, or just plain fun.

.....  
An excerpt from “*What is Sustainable Agriculture?*” by the US Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program. For the full article go to <http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/concept.htm>

.....  
Despite constant time pressures we always made a point of thanking and celebrating our volunteers. We handmade FDTR screen printed t-shirts, we held volunteer appreciation parties, wrote thank you cards, etc.

# LEADING UP TO FDTR

## Getting Started

**So, it's time to start building a Sustainable Local Food System.**

**How?**

The answer to that question is going to be a little different for each community and situation.

This document is an account of our experience, not a recipe for yours. We offer it in the hope that some of what we have done, and have learned by doing, may be of use to you. We have no idea where you are in your journey so we'll start pretty early in ours.

Of course, there has always been a local food system in Kingston and the surrounding area.

The farmers on our core team, and many others, have been growing food, using sustainable practices as they defined them, and selling their production locally for decades. Some local farmers have developed direct marketing strategies over the internet or through value added products – some have even opened their own café (E.g. Desert Lake Gardens, [www.dlgardens.com](http://www.dlgardens.com)). The NFU has made it easier for eaters to find local food by producing the Eating Close to Home Directory, which is a printed brochure that lists local farms and the products that they offer. This information has been made even more accessible with the creation of the local food locator ([www.fooddowntheroad.ca/online/locator.php](http://www.fooddowntheroad.ca/online/locator.php)), which allows internet users to search for places to buy farm products in Kingston and countryside, including farms and other local retailers.

There have also been a number of initiatives, some started by the NFU, to improve and develop the marketing of local food in our area.

## Building the Whole System

**What makes FDTR distinct is that we took on the task of developing the local food system as a whole, as a system.**

.....  
The Kingston Public Market lays claim to being the oldest continuously running outdoor market in North America.

.....  
See the section on Local Food Logos, [page 10](#).

It has been said and can be seen that all human networks, organizations, movements, and communities of all kinds, start with one-to-one relationships. Two people meet, talk, and discover that they share a common passion, dream, thought, idea, fear, or need. One of them has a similar encounter with a third person and introduces the other two and soon the thing takes on a life of its own. We have already mentioned several of the organizations and programs which led up to the inception of FDTR, and in some form, something like it had been brewing for a while in the area. But one very important formative moment for us was a simple dinner invitation.

*From an E-mail sent by Ian Stutt, an NFU farmer who was working in the Justice and Peace Office of the Sisters of Providence in November of 2005. Ian is a member of the NFU Project Committee.*

“Hi there,

I would like to invite you to a potluck dinner sometime in the New Year. We will cook up a main dish and ask you each to bring something small - a starter, a salad, or some dessert thing. Andrea has welcomed us to her farmhouse for the evening. It will be a chance to eat and talk about food and farming...with the future in mind. As you know, many people are talking about the future of food and farming in the region and it's not easy to figure out how to ensure sustainability for the next 100 years. Have a look below at the food charter that people in Manitoba (and elsewhere) are preparing and picture a series of gatherings over, say, 2 years that would bring a wide range of people together to imagine the future of food and farming.”

In this one paragraph is so much of what we're talking about: a focus on food and community, a long term vision of sustainability, openness to wide ranging discussion and a continuing pattern of regular meetings, already well established.

## Regular Meetings

We believe it is vitally important to keep food on the table, both metaphorically and literally. Make no mistake, **getting involved in this sort of community network building means going to A LOT of meetings.** If those meetings are held around a boardroom table under harsh lights in somebody's office even the most committed person can



.....  
Even if there is no pressing matter requiring immediate attention, **regular meetings are vital because they become part of everybody's routine: you don't have to find a time to meet when it's already in your schedule.** At times it can strain the patience of a post, but the payoff begins when you decide, collectively, that you are ready to move on to the next stage, to take action, to go public.

lose the get up and go to get up, after everything else in a full day, and go every second Monday. But **when meetings are more like gatherings of new and old friends in somebody’s kitchen with fresh, home-grown food on the table then going regularly stops being a chore and becomes a genuine pleasure.** We all tend to be a good deal more open minded, patient, and reasonable when we share food. Whether it’s the three hundredth meeting of a steering committee or an open meeting for new volunteers, the presence of food and the people who grew it make all the difference. **We all want our efforts to be sustainable and for that we need sustenance.**

With fabulous local food at the centre of every meeting we always started with an inspiration (shared by anyone on something in the food and farm world they had witnessed or heard about that they found inspiring). We wanted to start every meeting with hope and possibility. Then we would take a few minutes to check in with members; how folks were doing—building relationships and friendships.

## **NFU Feast of Fields**

In the years and months before FDTR, the NFU wanted to make and strengthen contacts between local farmers and the people who buy, cook, and eat food. We wanted to showcase locally produced food; we wanted to draw attention to the problems with the existing food system and the benefits of a more sustainable, local system. We wanted to celebrate and share the food around us, and so a feast seemed like a good idea.

We decided to launch the **First Annual NFU Feast of Fields in August, 2004.** Other Feasts of Fields have been started by chefs who wanted to bring city folk out to where the food came from.

The basic idea is as simple as it is delightful: a food centered festival held on a beautiful farm. For a single price of admission, people strolled between open tents where a wide variety of local restaurants and caterers offered samples of their specialties, all made from locally produced foods. Music, tours of the farm, and children’s activities filled up the time between nibbles and chats with new friends found in modest line-ups. We used signs, workshops, displays, theatre and intentional dialogue to bring forward some of the issues and challenges

.....  
People arrive at meetings bringing with them all sorts of differing moods and preoccupations from the rest of their lives. A few minutes helping them find a common energy level and focus can save unnecessary conflicts when you get down to business.

Remember, who “we” are has grown and changed over time, as with any community. The intention here is to use the word as inclusively as possible and to focus on the story more than the characters, to chart a journey not to stake claims.

of food and farming and some ideas for solutions to these problems.

For three years the NFU Feast of Fields was the focus of our group's activities and it was an unqualified success.

- 650-700 visitors annually
- 16 restaurants involved
- 30 farms in farmers' market
- Touring the farms
- Learning about food and farm issue

Tickets sold out early and it became a highlight of the summer for hundreds of people, some of whom had never set foot on a farm before. It was a great party and it offered a vision of a time in which everybody respects and appreciates food and farmers. It significantly increased public awareness of our group and, in general terms, of the issues that concerned us. It created thousands of those vitally important one to one conversations. It also gave us **an excellent opportunity to increase our organizational capacity-to get better at getting things done.** Very much in harmony with the NFU Feast of Fields were a number of other diverse initiatives.

The NFU Feast of Fields was, without question, the right thing to do at the time. After three successful annual events, we wanted, and felt ready, to do more. We wanted to start making concrete, systemic, long-term change. To do so we needed to hold events and activities on a year 'round basis.

## Time to Grow

So, drawing on and driven by all of this rich history and vigorous activity, a committee emerged intent on taking the evolution of the local food system to the next step. The majority of the committee members were NFU Local 316 directors.

We applied to the **Agricultural Management Institute (AMI)** for funding to contract a coordinator for one year with a modest budget to carry out the projects we had envisioned. We were successful.

---

### From the NFU:

- Eat from Kingston's countryside logo , launched in Feb 2006 (see [page 10](#)).
- *The Eating Close to Home* directory listing farmers supplying food to local markets
- Month long art show on Food and Farm issues in August 2006 at a local restaurant, the Sleepless Goat, entitled *Save and Savour*
- Frontenac Farmers' Market started with Frontenac Community Futures funding
- Publication of *The Local Harvest* newspaper in August 2006 and November 2007
- Other community initiatives at the same time:
  - New farmers' market started up at Queen's
  - A local giant puppet company, Spiral Soup Community Players, wrote and performed "Just Food" describing the perils and promise of global food system (4 performances, over 1000 attendees). While Spiral Soup wasn't part of the NFU it did receive funding from the Union.

---

The AMI program has been renewed, and a little research should reveal other possible sources of funding. Otherwise you may be looking at fundraising from the community, perhaps with events that could give the same sort of organizational benefits as we got from the NFU Feast of Fields.

## Getting Funding

*The unique feature and key to long-term success, of this project is the promotion of **market development in the context of systemic development**. This requires the engagement of a diversity of stakeholders in the collaborative process of building market intelligence, vision and concrete development strategies. The work will be organizational, promotional and practical. We will bring farmers, processors, distributors, marketing groups, retailers, experts, community organizations, local government and eaters together to learn about local food success stories from across North America. We will then ask ourselves: “What do we have in terms of existing local food awareness, infrastructure and capacities? What do we want? How do we get there?”*

—From the Project Summary of our AMI Application, September 2006. For more from the application see Appendix 1.

The AMI program had a specific emphasis on Market Development. **We were, and still are, convinced that the best way to get to the point where farmers have adequate and appropriate local markets for their food is through the comprehensive development of the whole local food system.**

When we made this point to the people at AMI they became very supportive of our plans for FDTR.

The next step was to develop a **Request for Proposals** (RFP). As this would be a key, defining document, setting the frame for everything to follow, we engaged a consultant to draft the RFP for us. Based on the funding application, it spelled out the tasks, timelines, and deliverables we wanted.

We had funding for one coordinator, but two individuals, Wendy and Andrew, submitted a joint proposal that included an equal sharing of the role.

.....  
This arrangement offered a broad base of talents and skills.

# “FOOD DOWN THE ROAD”

## The Year

This first year of Food Down the Road released a whole lot of pent up energies from a diversity of people; both as frustration with the current system and enthusiasm for what can be. Although (and really because) so much had already been accomplished, there emerged a remarkable shared feeling that this approach was exactly the right thing to do and it was the right time to do it. As exciting as all of that energy was and still is, much of it might have been spent and lost without the levels of detailed planning, continuous communication, and scrupulous record keeping that were carried out by the coordinators.

