

GROWING A LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM IN HEADWATERS



headwaters food
& farming alliance

July 2014

Recommendations and Priorities for HFFA

HFFA through support from Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health commissioned a report to investigate the barriers to growing a local food system in the Headwaters region. Researchers Guy Letts and Julia Hemphill spent several months doing in depth one on one interviews with producers, processors, distributors and consumers throughout the region gathering valuable information that resulted in the report to be found on the HFFA website at www.hffa.ca. This brief provides an overview of how HFFA will address the recommendations made in the report.

INTRODUCTION

The report completed by the consultants on behalf of HFFA contained an excellent in depth look at the local food system here in Headwaters region. The report made twenty-eight recommendations to HFFA on how to move a local food system forward in this region based on the information gathered from respondents and from a thorough review of literature and best practices from other regions. HFFA has categorized these recommendations into themes that closely align with HFFA’s overall strategic vision*. HFFA has prioritized the recommendations into actions that HFFA will undertake within the next year (near-term action items), ones that HFFA will assist in delivering through partnership and collaboration with other groups, ones that HFFA can support directly through advocacy or leveraging of resources such as data and finally recommendations that while HFFA can support the need for them; they are beyond the scope of what HFFA can reasonably deliver.

Recommendations Categorized by Theme

Strategic Planning	Supportive Policy	Supportive Environments: Built Environment and Land Use	Economic Development	Partnerships and Collaborations	Education, Literacy and Awareness	Food Access	Supporting Agriculture
6.1 Long-Term Vision for Growth	6.2 Adopting a Cluster Policy	6.4 Creating a Local Food Hub and Food Centre	6.5 Developing Agritourism and Rural Tourism	6.11 Postsecondary Partnerships	6.15 Ongoing Education and Food Literacy	6.24 Good Food Box Program	6.22 New Farm Grant/Incentive Program
6.3 Developing a Local Food Charter	6.8 Land Use Policy	6.6 Support of an Authentic and Aesthetically Pleasing Built Environment	6.9 Customer Focused Development Approval Process (Municipal)	6.18 Developing Local, Provincial and National Networks	6.16 Incorporate Local Schools	6.26 Gleaning Program	6.23 Establishment of a Seed Bank
6.28 Staffing Position	6.12 Buy Local Procurement Policies	6.7 Indoor farmer’s Markets	6.10 Promoting Cottage Industries		6.17 Local Food Week Activities and Events		6.27 Protecting Farmland from Development
	6.13 Home garden Credit	6.14 Edible Landscapes	6.20 Regional Marketing Network		6.19 Creation of a Resource Site (website)		
		6.25 Community Gardens			6.21 Peer Mentorship Program		

*** The Headwaters Food and Farming Alliance (HFFA) envisions a food system in the Headwaters that is productive, sustainable, transparent, and fair; supports the health and well-being of our residents and food providers; and contributes to a prosperous and equitable economy.**

Recommendations categorized by Role of HFFA

Priority List of Recommendations that HFFA will Undertake in 2014-2015

1. Developing a Local Food Charter (6.3 in the report)

The development of a local food charter will be an integral part of HFFA's work plan moving into the later part of 2014 and into 2015. Stay tuned for more information on HFFA will champion this issue in the community.

2. Promote Local Food Week Activities and Events (6.17 in the report)

Local Food Week is a new initiative that is part of the *Local Food Act* with the inaugural celebration from June 2-8, 2014. Another local food focused event; Ontario Agriculture Week will happen October 6-12, 2014. These events will be an opportunity for HFFA to highlight our own events and get more exposure through collective promotion of local food across the province. This will be a focus of HFFA moving in the fall of 2014 and into 2015.

3. Creation of a Resource Site (website) (6.19 in the report)

A website dedicated to HFFA activities, information and promotion of a local food system in the Headwaters region is high on the priority list for HFFA. A motion was passed at the June HFFA HUB meeting to move forward with the development of a dedicated website for HFFA work. The intent is to launch this new site in early spring 2015. Current information on HFFA can be found at www.hffa.ca.

4. Staffing Position (6.28 in the report)

HFFA currently has two people in part-time roles providing some project management support supported by funding obtained by HCIA (Headwaters Communities in Action) from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. It is HFFA's intent to move forward with a position that will support the new website once it is up and running. Future positions will be evaluated by need and funding sources.

