

Foodshed Development Strategy

Initiative Summary:

This initiative would start with an economic, demographic, and land-use analysis of all of Pennsylvania to determine a limited number of “foodsheds,” where the utilization of locally produced and processed foods would be maximized and the use of fossil fuels in the procurement and delivery of the food would be minimized. To quantify greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions due to the use of local food, more data are needed on what food is being imported from where into the various regions of Pennsylvania. Packaged and processed foods are especially difficult to define, as they may use ingredients or elements from different states or countries.

After analysis of food origination is complete, the next implementation steps would include:

- Granting authority to specialized “food policy teams” in each foodshed to work in conjunction with county governments to develop and implement “foodshed strategic plans” within a specified time.
- Providing funds from the state and other sources in the form of grants to farmers, market venues, and municipalities wishing to participate. In addition, each team could maintain its own development function to raise funds through local foundations, businesses, and individuals to supplement state funds.
- Establishing of backyard gardens (e.g., victory gardens), urban farming initiatives, farmers’ markets, community-supported agriculture (CSA) projects, cooperatives and on-farm or community-based processing facilities (e.g., meatpacking, creameries, packaging and storage of fruits and vegetables, etc.), and plans for consolidating transportation and distribution.

Parties Affected/Implementing Parties: Pennsylvania Departments of Environmental Protection (DEP), Agriculture (PDA), Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Health (PDH), Community and Economic Development (DCED); Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS), county commissioners, school districts, colleges and universities, municipalities.

Goals:

- Foodshed analysis,
- Formation of foodshed policy teams,
- Development of strategic plans,
- Fund development,
- Granting and implementation,
- Creation of market-based, local investment opportunities

Data Sources/Assumptions/Methods for GHG: See relevant attachments (links).

Data Sources/Assumptions/Methods for Costs: Initial costs would be for foodshed analysis and strategic planning.

Potential Overlap: Not applicable.

Other:

Here are links to the relevant Foodshed literature:

http://www.ruralpa.org/farm_school_report08.pdf

http://www.ruralpa.org/Farm_School_Guide08.pdf

<http://www.farmandfoodproject.org/documents/uploads/The%20Case%20for%20Local%20&%20Regional%20Food%20Marketing.pdf>

http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/research/marketing_files/NEIowa_042108.pdf

<http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs/staff/health/health.htm>

http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/research/marketing_files/consumer_PNMWG5-05.pdf

http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/research/marketing_files/WorldBook.pdf

<http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/foodmiles.pdf>

http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/news/newsreleases/2007/organic_041807.htm

<http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs/staff/ppp/index.htm>

http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/research/marketing_files/GoodFoodIowa_0408.pdf

Subcommittee Comments

This initiative would start with an economic, demographic and land-use analysis of the whole of Pennsylvania to determine a limited number of “foodsheds” where the utilization of locally produced and processed foods would be maximized and the use of fossil fuels in the procurement and delivery of the food would be minimized. In order to quantify GHG reductions due to the use of local food, more data is needed on what food is being imported from where into the various regions of Pennsylvania. Packaged and processed foods are especially hard to define as they may use ingredients or elements from different states or even countries.

After analysis of food origination is complete, the next implementation steps would including:

Granting authority to specialized “food policy teams” in each foodshed to work in conjunction with county governments to develop and implement “foodshed strategic plans” within a specified time; Providing funds from the state and other sources in the form of grants to farmers, market venues, and municipalities wishing to participate. In addition, each team could maintain its own development function to raise funds through local foundations, businesses and individuals to supplement state funds.

Establishing of backyard gardens (i.e. victory gardens), urban farming initiatives, farmers’ markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) projects, cooperatives and on-farm or community-based processing facilities (e.g. meatpacking, creameries, packaging and storage of fruits and vegetables, etc...) and plans for consolidating transportation and distribution.

The subcommittee believes there is merit to this work plan and further consideration is appropriate. There is a potential opportunity to combine this with Forestry – 2 as a research and analysis project for further investigation.