Among the very first things done was to agree on and establish **best practices** for financial and program accountability to the funder, the NFU Project Committee, and the community. We knew from the start that we wanted **FDTR** to become a permanent, sustainable community movement. We had to make sure we didn't burn any bridges along the way; networks live on trust at all levels. We had to be absolutely clear and transparent about what we were doing, how, and why, and we needed to spend public funds wisely and carefully.

We knew that in this first year we needed to make as much difference as we could. **The entire year was designed for maximum effect, with a steady build towards the Local Food Summit with the Summit Declaration as a way forward.**

## Meeting Groups and Organizations

We spent some time mapping the known participants in the local food system, discussing whom to focus on and why, until a strategic networking process emerged.

The first part of that process was to meet with key groups and to introduce the idea of FDTR and what we hoped it could accomplish and to listen to everything that came back. We emphasized that we were not pushing a single sector agenda in competition or conflict with what they were doing but rather seeking a whole system approach that could serve everybody. We didn't intend to take over but we were

.....  
Although we were far from being newcomers to either the swirling tangle of food related issues or the relatively small but intensely engaged world of people trying to untangle them in our area, our project was new. We had some money. We had coordinators. It was vitally important that it make a good entrance. As we knew from our own experiences, anybody who cares enough to try to change things has strong personal feelings about them and even the most generous and open person, or organization, can be put off if their efforts, goals, and achievements aren't adequately acknowledged and included in further plans.

.....  
This process was complex but we formed a detailed consensus on the make-up of the existing local food system and the related network of interested agencies.

.....  
Within and enhancing the structure of any network are direct partnerships between organizations, usually focused on specific events or initiatives. See Partnerships on page 20.

- .....  
FDTR coordinators and volunteers brought a FDTR presence to events reaching 1000's of people. Over the span of the project, we have:
- Gave 55 presentations about FDTR
  - Distributed FDTR materials at 78 events, reaching almost 120,000 people
  - Collected contact information from more than 500 people
  - This data does not include all the informal communication among citizens and the phenomenal buzz in our region about building a sustainable local food system.
  - For more details see Appendix 2. First Year Report pg 18.

.....  
You may even be pleasantly surprised to find a local marketing expert eager to help out on a socially positive, good news project.

willing to facilitate and to lead if our leadership was welcome. We came away knowing faces and names and with some of the mutual trust, common language, and respect that were to be the real substance of the healthy network we were trying to develop.

## Meeting the Community: Marketing an Idea

One of the big marketing challenges we faced was, and still is, the complexity of the food system itself and the issues surrounding it. We needed to engage people in stages. Before we could convey any message or invite any kind of engagement we needed to give people reasons to stop and notice us by catching their attention with simple, clear images, both verbal and visual.

It's worth your while to look at a variety of logos, names, and tag phrases before designing yours. The "Be a Local Hero: Buy Local" is a particularly successful example. A logo can do much more than just identify your project. It can become the centerpiece of a program by which food shoppers can easily identify local food.

The precious moment when people's attention is captured provides an opportunity to spark their curiosity and provide them with enough information to make them want more. We wanted to give people something to take away from a first encounter, something that would remind them days and weeks later of that meeting. We came up with the idea of a bookmark, with information about the project and events on one side and a list of ten concrete things people can do to help (Appendix 3) on the other. We also developed a series of posters for our events, each of which was an evolution of the one before (see example at right).



Next we needed to make it easy for people to learn more and to get involved. **The website is such an important feature of modern communications that getting people to visit it is increasingly becoming the goal of all outreach efforts.** We're rather proud of ours. It was launched at the same time the Local Food Summit was held, in order to use the buzz of the Summit to promote the website and encourage people to visit it.

## Did we mention that our website is [www.fooddowntheroad.ca](http://www.fooddowntheroad.ca) ?

Arts and media marketing experts will tell you that most people will not become meaningfully aware of something until they have come across it in three different ways. e.g. "I've seen an ad for that movie on TV, heard it reviewed on the radio, and my friend liked it = I'll go see it".

## Tools don't do the job. People do.

Passive outreach tools like logos, slogans, flyers, and websites are only one part of an effective public awareness campaign. Just as it is true that a strong core support community for your project will be built one interpersonal connection at a time, the same is true for the spread of public awareness and involvement.

No expensive media campaign can match the effect, or the cost effectiveness, of spreading the word one person at a time. Involving many people gives you a gentle army of advocates in the community.

## Volunteers

Volunteers are the lifeblood of any community movement. People are incredibly generous with their time and talents as long as they feel they are making a difference and are being appreciated.

Our extraordinary volunteers gave literally thousands of hours. Sometimes they undertook tasks for which they had special skills or talents, like writing or editing press releases and articles, creating multimedia presentations, baking treats, entering data or facilitating



.....  
"Pressing the flesh" is a cliché of modern politics, but it's true that a citizen is far more likely to vote for somebody they have actually met in person.

.....  
A food focused effort has a huge advantage when it comes to recruiting and keeping volunteers because of the celebratory and social nature of food itself. See the section on Meetings, [page 13](#).

.....  
In addition to the NFU Project Committee, the Community Council, the Research Network, *The Local Harvest* contributors, and the Website team, FDTR had over 80 volunteers on the Support Our Spring Series and Support Our Summit teams and sub teams as well as about 50 other volunteers doing more general support work.  
For full details see the First Year Report, Appendix 2.

groups at events. Sometimes they greeted people, handed out programs, questionnaires or pencils, gave directions, or registered event participants. Sometimes they stacked chairs, carried boxes, and cleaned up. Always they were the friendly face of this movement.

The easiest way to lose volunteers is by letting them get lost in a crowd. Coordinating volunteers, especially in large numbers, takes time and energy. Volunteers gained a sense of achievement (and the actual achievement) from working in committees and sub-committees for specific events and tasks.

## Media

We did enjoy considerable support from some of our local newspapers, radio and television. We enjoyed the most successful media relationships when we worked with individual reporters to develop newsworthy stories of interest to their audiences.

In general, the more a media outlet identifies itself as local the more likely it is to be interested in covering a local initiative. Become familiar with where your local editors and reporters stand on issues by reviewing their articles.

Once you have a targeted media list of reporters, the best chance of getting the coverage you seek is to prepare an article that provides the details you want covered and follow-up contact information. The best releases are written in journalistic style with a mix of facts and quotes about the news item. This makes it easier for reporters to cover the story.

## Partnerships

One way to summarize the role of FDTR is to call it a catalyst, drawing together a network to change a system. The broad nature of an all inclusive network has many great strengths but a truly comprehensive network also includes and benefits from specific partnerships.

One of the strengths of FDTR is the partnerships we have built that will move these various projects forward:

.....  
For advice and further links relating to Media Relations go to <http://www.charityvillage.com/cv/research/rmed.html>

.....  
Local media are receptive to a good news story, especially when it has a specifically local tone.

- The Food Declaration/Charter and Food Council projects have been developed in partnership with KFL&A Public Health, St. Lawrence College, the Kingston Economic Development Corporation (KEDCO) and the Sisters of Providence.
- The New Generation of Farmers project is supported by Heifer International, NFU Local 316, Windkeeper Sanctuary, FarmStart, Just Food Ottawa, EcoPerth, Ontario Farmland Trust and St. Lawrence College.
- The Cooperative Food Distribution Initiative includes OPRIG (Ontario Public Interest Group) Kingston, NFU Local 316, Sisters of Providence, and the Partners in Mission Foodbank
- Participation from LFP (Local Food Plus) brings the capacity of Ontario's most successful local food marketing organization to our region. Together, we hope to develop a program for distributing certified local food to St. Lawrence College, and other local institutions, as well as create a reliable market and increased sales and profitability that should motivate more farmers to begin shifting their production system towards more profitable local markets.

# MANY WAYS TO TAKE PART

Getting our message out is a vital part of our project, but equally important is letting people in, which often happens in different ways. Some are curious, some are angry, some have a personal or financial interest, some are altruistic, some are hungry, and some are well along a parallel or convergent road. The mix of people and agencies involved in any discussion of the food system is at least as complex and multi-faceted as the system itself. **We believe** that in order to unify and develop that mix into a network it is necessary to create as many diverse points of entry as possible.

University professors and food bank users, retired farmers and teenage environmentalists, amongst many others, all need to see places for themselves in the discussion. Some efforts need to be broadly inclusive, while others need to be specifically targeted. Our Spring Series Events did both. The first part of Event One was designed for the general public while the second half was aimed at farmers and food businesses. Event Three had an afternoon discussion for folks particularly concerned with community food security, as well as an evening for the general public.

Some people connect best by attending a talk, others prefer to talk themselves, some interact best in a relaxed, social forum, and others are more comfortable in a highly structured, task-oriented setting. We tried to make a place at the table for everyone. All of these initiatives depended on volunteer participation to make them work. Some of our volunteers came from Queen's University and St. Lawrence College, while others were local farmers and people training to be farmers, and so there was a youthful quality to how they worked and how we worked with them. At the same time we had a strong representation of seniors that enriched our mix.

## The Research Network

The Kingston region has two universities and one community college; a large academic sector for a city of its size. A high proportion of our volunteers came from these institutions. The Research Network was involved in generating *From the Ground Up – A Primer for*

.....  
The food system approach, which is so important to what we have done, is not the only way, of course. Others may well decide, for valid local reasons, to work in a very different way, focusing on market development, perhaps if production capacity is already strong or vice versa. We can only describe our experience. It is up to you to take from it what you can use.

**Community Action.** This document is meant for people working on local food and farm issues in the Kingston region. It is intended to build common ground and a common language for people coming from diverse backgrounds. It is also a reference where information and perspectives about the local food system have been gathered from a range of academic and community sources. Gaps have been identified for further research in this document, which will help our Research Network generate information needed to build a more sustainable local food system. These identified gaps can also help link us and other researchers by providing researchers, such as graduate students, with a research topic that can make a difference in the community.

## The Food Down the Road Community Council

Other communities have established formal food councils.

The Toronto Food Policy Council is an independent agency within Toronto Public Health. While these bodies generally do not have the authority to pass or enforce laws they can have considerable moral influence, some research capacity, and a mandate to advise and critique governments on food policy related issues.

## Local Food Declaration

One of the most significant tools food councils wield is a **local food charter**- a document, signed by the leadership of municipal governments, which clearly declares values, actions and intentions on which specific policies are to be based and against which they can be assessed.

**A food charter works at the official and political level as a clearly defined set of guiding principles.** It helps to keep decision makers on track.



.....  
*Food Policy.* Toronto Public Health. December 8, 2007. [http://www.toronto.ca/health/tfpc\\_index.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/health/tfpc_index.htm)

*The Charter.* Manitoba Food Security Network. December 11, 2007. [http://food.cimnet.ca/cim/43C1\\_3T7T4T97.dhtm](http://food.cimnet.ca/cim/43C1_3T7T4T97.dhtm)

*Food Policy Council.* July 20, 2007. Community Services. December 11, 2007. <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/foodpolicy/policy/council.htm>

*City of Greater Sudbury Food Charter.* Sudbury & District Health. December 11, 2007. <http://www.sdhu.com>. Path: Healthy People, Healthy Places; In the Community; Food Charter.

.....  
 The Manitoba Food Charter is one page (pictured at left). It is offered in three languages – English, French and Cree. It became available to see and sign in March 2006.

It is endorsed by signatories - individuals, institutions and organizations. It has not been endorsed by the government of Manitoba although certain sectors of the government (i.e. Aboriginal and Northern Affairs) have been very supportive. The charter's goal is to "increase food security and sustainability of the food systems in Manitoba by providing a common focus for action for food system stakeholders through the Manitoba Food Charter". The charter is written in two parts. The first describes the current situation in Manitoba; the second sets out the vision of the charter.)

.....  
At each session/workshop, participants were invited to write down their ideas on “key priorities to build our sustainable local food system.” This invitation yielded more than 600 thoughtful submissions which laid the groundwork for the development of this *Local Food Summit Declaration*. During the final session of the Summit, participants sorted the data and identified priorities for our local food system. This work was sent to the community council which crafted this Declaration.

**For more information about the creation of this Declaration, the full text of the document, and our plans to develop a food charter for our region, please visit [www.fooddowntheroad.ca](http://www.fooddowntheroad.ca).**

The beginnings of the move towards having our own food policy council can be seen in the establishment of the Food Down the Road Community Council. At this stage it does not have the stats or resources that come with a more formal structure, but our intention is that it will become a food council for our region, and an independent organization which brings together various farm and food system leaders and organizations to coordinate the movement.

**A key part of the Local Food Summit was a comprehensively inclusive process that generated material for our own Local Food Summit Declaration, which will bring us a step closer to a charter.**

## **Engaging Local Government**

A strong indication that these efforts to engage local government represent more than wishful thinking is the positive reception we received when we helped elected decision-makers to see the value of local food through presentations to municipal councils and committees in the City of Kingston and Frontenac County. The effectiveness of this outreach was demonstrated by politicians’ participation in Speakers Series Events and when Kingston City Council unanimously passed a motion to prioritize local food purchasing in a new City of Kingston food service contract. (See opposite sidebar for text of motion.)

## **Institutional Buying**

In addition to three large post secondary institutions, Kingston is also home to a large Canadian Forces Base (CFB) and a number of federal correctional facilities. Among them, these institutions feed thousands of people every day and their purchasing power is considerable. As a result of presentations and ongoing dialogue, some of these institutions are showing increased interest in, and even commitment to, adding locally produced food to their menus.

The emergence of this important new market began with the City of Kingston’s motion (following a presentation to council by a local NFU leader and FDTR; see above) to prioritize healthy and local food in the City’s RFP for a new food services contract. It continued with

CFB Kingston's request for Food Down the Road to start a dialogue with their food purchasers on June 26th, 2007 and climaxed when the President of St. Lawrence College announced that its three campus institutions (Kingston, Belleville, Brockville) would move towards setting targets for a percentage of local food on their cafeteria menus as he welcomed 350 attendees on the Saturday morning (November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007) of the Local Food Summit. News about this trend, in which institutions are increasing local food content in their menus, has been spreading and farmer confidence is growing as a result. The greatest challenges to the success of these initiatives are the consistency of supply, infrastructure and distribution logistics. The NFU has begun to work with Local Food Plus to set up a pilot supply arrangement between St. Lawrence College and local farmers. Beef (cull cows) would be an easy win in our region - this may be the anchor product. While there are logistical issues related to small independent farmers meeting large, often highly regulated, purchasing agreements with consistency, there is a huge opportunity for mutually beneficial relationships to be developed and FDTR will continue to help facilitate them.

## **Community Gardens**

No food is as local as the food you grow yourself. While cooperative community gardens may not put money directly into the pockets of local farmers, they do promote the appreciation of healthy local food and raise awareness of food and farming issues in general. They are also valuable in the growth of healthy neighbourhoods, as people get out and tend these gardens together. Most importantly, they provide very affordable, healthy, fresh local food for local plates and, as such, are a key part of the local food system.

By promoting awareness of community gardens, encouraging municipal policies which help and encourage the existence and development of these gardens, and providing a network through which to find other interested people, FDTR supports and encourages their growth.

## **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)**

A remarkable local food system success story of the past year has been

.....  
The motion in question was passed by Kingston City Council on April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007, and reads,

Moved by Kingston's Deputy Mayor Schmolka

Seconded by Councillor MacLeod-Kane

Whereas city staff are preparing a Request for Proposal for the food concession services at the Multiplex; and,

Whereas promoting healthy food choices should be a concern at a city-owned facility; and,

Whereas supporting our local farmers and food producers is important to the Kingston community; Therefore be it resolved that the Request for Proposal require responses to identify the healthy food options that will be offered for sale, and show how locally-produced food, will be offered for sale;

And further that the evaluation of submitted bids award points for providing healthy food options and using local foods in concession services

And further that Council direct the Administrative Policies Committee to form a policy in consultation with staff, to incorporate the requirement to identify healthy food options and the use of local foods in our Purchasing process.

**CARRIED**

.....

## **So You Want to Farm/Grow Your Own Food**

Some newer farmers in the Kingston area are involved in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). Read about the CSA movement in our region in Jamie Swift's piece, "[Inside the CSA Phenomenon](#)" in the second edition of The Local Harvest newspaper, available online at our website [www.fooddowntheroad.ca](http://www.fooddowntheroad.ca).

the almost threefold growth in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) efforts. In a CSA, eaters pay the farmer in advance for a share of the harvest, either as a lump sum or on a regular basis. In this way, the farmer doesn't have to shoulder all of the financial risk and cash flow difficulties associated with conventional food production and sales. Members sometimes pay with labour in lieu of cash, which addresses another problem many small farmers face, the need for intermittent and occasional extra help. Also, this helps low income eaters access fresh produce by offering their labour for a share.

CSAs have been around, or were emerging, before FDTR existed. FDTR's goal is to link these farms and farmers together in a larger, whole system discussion which will allow each of them to flourish in harmony with the others.

## **Nothing Succeeds Like Success**

As the year progressed it became increasingly clear to everyone involved, including our core funder, that FDTR was going well. This sense of momentum led us to ask AMI for additional funds to pursue a number of support projects, including the creation of this document. A key element in the sustainability of any organization is that it has institutional memory, so that it can pass on all that has been done and learned in the time of its existence.

## **Events**

The rhythm of continuous activity was punctuated by four significant events building up to the Summit at the end of the year. A series of four very different gatherings (always with great local food) took place in four very different locations; each gathering looked at the issues from very different perspectives, resulting in the effective sharing of a lot of valuable and fascinating information. Presented in attractive and engaging ways, this information took many forms, which included books, brochures, displays and representatives from a range of organizations, decorative displays of local food, slide shows of information, images, and quotations during unstructured time, live local music etc.

(One of the things that make FDTR a success is a level of attention to detail at all public FDTR events; there was a sense of “eventfulness” each time.

- Good signage so folks know where the event happens (which door to enter, where are the washrooms, etc. )
- People welcomed as enter
- Live music as people enter
- Beautiful displays of local food
- Large signs/photographs celebrating local food system
- Slide show as people gathered with inspiring photos and quotes from the local food system
- Fantastic local food
- Tables covered with red & white checked table clothes
- Program with space for writing own notes, pencils for everyone
- Invited folks to make table cards with names on them (so that folks at their table could get to know one another)—building community.

## **The FDTR Spring Series**

### **Event 1: Harvesting Support for Local Food: Success Stories from the Field**

Featured Speaker: Mark Lattanzi from the Be A Local Hero campaign.

March 10, 2007

Farmers, eaters and local business people gathered to learn what it takes to make a local food campaign successful.

180 people attended Part I: The launch of Food Down the Road and Building a Vibrant Local Food Campaign. 91 people attended Part II: Marketing Strategies that Make a Difference. 43 people came to a networking dinner in the evening.

## **Event 2: The Future of Farm & Food Sustainability: Local Opportunities in an Age of Climate Change and Expensive Energy**

Featured Speakers: Pat Mooney & Titia Posthuma

March 28, 2007

Brought farmers, eaters, and local leaders together to discuss how we can turn the challenges facing farmers into opportunities for sustainable development in our rural and urban communities.

146 people attended (about 45 of whom were farmers)

## **Event 3: Hungry for Health: Taking Steps toward Local Food for All**

Featured Speakers: Ellen Desjardins, Sue Hubay & Karine Jaouich

April 23, 2007

A full range of local food system participants, from farmers to dieticians to politicians, gathered to discuss models from cities which successfully offer fair prices to farmers, and affordable access to healthy food for all citizens.

In the afternoon, 40 representatives from a broad range of organizations involved in our local food system participated in the afternoon workshop. Participants introduced themselves first by sector and then at multi-sectoral tables where questions on issues around community food security were discussed.

190 people attended the evening event and heard the successes and challenges that the communities of Kitchener-Waterloo, Toronto and Peterborough face in providing local food to all citizens. Everyone had a chance to discuss ways we can better nourish our community during the question and answer period and facilitated table discussions.

## **Event 4: Food Movements with Momentum: Building Structures that Support Vibrant Local Food Systems**

Featured Speakers: Wayne Roberts & Mike Schreiner

May 10, 2007

The afternoon and evening sessions were focused on “structures”

that support sustainable local food system development. Food policy councils and food charters were two of many structures under discussion, from areas including policy, research, education, and marketing.

Seventy-five local farm and food leaders participated in the afternoon. They heard about local food structures from Wayne Roberts and Mike Schreiner, and then discussed where they each fit into our food system, the support structures that will enable their various organizations to grow, buy, process, cook, and sell sustainable local foods, and what their individual and collective next steps should be as organizational leaders.

Ninety-five people participated in the evening's public event, the grand finale of the Food Down the Road spring series. Roberts and Schreiner shared success stories from Toronto, followed by a question and answer period. Everyone had the chance to discuss what lessons could be learned for the Kingston area; what is unique about our region's farm and food system; and what needs to be done to support and build it.

The Series drew diverse potential partners into each others' comfort zones to discover shared interests, provided the range of entry points previously discussed, generated hundreds more of those all important one-to-one conversations, created a real buzz of energy and awareness in the larger community and media, and established a habit of continuous critical learning outside of the usual academic circles. The events also served as both promotions and learning experiences on which to base the Local Food Summit.

We can't overstate the compound benefits of these events. Working for change of any kind can be a lonely business and finding yourself in a room with hundreds of other people who share a vision and a determination to realize it can be the moment when a project becomes an energized, diverse and dynamic community movement.

## The Local Food Summit

*(See the summit program, Appendix 4)*

Here are the lead and tail of a lengthy newspaper article written by a farmer from near Tweed:

### **Long overdue – a conference about food sovereignty**

*The Community Press, Western Edition, November 9, 2007 Stirling, Ontario*

By Paula Cassidy

An event took place that has fundamentally changed me - and I would be failing as a local voice if I did not pass this on to my rural readers... (link to the whole article)

I came away from the Food Summit with an excitement that is unstoppable. I do hope that I have ignited a renewed passion in you - both farmer and eater, to go beyond this page and take the next sustainable step. Thank you for indulging me with your open minds. Cheers, courage and light to you all!

This passionately supportive article is typical of many of the responses to the summit. It is difficult to honestly describe the quality and quantity of good feeling and renewed commitment which filled the halls of St. Lawrence College without appearing to exaggerate.

The Local Food Summit was held over a weekend, with a keynote address on Friday night, workshops and lots more on Saturday, and on Sunday an exciting, almost chaotic, collective process designed to gather, sort, and begin to make sense of a small mountain of questionnaires collected over the previous two days and shape the information into the beginnings of a Local Food Summit Declaration.

Friday night's keynote speaker was Thomas Homer-Dixon, chair of the University of Toronto's Trudeau Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies and author of "The Ingenuity Gap" and "The Upside of Down" (<http://www.homerdixon.com/>). Dr. Homer-Dixon's work, while not specifically about food or food systems, is on the leading edge of a world wide discussion of the predictable and unpredictable consequences of Climate Change and other looming global crises. He spoke about how different kinds of networks have different resiliencies to crises; he argued that less centralized and tightly connected networks, like a localized food supply, are not only good for all the reasons we already know, but are excellent models for how society as a whole can prepare

.....  
Want more solid evidence of support?  
After the second event one community member spontaneously donated \$1,000 to FDTR and another \$1,000 to the NFU.



itself for what lies ahead of us. As occurred during the Speakers Series, many people found it encouraging to see that our seemingly small efforts were actually significant elements in something larger. Positioning a local movement in the context of a global issue gave both urgency and context to the whole summit. It was also exciting just to be in one room in our community with over 400 people who care about local food.

The Saturday was a full day including:

- A plenary panel,
- 18 separate workshops on a wide variety of topics (see summit program, Appendix 4),
- A delicious full-course lunch of all local food (image)

.....  
**Above:** A break out discussion group at the summit. (Photo: Judy Tse)



.....  
**Above:** Food system priorities identified and categorized at a large group session at the summit. (Photo: Aric McBay)

during which people who care about what they eat were enthusiastically building networks, to the sound of local musicians. (There was even a little dancing.) Farmers and students, activists and chefs, policy makers and food distributors, all tucking into passionate discussion and equal portions of good local food. Something important and beautiful was happening.

## Challenges and Lessons

Any community process that doesn't encounter setbacks, obstacles, and redirections isn't going anywhere at all. Some can be anticipated. Some appear out of the blue like an August hailstorm. **FDTR** is no exception. Everyone involved has, at times, felt challenged, discouraged, or unheard. As long as it doesn't happen to everyone at once, the process will still be alive and moving forward even if the path changes. Resolving conflict through principled dialogue is one of the most powerful ways to learn and to grow. That dialogue can only happen in the context of respect and openness that surrounds this whole project.

**Food Security and Farm Incomes:** There is a tension between the need to provide healthy food at affordable prices to all and the need to make sure local farmers get fair prices for their food -- prices which allow them to make a decent living. We believe that the way to answer both of these urgent needs is by improving the system as a whole until it works better for everybody. Getting there will involve a lot more discussion in our community, and in yours.

**Sustainable and Conventional:** Right from the start, we were committed to “building a sustainable local food system”, but there is still much debate about which part of the system needs to develop first, which is more important, and just how the parts relate. We believe that both the local and sustainable elements of the food system are important and intertwined. Thus, separating the two and seeing them as competing is unhealthy for the system.

**Volunteers Working with Consultants:** This first year has been a learning experience for everyone. We all want to see the project flourish, but an essential element of FDTR is sustainability of all kinds, including the people.

When contracting consultants, it is critical that both volunteer project managers and consultants have a clear understanding of what can, realistically, be accomplished with the resources available. It is vital that you, as a team, **set realistic goals and expectations for yourselves**, review those goals and expectations regularly and be willing to find triumph in every step taken towards achieving them. We knew how much funding we had and what our outcomes and deliverables were to be. But the systemic approach and process-oriented design of the project, while giving us the results we sought, took much more time to implement than any of us anticipated. People became over-committed, which led to stress and/or unfulfilled plans. Engaging project leaders can mean raising and dealing with subtle but important issues of ownership, perspective, and control. Having clearly defined shared core values and principles makes staying united much easier, but anyone qualified to coordinate something like **FDTR** is going to bring their own perspectives and ways of doing things to the project.

You’re going to need a person or people who will enhance your team, and that may well mean constructively challenging you to reconsider some of your own opinions and perspectives. In our case, in

addition to a broad range of organizational, and communication skills, Andrew brought a depth of social, economic, and political systemic analysis which allowed us to enhance the links between issues, plus a real gift for building networks. Wendy brought strong talents in facilitation, team building and event planning, as well as an emotional understanding and generosity of spirit that drew people in and kept them welcome. They were a formidable pair. With a detailed action plan, clear best practices, open and regular communications, and strong guiding principles we were able to form with them a respectful and highly effective team, the next level of “we”.

**Organizational Ownership:** We continue to work our way through questions of organizational ownership. FDTR grew out of a broad and diverse community of active partners. The NFU took on a significant leadership role as time went on, taking on substantial responsibility. Maintaining a delicate balance between the need to be accountable to our funders and NFU membership and policies, and the inclusive, systemic essence of the project itself, is an ongoing discussion.

**Talking Late into the Night:** We have built a close community of passionately committed people who have a lot to say about a very broad and deeply important topic. We are all sitting comfortably and have plenty of food. **When does the meeting end?** Accept that there is always more to say and do and that there will always be another meeting. You must start on time and set a reasonable time to end and stick to it. Anything which makes people reluctant or even hesitant to come out again is counterproductive. Starting late and running late, even a few minutes, can make people resentful at the end of a long day.

**Charging for Events:** We wanted to make our events accessible and welcoming to everyone, regardless of income; after all, people living on marginal incomes are experiencing the failures of the food system acutely and daily. Yet there are real costs involved, especially when food is provided. A sliding scale price arrangement can help, but many people are unwilling to ask. Sometimes an event partner has specific policies against charging admission. There is no simple answer to this question, other than to put it on the table early in all planning and to make a maximum effort to be sensitive to individual needs.

us, but we could have done better. Even our name, **Food Down the Road**, may suffer a little from its own cleverness. Having two or more meanings can be confusing. Our logo worked quite well, especially in the context of the evolving poster campaign described earlier. On the other hand, the Eat From Kingston's Countryside logo may subtly undermine its message of vibrant health because the plant in it is brown. It's interesting to note how very simple and unambiguous the logo is for Local Food Plus.

**Media Relations:** A key thing is to have a strong promotional and communications team. We did, but it got stretched pretty thin towards the Summit and our media relations activities suffered somewhat. The key would have been to **have team members who did not have other important Summit related duties**. We did not have enough key volunteers to go around, so the promotion and communications people were too busy to continue to give the level of energy that had been previously invested.

## Short-term objectives achieved during the project

**Inspire farmer confidence** in the viability of local marketing networks:

- **Farmers were leaders** whenever possible and this inspired other farmers. From acting as presenters and speakers at the events reported upon in this document, to doing media interviews, to the activities of volunteer teams, farmers, farm issues, and the reasons why local markets are good for business and good for community were front and centre throughout the project.
- **Farmers participated** in all FDTR events. At each of the Spring Series events, polls of participant backgrounds were taken. There were 40 or more farmers present at each of the four events, and over 100 attended and spoke at the Local Food Summit.
- **Anecdotes** from the farming community may not be hard evidence, but they have helped us to gauge farm community buy-in during the past year. There are certainly critics of local food and direct marketing, especially those whose production models are not adaptable to these innovations (understandably), but the vast majority of comments that



.....  
The following two sections are excerpted from the **project first year report**. For the full report contact us at [info@fooddowntheroad.ca](mailto:info@fooddowntheroad.ca), and see excerpts in Appendix 2.

filtered back to us were ones of hope and optimism, and a growing belief that the citizens, food businesses (processors, restaurants, grocers) and leaders in our region are ready to prioritize and pay more for food grown closer to home.

**Increase sales** of local food, thereby enhancing farm profitability:

- **Demand creation** has been one of the greatest successes of FDTR as a broad-based initiative. Thousands of Kingston and area residents have been sensitized to the benefits of local food. They are fuelling the increase local food opportunities cited below.
- **The tremendous growth of local CSAs** (Community Supported Agriculture market gardens). Kingstonians are embracing sustainably grown local food, and direct marketing! Also exciting is the fact that all of these CSAs are run by young farmers – 20- and 30-somethings who are starting out as independent growers, and whose entry into agriculture has been facilitated by this innovative model with its low start-up cost. We expect CSA memberships to increase again next season, as all four CSAs have waiting lists.
- **A new retailer focused specifically on local food:** Local Family Farms opened this summer in Verona (25km north of Kingston). All products, including value-added baked and prepared foods, are locally sourced. This has given a big boost to local producers, not least because the owners, Kim and Dave Perry, are farmers themselves and so ensure fair prices to their suppliers.
- **Farmers Markets:** More local farmers are selling more products at the Kingston, Queen's and Frontenac farmers markets. Research is required on the statistics, which have not been tracked, but everyone reports increased sales.
- **Farmer-Retailer Deals** following FDTR activities – for example, an arrangement made between Patchwork Gardens (a local vegetable grower) and Tara Natural Food (a major downtown retailer) following the owner of Tara's participation in a Retailers Focus Group on November 16<sup>th</sup>. Patchwork will be increasing production next season to meet this new demand.
- **A Cooperative Food Distribution Initiative**, initiated by FDTR,

has been funded by the City of Kingston and the Sisters of Providence. In 2008 partner organizations will develop and pilot a food reclamation project that will pick up food headed for the waste stream in restaurants and grocers, and redistribute it for use in local meal programs. At the same time, sustainably grown local food will be sold to the same restaurants and grocers. Fair prices will be paid to farmers.

- Mentioned above under **Partnerships**, a program for distributing LFP (Local Food Plus) certified food to St. Lawrence College, and other possible partners, will create a reliable market, as well as increased sales and profitability that should motivate larger conventional growers to begin shifting their production system towards more profitable local markets.

**Promote brand recognition** of the existing local food logo:

- The Eat from Kingston’s Countryside **logo was promoted at all FDTR events.**
- A second edition of **The Local Harvest** included an updated Local Food directory (featuring the logo). 12,000 copies were printed with over 7,000 distributed across the region, province and country to date.
- An updated version of the **Eating Close to Home Directory** was compiled, printed and distributed.
- A **FDTR website** was set up, featuring the logo, and a new Local Food Locator, which has attracted interest from organizations across Canada – see [www.fooddowntheroad.ca](http://www.fooddowntheroad.ca)
- An Eat From Kingston Countryside **Brand Assessment** was carried out, with multiple findings and recommendations that will help the NFU to chart the future for the logo, brand, and marketing initiatives they are part of. *See Attachment 29 to read the draft version of the Report*

**Build relationships** between local farm, food and related groups engaged in issues connected to local market and local food system development:

- **Over 1,200 people** from all farm and food sectors participated

.....  
**Below:** A screenshot of the Local Food Locator online.



directly in the Spring Series and Local Food Summit. Every activity prioritized some time for group interaction and networking breaks so that farm and food system relationships could develop.

- **The FDTR Community Council** met for the first time on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Comprised of 13 people from a broad range of food system sectors, (farmers, health care, food security, restaurateurs, food services, grocers, researchers and educators, distribution, government, and economic development) this council has taken an increasingly active leadership role during the past 6 months. The Community Council renewed its mandate for an additional 5 months on November 19<sup>th</sup>. It is hoped that, within the next 12-24 months, an organizational structure will develop into a permanent “food policy” body at the centre of an organization with core and project funding to promote sustainable local food system development in our region.
- **St. Lawrence College** has become increasingly involved as a leader in the local food movement – it has developed new courses, hosted over 20 FDTR meetings and events, and taken steps towards a formalized local food procurement policy. Furthermore, key individuals from the College have played major leadership roles as volunteers and during staff time.
- **Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Public Health and KEDCO** (the Kingston Economic Development Corporation) have also become increasingly engaged, with the Chair of the Board of Health sitting on the FDTR Community Council and the new steering committee that will guide the next phase of the project, and KEDCO providing ongoing in-kind logistical and cash support.
- **A Local Farm and Food Research Network** met for the first time on March 14<sup>th</sup>. A group of 18 researchers from academia, public service, and non-profit organizations, including farmers, worked until October, guiding research and helping to write *From the Ground Up: A Primer for Community Action on Kingston and Countryside's Food System*. Over 300 copies of this 70 page document have been printed and distributed to food system activists. The full document is available online. Visit [www.fooddowntheroad.ca](http://www.fooddowntheroad.ca) to read the full Primer.
- **A Kingston and Countryside Food System Inventory** was

prepared, compiling the network contacts recorded over the course of the project into a categorized listing of over 300 contacts. This listing is the basis reference for reaching out to our food system. *See Attachment 31 to read the full Inventory.*

- The **FDTR Website and Database** were created in the summer of 2007 to fulfill numerous purposes. The Local Food Locator allows eaters, restaurant owners, and other purchasers to search by food type (beef, dairy, vegetables), by production system (certified organic, non-certified organic, conventional) or by farm name. The FDTR database has over 300 contacts entered into it so far (with 200 more to go) that can be used to create email lists, promote events, communicate with volunteers, etc. This is just a sample of what these powerful information technologies offer our local food movement.
- **Other organizations taking the networking lead:** The City of Kingston, Kingston Market Vendors Association and Downtown Kingston Business Association partnered on a Local Food Networking and Culinary Tourism event where FDTR was asked to present on November 21<sup>st</sup>.
- **Project collaboration:** The NFU and FDTR have partnered with other food system organizations to initiate future development projects such as the Cooperative Food Distribution Initiative, a New Generation of Farmers project supported by Heifer International, a Food Charter and Food Council Development project, and a provincial project led by FarmStart in Guelph that we helped to initiate.
- A **Local Food Summit Declaration** has been developed by the FDTR Community Council, based on input from the entire Summit, and the Sunday, November 4<sup>th</sup> Declaration workshop in particular. This Declaration will be published online and in local newspapers and Summit participants will be encouraged to sign it. The Declaration is a key step towards a Food Charter which FDTR aims to develop over the next 12-24 months as a statement of principles that food-related organizations sign on to and integrate into their strategic and action planning processes.

**Foster stakeholder and public awareness** of the economic and ecological challenges faced by the global food system and successful models of local marketing, processing and distributing that farmers and

others can adapt to our region:

- **Over 1,200 people** from all farm and food sectors participated directly in the Spring Series and Local Food Summit. These events covered a broad range of food system issues. The Spring Series addressed local food marketing, farm sustainability, peak oil, seeds, bio- and nano-technologies, hunger and health, and institutional models that support local food system development. The Local Food Summit began on Friday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> with Thomas Homer-Dixon's big picture overview of climate change, energy issues, and the resilience of networked systems. Saturday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> began with a Sustainable Local Food System plenary panel session followed by a day of workshops – six streams, 18 choices.
- A wide variety of **78 FDTR presentations**, displays, courses, and workshops occurred over the course of 2007, **with the potential to reach as many as 120,000** people with farm and food issues at varying levels. The **FDTR Website** was launched at the Summit on Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> and a volunteer team has been trained to provide ongoing support and development for this important public education tool.
- During 2007, FDTR was featured **in at least 79 media stories** on TV, radio, in newspapers and magazines, reaching tens of thousands of people.
- **Over 80 volunteers** have made FDTR what it has been so far. These active citizens come from a wide range of backgrounds, geographic locations, age groups and levels of engagement, and bring their learning and questions back to their own circles of influence. Their dedication to a sustainable local food system for our region is one of the key drivers of change.

## What Next

There is no doubt that FDTR has been immensely successful as an awareness, consensus, and community building project, significantly exceeding projections and expectations and creating a very real shift in attitudes within our community. But the proof of the pudding will always be in the eating and if all this talking, however encouraging and informative it has been, is going to amount to more than hot air, then a number of things need to happen next.

## Long-term Objectives – setting the stage for the future:

### Develop strong local marketing networks for local food:

- **Support the continued growth of CSAs** by helping to set up CSA Incubator farms modeled on Ignatius Farm in Guelph and Intervale in Burlington, Vermont – as part of a project, in partnership with Heifer International and others, which will build capacity of farmers to participate in local markets.
- Support the development of **more farmers’ markets**, especially an indoor facility for the winter months extending the farmers’ market all year.
- Continue to develop the **website** tools to empower individual eaters and small businesses to buy locally produced food as part of a sustainable local food system.
- Mentioned above under **“Public Institutional Buyers”**, a program for distributing LFP (Local Food Plus) certified food to St. Lawrence College, and other possible partners, will create a reliable market and increased sales and profitability. Farmers may be motivated to shifting their production system towards more profitable local markets. Successful public relations spin off for the College with this initiative will lead other local institutional buyers to participate (such as Queen’s, the hospitals, prisons, Canadian Forces Base).
- Experience success with the Cooperative Food Distribution Initiative and move towards **farmers’ processing and marketing cooperatives** for the region.

### Build infrastructure for local growing, processing, distributing and retailing:

- The need for **new farmers** and additional production for local markets is a key issue in our region – we do not have enough local food to meet demand. We seek to address this by working with Heifer International on a project that will assist new and established farmers with access to resources for small-scale diversified agriculture. Heifer is supporting us to research and develop a three year project.
- **Local Beef:** Research indicates that we have the cattle farms and abattoir capacity in our region to meet the majority (70%)

of our own beef needs. The challenges are developing market relationships, **to create local finishing capacity, and to develop more interest in grass-fed beef** in our farming, processing, and retailing community. Market relationships will likely emerge in the form of public institutional buying, as discussed above.

- An **indoor farmers' market** for the winter months is the next logical step for our region.

### **Feed our communities** healthy local food:

- **Long-term regional food security:** FDTR takes an incremental and long-term approach to farm and food system development. Most of the activities described in this report are ultimately concerned with maintaining and building our capacity to “feed our communities healthy local food” in the long-run.
- **Immediate food security** is also a central issue - 11% of Kingstonians experience some form of food insecurity. While it is clear that it is not the responsibility of farmers to solve regional hunger issues linked to low incomes and high housing costs, any “food system” movement must confront food justice for eaters. Awareness is key - FDTR has sought to increase understanding of hunger in our region through workshops and speakers: the Spring Series Hungry for Health event on April 23<sup>rd</sup> was focused on successful food security programs from Peterborough, Waterloo and Toronto; Debbie Field, the director of FoodShare (Canada’s leading food justice organization) was a key note speaker at the Local Food Summit; and one of the Summit workshops, Hunger No More, featured a panel of Kingstonians who have experienced food insecurity first hand.
- The **Cooperative Food Distribution Initiative** (discussed above) tackles these short-term and long-term issues. This pilot food reclamation project (modeled on 20 years of experience at Toronto-based Second Harvest) will pick up food headed for the waste stream in restaurants and grocers, and redistribute it for use in local meal programs. At the same time, sustainably grown local food will be sold to these restaurants and grocers. Fair prices will be paid to farmers. One of the key goals of this project is to get farm and food system developers working together with food security organizations so that dialogue and mutual respect and understanding can develop.

**Sustain our farmers**, our rural economy and the ecological health of the land:

- **Fair prices for farmers:** Through direct marketing, cooperative distribution, public institutional buying, and other market relationships where diversified farmers can set prices that make sense for them. Premium prices for organic food are also helpful.
- **Ecological agriculture:** Demand for organic and sustainably produced food continues to rise. FDTR facilitates education/training and land access opportunities so that sustainable farmers can get started and develop.
- The Local Food Summit Declaration, and we expect the food charter, will put questions of economic and ecological sustainability at the centre of the **regional food policy agenda**.
- **Working with LFP** connects us with their established certification system that has criteria for distance traveled, ecological practices, social justice and energy use on the farm. By partnering with LFP, we believe local food production will gradually move in these directions

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Excerpts from the AMI Application of September 2006

### Project Summary:

The Building a Sustainable Local Food System project builds upon previous research done at Queen's University, and upon existing local food marketing initiatives. The project will engage farmers and a broad range of food system stakeholders in a long-term effort to develop markets which can support the farming, processing and distribution of locally grown food within a 100km area around Kingston, Ontario. Direct marketing, institutional buying, local processing and distribution will increase the economic sustainability of regional farms. Localization benefits society by strengthening rural communities, shrinking the ecological footprint of food, improving nutritional quality, and ensuring security of the regional food security. Local food is an emerging global market trend that enhances farm profitability by shortening supply chains, thus decreasing costs and increasing farmers' share of the food dollar. These "economies of the small scale" can only be realized by a large number of farmers if the Kingston area develops a food system that includes infrastructure for local processing, distribution and direct retailing, as well as the commitment of the public and the confidence of farmers themselves. The unique feature, and key to long-term success, of this project is the promotion of market development in the context of systemic development. This requires the engagement of a diversity of stakeholders in the collaborative process of building market intelligence, vision and concrete development strategies. The work will be organizational, promotional and practical. We will bring farmers, processors, distributors, marketing groups, retailers, experts, community organizations, local government and eaters together to learn about local food success stories from across North America. We will then ask ourselves: what do we have in terms of existing local food awareness, infrastructure and capacities? What do we want? How do we get there? The key mechanisms for this will be a four-part Speakers Series in the winter of 2006-7 to build momentum, followed by a Local Food Conference in November 2007. The central objectives of

the series and conference will be to,

- ▶ Create both farm/food sector and broad public awareness of the reasons and means for growing, processing, distributing, retailing and buying local food
- ▶ Publish a Kingston Area Food Charter which will describe our shared vision and values
- ▶ Build the network basis of a Kingston Area Food Council that will move stakeholders towards the goals and principles outlined in the Food Charter

### Project Description:

Opportunities to enhance local food marketing have been identified in the Sustainable Communities: Building Local Foodshed Capacity in Frontenac and Lennox-Addington Counties research report by Allison Blay-Palmer of Queens University. The Building a Sustainable Local Food System project will follow up on her research and build on recent local initiatives that have developed markets for local farm products in the Kingston area. Such initiatives include: the Frontenac Farmers Market, the NFU Feast of Fields, the Local Food Logo and the NFU Eating Close to Home directory of farmers marketing locally.

Our National Farmers' Union volunteer working group has been engaged with this project since January 2006 when we gathered 25 members of the local food and farm community to discuss local marketing opportunities and local food system development. We are now seeking your funding support to hire a coordinator for a four part Speakers Series to take place from November 2006 to March 2007 and a Local Food Conference to take place in November 2007.

These events will focus attention on local food as a paradigm shift and a global marketing trend. Knowledge of this trend will be shared by farmers and others brought

in from regions where successful local food system development is underway. Successful examples of direct marketing, community shared agriculture, institutional buying, producer cooperatives, farmers markets, food directories and local brands will be presented. The economic benefits of shortened supply chains and public loyalty to local brands will be emphasized. So too will the benefits of partnerships with related food, health and environmental organizations, as well as municipal governments.

The work of the Region of Waterloo Public Health Unit serves as an excellent example. They created the Waterloo Foodlink in 2002 which is an organization that produces an annual directory linking consumers to local farm products. They also produce a monthly newsletter, host an annual Taste Local! Taste Fresh! event where local chefs serve local food. The Health Unit has also undertaken a long-term study process called the Farms the Sell Food Locally Viability Study which includes ongoing studies such as the Optimal Nutrition Environment Study (looking at the health outcomes of eating local food), the Food Flow Study (looking at the amounts of local food produced, processed and consumed in the region), the Food Miles Study (looking at the transportation needs of food eaten in the region), and Local Food Branding focus groups.

Waterloo is but one example that makes it clear that the best local food marketing campaigns are carried out in the context of a well organized broader food system development movement. This movement has begun in the Kingston area and the proposed events are meant to build awareness, momentum, partnerships and a practical sense of purpose for farmers and all other food system participants.

Our vehicles for accomplishing this, the four part Speakers Series, one per month in November 2006 and January to March 2007 will include,

- An event focused on local marketing success stories from the “Be a Local Hero, Buy Locally Grown” campaign in Massachusetts – the longest running local food marketing campaign in North America
- An event focused on the ecological and economic

challenges facing our global food system and the reasons why local food is a hopeful and viable direction.

- An event focused on nutrition, public health and hunger, and how local food markets can help address these complex issues.
- An event focused on Food Charters and the work of Lori Stahlbrand and Wayne Roberts on Toronto’s Food Policy Council and the new Local Flavours Plus project.

The Local Food Conference in November 2007 will be a weekend event that brings together as many local food system stakeholders as possible, plus members of municipal governments and the general public to explore and discuss the many facets of local market and food system development. From sustainable agricultural practices to land access for young farmers to local food access for young low income families – we will cover a lot of ground together. The end goal will be to produce a first draft of a Local Food Charter for the Kingston area.

These events will,

- Promote direct-farm-marketing success stories
- Promote local supply, processing and distribution system success stories (institutional buying, local dairies, local vegetable cooperatives, local mills, regional seed cooperatives, local food box programs, etc)
- Promote awareness of other local food system building initiatives (The Toronto Food Policy Council and Local Flavours Plus, the Saskatoon Food Coalition, Vancouver Food Policy Council, The Boston Food Project, etc)
- Develop relationships between a diversity of Kingston area farm and food groups who may not otherwise know each other or work together, thus giving them confidence in the economic viability of the local market option built on whole food chain cooperation and public awareness
- Build awareness in the community of the value of supporting local food production and build commitment by the community to support local food production with their food dollars

- Build awareness of the short and long-term challenges facing the global food system which necessitate the need for renewed local food systems
- Develop a Kingston Food Charter (guiding principles for a local food system)
- Initiate a Kingston Food Council to coordinate practical development work according to the principles laid out in the Food Charter

A Food Charter is a mission and values statement for local food system developers. The Toronto Food Charter was adopted by that city's municipal government in January,

2001 as a set of policy principles. More recently, the Local Flavours Plus local food system initiative received a \$1 million grant to implement the vision of the Toronto Food Charter over the next three years.

We would like to model ourselves on local food developments in Toronto and elsewhere by bringing together a broad spectrum of local stakeholders to create a Food Charter and a Food Council for the Kingston area. The relationships established in preparation for the Speakers Series and Local Food Conference, and the Charter itself, will form the basis of a long-term local food system development initiative and Food Council.

## Appendix 2: Excerpts from the First Year Report

Over a year has passed since we described our project vision, and asked these central questions about Kingston and area's farm and food system. Based upon core ideas and your support, *Food Down the Road: Toward a Sustainable Local Food System for Kingston and Countryside* (FDTR) has flourished for the past 12 months. There is a buzz of hope about local food in our region. Farmers and eaters are mobilized, food system networks and relationships are strengthened, demand is high and local market opportunities are emergent, partnerships and leadership are diversifying, policy work is moving ahead in tandem with economic development, and seasonal local food has been at the centre of events and celebrations.

**First and foremost, we realize that our systemic approach requires us to focus on building relationships and partnerships within our food system.** *The ways* in which we engage farmers, eaters and other food system participants have been as crucial to our success as the substance of discussions about what we have, what we want, and how we move towards local markets. To summarize the wide range of objectives, activities, outcomes, and conclusions drawn together in this report we have identified four pillars that these relationships and partnerships, and our sustainable local food system, are being built upon:

**Local Farmers and Market Opportunities** – Farmers are initiators and leaders in this movement. Farmer confidence in local markets is growing due to increased demand, a willingness to pay more for sustainably grown local food, new farmers markets, new retail deals, phenomenal CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) growth, and moves towards public and institutional commitment to local food.

**Engaged and Sustainable Participation** – Attendance at Spring Speakers Series and Local Food Summit topped 1200. Events were organized by 80-plus volunteers, 12 consultants, 10 FDTR Community Council members and 36 participating and partner organizations. Behind these numbers are passion, effort, joy, friendships, debates, tensions, strong facilitation and organization, an increasing number of groups and individuals taking the lead, and a recognition that we must carefully prioritize and coordinate our energies so as to avoid overextension. There can be no sustainable farming and food without sustainable organizational and personal practices.

**Communication and Coordination Capacities** – The diversity of communication tools and activities developed during the past year is amazing: 4 Spring Series events and a 3-day Local Food Summit, a FDTR website and database, 300 copies of the 70-page *From the Ground Up* primer, 12,000 copies of the second edition of the

Local Harvest, 700 copies of the revised *Eating Close to Home* directory, 78 FDTR presentations, displays, courses and workshops, 79 media stories about FDTR, a Local Food Inventory, reports on the *Eat From Kingston's Countryside* brand, FDTR itself, and on Food Charters and Food Councils across Canada, and a Local Food Summit Declaration that leads us towards a Food Charter for our region. Coordination by the NFU, high capacity volunteer teams, and the FDTR Community Council has been and will continue to be vital to this success.

### **Future Projects that Balance Policy and Practical Change**

– Based upon our local food system's key challenges and opportunities, four priority areas (and projects that address them) have been worked on by local farm and food system participants and partners: a) Policy and Systemic Planning - Food Charter and Food Council Development project; b) Agriculture - New Generation of Farmers project; c) Distribution and Food Security - Cooperative Food Distribution Initiative; d) Public Institutional Buying and Local Brand Development - Partnering with LFP (Local Food Plus) and St. Lawrence College.

The systemic approach we have taken to farm and food system development has many strengths and challenges. Most importantly, it requires a lot of intentional relationship building and therefore many of our lessons learned and recommendations offered relate to people and the way they work together.

- i) **Key agents of change:** Tapping into existing capacity and engagement within key organizations was central to our success. Continue to search out the innovators and enthusiasts within key organizations and build partnerships with and through them.
- ii) **Shared vision and values:** We sought and achieved a fine balance between broad farm and food system participation and engagement with individuals and organizations who share similar perspectives on the desirability of, and need for, a sustainable local food system for Kingston and countryside. As Wayne Roberts from the Toronto Food Policy Council advised, don't aim for a "round table" as progress can get bogged down

by interest groups who come to the table without genuine concern for the broader vision and purpose. Work, especially in leadership teams, with individuals and organizations who share goals and perspectives and have the capacity to move things forward.

- iii) **(Long-term) commitment to change:** As experienced in many regions doing this work, it is hard to engage some of the key stakeholders, such as some government representatives and officials, some farmers (important that events more in the 'off season' for farmers), some restaurants, etc. This is to be expected, as local food system development is an innovative and long-term process which requires significant changes to the status quo. This cannot be accomplished quickly, but must be pursued with consistency and rigour over many years.
- iv) **Short-term balance - policy and action:** Notwithstanding iii, we also sought a short-term balance long-term, research-based, consultative policy level work with immediate economic development projects and impacts, in order to engage many kinds of leaders and to ensure that there is both plenty of fruitful talk, and plenty of fruitful action in our local farm and food system.
- v) **Systemic priorities, diversified leadership:** A balance has been sought between the kinds of future projects and funding we have pursued while addressing key farm and food system priorities and opportunities identified during the year. Future projects target Food Charter and Food Council development (policy), new farmer training and land access, market and brand development, and a combination of food waste, food security and distribution concerns. We often say that we are taking a "systemic approach" and we would like to affirm that we are committed to this necessary and challenging perspective, despite the danger of trying to do too many things. The keys to managing this are communication and coordination across the food system, prioritization of needs and opportunities, and the democratic involvement of an increasing number of mobilized individuals and organizations who become systemic and project leaders.

- vi) **Volunteer appreciation:** There has been a huge investment by volunteers. It is essential to link in volunteer development and appreciation throughout all activities and work (local food at every meeting, fdtr t-shirts, keeping the “fun” in it, celebrations, thank you cards, time for inspiration, meeting check-ins, and friendship-development, etc).
- vii) **Staff capacity and passion:** Staff efforts were key to success – we couldn’t have accomplished much of what we have without \$\$ to engage skilled professionals dedicated to the work. This was not just a question of *quantity*, but one of the *quality* of the work that was done. We need to continue to hire highly competent and passionate individuals with capacities for the clearly defined tasks at hand.
- viii) **Rigorous and efficient processes:** From meeting agendas, roles and minutes to broad project strategizing, the benefits of solid processes and documentation were overwhelming. When we got too busy to do this well, mistakes were made and direction was less clear. Sometimes this was necessary and acceptable, but definitely not desirable.
- ix) **Inclusion and transparency:** from RFPs (requests for proposals) and hiring to organizational priorities and decision-making, we have learned that inclusive and transparent processes motivate people and build trust. Ideally we would have had more time for open processes, but it was key to respond quickly to opportunities and we were able to adapt and still be inclusive and transparent – this required intent and effort. For example, we posted-RFPs far and wide, asked for quick turn arounds, and built in options for hiring with or without interviews.
- x) **Sustainable pace:** The overwhelming enthusiasm from the public was highly motivating and also led us to take on more than was possible give coordinators, consultants, volunteers time. This was an intense “start-up” year and it is not reasonable or desirable to keep going at this pace.
- xi) **Multi-year funding** is desirable for this kind of project, so that the capacity building occurs at a more sustainable pace.
- xii) **Less is more:** Do a few things well – at times we seemed spread quite thin. While the results were amazing, in the end, people were tired and some close to burn-out. We need sustainable practices at organizational and personal levels, as well as on farms and in the food system.
- xiii) **Multi-sensory:** At events our intention was to reach all the senses (visual, auditory, olfactory and to engage the head and the heart)--this was very effective and something we will continue to do.
- xiv) **Media strategy:** If you have a good and innovative message the media will come out, but not always report on the angle that we thought should be featured. More energy, intention and resources are required to nurture relationships with the media – focus on key reporters who “get it” and on key media outlets (e.g. the Kingston Whig Standard) who reach the desired audience.
- xv) **Financial management** was much more time consuming than anticipated – need to keep this in mind r.e. budget line for bookkeeper in the future
- xvi) **Accessible prices:** We sought to balance financial accessibility to events and opportunities to receive funds for the initiative. Many people commented that we should have charged a bit more for summit (while still using a sliding scale).
- xvii) **The time is right for local food:** This project was hugely successful because of hard work and excellent planning, but also because the timing is right in the wider culture, people are ready to hear and respond to this message.

Overall, this year has been a huge success. There is great hope for the future of sustainable farming and food in the Kingston region – there is a “Food Down the Road” buzz in the air. Local policy agendas are shifting, viable local markets are emerging for farmers, and an increasing number of young people are interested in farming. There is much to be done in terms of follow up on specific policy and economic development projects. The support of the governments of Ontario and Canada has made this work possible. The AMI’s investment in our community (reinforced by your staffs’ participation in the Local Food Summit) is sincerely appreciated. We look forward to the possibility of continuing to work together *toward a sustainable local food system for Kingston and countryside.*

## Appendix 3: Take Action Bookmark Text

# TAKE ACTION!

## *Toward A Sustainable Local Food System*

### ❶ Choose Your Food

Eat more sustainably-grown, locally-produced foods and choose fairly-traded foods from around the world. Can, preserve, freeze, dry or root cellar our local bounty for enjoyment all year round.

### ❷ Support Local Farmers/Food Businesses

Ask for sustainably-produced food at farmers' markets, grocery stores and restaurants. Become a member of a community supported agricultural (CSA) group. Use the "Eating Close to Home" online directory at [www.nfu.ca/on](http://www.nfu.ca/on) to find local food.

### ❸ Grow Your Own

Eat really close to home! Plant beans on your balcony, greens in your front garden, tomatoes in your back 40, or sow with others in a community garden. Share your harvest.

### ❹ Save Your Seeds

Whether you farm 200 acres or garden in a small city plot, save seeds from what you plant – this practice promotes self-sufficiency and preserves biodiversity.

### ❺ Look for the Logo

Our region has an *Eat From Kingston's Countryside* local food logo to identify foods produced within 100 km of Kingston. Look for it, ask for it, and if you're a farmer, join the program.

### ❻ Teach & Learn

Seek information about the benefits of local food system development and talk about what you learn with kids, friends, colleagues and family members. Farmers: Research and implement more sustainable farming practices.

### ❼ Change the Menu

Ask for local food options in schools, hospitals, workplaces, cafeterias and institutions – everywhere! If you farm or operate a food-based business, consider the advantages of shifting to local markets for supply and sales of food.

### ❽ Seek Healthy Local Food for All

Learn how local food can be more accessible to all. Go to [www.healthycommunities.on.ca](http://www.healthycommunities.on.ca) and check out its *Healthy Food, Healthy Community* report.

### ❾ Advocate for Good Food Policy

Promote policies that support sustainable local food systems at the municipal, provincial and national levels. Engage politicians and friends. Write letters to the editor.

### ❿ Host a 100 km Potluck, Picnic or BBQ

Spread the word about sustainable, local, seasonal eating. Gather with friends and family to share a meal with as many ingredients as possible from within 100 km of where you live. Share recipes.

# Appendix 4: Local Food Summit Program

Food Down the Road's

# Local Food Summit

Participate in charting the future of farming and food for Kingston and countryside



**November 2-4, 2007**  
Kingston, Ontario

Featuring key note speaker

**Thomas Homer-Dixon**  
*Local Food Systems and Social Resilience*

**FOOD DOWN THE ROAD**   
*Toward a Sustainable Local Food System for Kingston and Countryside*

## Register for Food Down the Road's Local Food Summit

**November 2-4, 2007 - Kingston, Ontario**

Space is limited. Pre-register NOW to avoid disappointment!

### Contact Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/town \_\_\_\_\_ Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please check all that apply:

chef  eater  farmer  food activist

food retailer  restaurateur  other \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I permit my contact information to be shared with other Local Food Summit attendees.

Food restrictions \_\_\_\_\_

### Fees

**Pre-Register til Oct. 26**

**Register On Site\***

|                                       |        |              |      |
|---------------------------------------|--------|--------------|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full Weekend | \$20   | Full Weekend | \$30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friday       | \$10** | Friday       | \$15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday     | \$10   | Saturday     | \$15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday       | \$10   | Sunday       | \$15 |

Children under 12 free for Saturday! # attending: \_\_\_\_\_

\* Onsite registration is dependent on available space. Capacity is limited.

\*\*Friday tickets available in advance at various outlets (see web/call for details). Sliding-scale available, please contact [info@fooddowntheroad.ca](mailto:info@fooddowntheroad.ca) or 613.767.4127

Detach this registration form and send it with a cheque (payable to *NFU Local 316 Local Food Project*) by mail to **Wendy Luella Perkins 106 Raglan Rd. Kingston ON, K7K 1K9**

Or register and pay online at [www.fooddowntheroad.ca](http://www.fooddowntheroad.ca)

### Saturday Workshop Choices

Please select 3 workshops per session in order of preference. Workshops assigned on a first come, first served basis.

|          | 1 <sup>st</sup> Choice | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Choice | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Choice |
|----------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| am       |                        |                        |                        |
| early pm |                        |                        |                        |
| late pm  |                        |                        |                        |

## Local Food Summit Schedule

**Friday, November 2, 7pm-10pm**

Sydenham St. United Church, 82 Sydenham St.

**Local Food Systems and Social Resilience**  
**Thomas Homer-Dixon**

Thomas Homer-Dixon's keynote address will start the Summit with the big picture. Homer-Dixon is one of the few thinkers able to synthesize the many challenges facing our society and our planet, and offer a hopeful and practical vision for a sustainable future. Local farms and food are key to the renewed civilization he calls for.

**Saturday, November 3, 9am-5:30pm**

St. Lawrence College, 100 Portsmouth Ave.

**Inspiring talks • 18 dynamic workshops**  
**Community displays • Fun for the whole family**

Learn about our local food system and how to change it. Find out how much is going on in our community already and the directions we are moving toward. See workshop options on the reverse.

**Sunday, November 4, 9am-2:30pm**

St. Lawrence College, 100 Portsmouth Ave.

**Participate in creating the**  
**Local Food Declaration**

Summit participants will collectively create the *Local Food Declaration*, a statement of principles and practical directions for the future of farming and food in Kingston and countryside.

**Pre-registered? Check-in early!**

Friday starting at 5:00pm Saturday starting at 8:00am

If we aren't sold out, you can register onsite then!

**Registration includes delicious local snacks and lunches**



**Thomas Homer-Dixon** is the author of several books, including *The Upside of Down* and the Governor General Award winning *The Ingenuity Gap*. He is currently the George Ignatieff Chair of Peace and Conflict Studies at the Trudeau Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at University College, University of Toronto. His research focuses on modern threats to global security and how societies adapt to environmental, economic, and technological change.



**Food Down the Road**, a National Farmers Union (NFU) Local 316 initiative empowers all local food citizens to look down the road toward a sustainable Kingston and countryside, vibrant farms and healthy food for our urban and rural communities.



*Food Down the Road* relies on the generosity of many partners and volunteers. It is funded in part through contributions by the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario under the Agricultural Management Institute (AMI), an initiative of the federal-provincial-territorial Agricultural Policy Framework designed to position Canada's agri-food sector as a world leader. The Agricultural Adaptation Council administers the AMI program on behalf of the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario.

*printed on recycled paper*

## Saturday Workshop Options

|                 | <b><i>Cooking &amp; Tasting</i></b><br><i>for the Whole Family</i>   | <b><i>Taking Food Action</i></b>  | <b><i>The Future of Farming</i></b>  | <b><i>Between Field &amp; Fork</i></b>   | <b><i>Food Fights</i></b>   | <b><i>In the Public Interest</i></b>  |
|-----------------|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| <b>am</b>       | <b>Cooking for Seasonal Celebrations</b><br><br>Chef Thomas Elia & the St Lawrence Culinary Arts Program<br><br><b>①</b> | <b>Growing Food In the City</b><br>Home & Community Gardening<br><br>Janette Haase<br>Sunny Lam<br><br><b>②</b> | <b>What is Sustainable Farming?</b><br><br>Anne Clark<br>Pat Dawson<br>John Wise<br><br><b>③</b>           | <b>Local Food Restaurants and Culinary Tourism</b><br><br>Michael Potter<br><br><b>④</b>                 | <b>Crude Awakening</b><br>Farming and Food in the Face of Peak Oil<br><br>Rick Munroe<br><br><b>⑤</b>       | <b>Where's the Local Beef?</b><br>Supplying Our Public Institutions<br><br>Alison Blay-Palmer<br>Mike Schreiner<br><br><b>⑥</b> |
| <b>early pm</b> | <b>The Wonders of Root Veggies</b><br><br>Chef Thomas Elia & the St Lawrence Culinary Arts Program<br><br><b>①</b>       | <b>Seasonal Cooking and Eating All Year Round</b><br>100km Diet<br><br>Tibrata Gillies<br><br><b>②</b>          | <b>Who are Tomorrow's Farmers?</b><br><br>Emily Dowling<br>Moe Garahan<br>Mike Shook<br><br><b>③</b>       | <b>Processing at the Local Scale</b><br><br>Nancy George<br>Brian Quinn<br>Chris Wooding<br><br><b>④</b> | <b>Seed Wars</b><br>Biotechnology and Food Sovereignty<br><br>Colleen Ross<br>Lucy Sharratt<br><br><b>⑤</b> | <b>Hunger No More</b><br>Food security in Kingston and Countryside<br><br>Ann Armstrong<br>Tara Kainer<br><br><b>⑥</b>          |
| <b>late pm</b>  | <b>Healthy Local Eating for the Whole Family</b><br><br>Radha Poorhan<br><br><b>①</b>                                    | <b>Saving Heirloom Seeds</b><br><br>Kathy Rothermel<br><br><b>②</b>   | <b>Local Livestock for Local Markets</b><br><br>David Lewington<br>Dave Perry<br>Kim Perry<br><br><b>③</b> | <b>Cooperative Food Distribution</b><br><br>Russ Christianson<br>Achim Mohssen-Beyk<br><br><b>④</b>      | <b>Food Justice for All!</b><br><br>Debbie Field<br><br><b>⑤</b>  | <b>Food Governance: Legislators, Civil Servants &amp; Local Food</b><br><br>Dorene Collins<br>Tom Manley<br><br><b>⑥</b>        |

### ***Children's Program—Playing with Your Food!***

A children's drop-in program is occurring all day on Saturday. Fun and educational crafts, stories, games, songs and more (all about food and farming) will be happening. Be sure to indicate on the registration form the number of children who will be coming. Please note that this is not a "drop-off" program; a parent/guardian will be required to accompany children who attend the program.

**Find out more about the National Farmers Union, Food Down the Road and our Local Food Summit (including a detailed schedule for the weekend, descriptions of the workshops and information about our speakers) at**

**[www.fooddowntheroad.ca](http://www.fooddowntheroad.ca) • 613.767.4127**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Food Down the Road: Toward a Sustainable Local Food System for Kingston and Countryside* is a National Farmers Union Local 316 initiative that relies on the generosity of many partners and volunteers.

NFU Local 316 members thank the writer, Ned Dickens and the booklet designer, Aric McBay and the many wonderful and dedicated people who made this sharing document possible by contributing in so many ways to the whole FDTR project.

Though this project has benefited from the efforts of more individuals and organizations than we can name, we thank a number of contributors in particular.

Thank you to Food Down the Road project coordinators, Andrew McCann and Wendy Luella Perkins, for all of their amazing work and Hilary Davies for volunteering to coordinate the completion of this document.

Many thanks to our dedicated copyeditors and proofreaders, Hilary Davies, Peter Dowling, David Hahn, Alice Robinette-Woods and Marion Watkins. Thanks Wendy Luella Perkins for the cover photos.

Thank you to Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Public Health for printing the document.

We thank you Barbara Baxter, a local food eater, for your moral support and generous financial contribution to this document.

National Farmers Union Region 3 (Ontario) demonstrated a great deal of interest in and support for the FDTR initiative and funded this document so that FDTR experiences can be shared with other NFU locals and local food movements across Canada.

FDTR is also funded in part through contributions by the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario under the Agricultural Management Institute (AMI), an initiative of the federal-provincial-territorial Agricultural Policy Framework designed to position Canada's agri-food sector as a world leader. The Agricultural Adaptation Council administers the AMI program on behalf of the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario

Visit [fooddowntheroad.ca](http://fooddowntheroad.ca) for more information.



Local 316 of the  
**national farmers union**  
*In Union Is Strength*

**FOOD DOWN THE ROAD**  
*Toward a Sustainable Local Food System for Kingston and Countryside*