Recommendations that HFFA will undertake through Sub-committees or Partners

These are actions or projects that are already happening in the region by sub-committees or partners of HFFA and where HFFA can take a leadership role by supporting these initiatives already in place.

1. Developing Agritourism and Rural Tourism (6.5 in the report)

The [Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association](#) (HHTA) has a robust sub-committee; the [Culinary Tourism Working Group](#), that is actively promoting culinary events in the region. In addition HHTA through its Headwaters Equine Leadership Group is promoting this region as [Headwaters Horse Country](#) and a centre of equine excellence. HFFA will continue to support these groups through shared committee membership, shared promotion and leveraging of best practices and knowledge.

2. Buy Local (healthy) Procurement Policies (6.12 in the report)

HFFA's partners, The Wellington Dufferin Guelph Health Unit are currently working on developing resources for local municipalities, recreation centres and community centres to develop policies regarding healthy and local food procurement. HFFA will continue to support this and provide input, data and resources as required.

3. Ongoing Education and Food Literacy and Incorporate Local Schools (6.15 and 6.16 in the report)

The Education, Access and Literacy sub-committee of HFFA has been formed to do this work in the region. The ELA group is working with funding from the Local Food Fund on a sophisticated program involving the setup of farm to school kits and training programs to get teachers engaged in local food in order to engage their students. This program will be rolled out to schools in Dufferin County in

2014-2015 with the intention to expand to the full Headwaters region if future funding can be secured. More on the program can be found here: www.hffa.ca.

4. Good Food Box Program (6.24 in the report)

Part of the funding for the ELA group will include the development of a Food Club which offers a membership and this will be delivered initially through the schools involved in the ELA programming, but may be expanded later. This project will act a pilot program to determine the needs of the community for a broader good food box program. In addition, there are small programs that run in some communities in Headwaters that can be support through the work of HFFA primarily through promotion.

Recommendations that HFFA will Support

1. Long-Term Vision for Growth (6.1 in the report)

A long-term vision is critical to the region for many reasons, but cannot be achieved by HFFA alone. By working collaboratively with various stakeholders, HFFA can support this effort.

2. Adopting a Cluster Policy (6.2 in the report)

This recommendation is better served through the various economic development policies and strategic plans throughout the region. HFFA will continue to support these efforts and will maintain the development of a local food value chain as an aspirational goal moving forward.

3. Creating a Local Food Hub and Food Centre (6.4 in the report)

A food centre currently exists in Caledon, [The Exchange](#), serving several groups. In addition, HFFA is working closely with the ELA sub-committee on school programs and enhancing food literacy. A sub-set of the ELA group is working with the local food banks on what a potential food hub would look like. Initially it would focus on serving the current population that lacks access to fresh healthy food, but this could be expanded in the future to have a broader purpose.

4. Indoor farmer's Markets (6.7 in the report)

This is not a new recommendation and the [Orangeville Farmers Market](#) has been slowly expanding in the winter months. In 2014-2015 it will be open every second weekend. There is an opportunity to host another winter market in the Headwaters region and HFFA would support this initiative.

5. Land Use Policy (6.8 in the report)

Land use is the purview of both the municipalities and the province (for the most part). It has been identified as a challenge and an opportunity. Farm-friendly land use will be supported by HFFA. Many of the municipalities that comprise the Headwaters region have land use policies that encourage agricultural development and in addition there are several provincial policies such as the Green Belt and the Niagara Escarpment Commission that impact how land is utilized locally. Another local group; [Food and Water First](#), is actively promoting the preservation of class 1 farmland. HFFA supports this initiative.

6. Customer Focused Development Approval Process (Municipal) (6.9 in the report)

This is the responsibility of the local municipality to ease the process with respect to building local businesses in the Headwaters region. HFFA supports making this process smoother.

7. Postsecondary Partnerships (6.11 in the report)

There are limited post-secondary institutions in the Headwaters region, however there have been several partnerships created with local colleges and universities by HFFA partners such as [Dufferin.Biz](#) and the [Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association](#). These partnerships have allowed these groups to access research and graduate students.

8. Home Garden Credit (6.13 in the report)

This is something that would need to be undertaken by the local municipalities. HFFA supports the concept of a Home Garden Credit.

9. Edible Landscapes (6.14 in the report)

HFFA could support this initiative if undertaken by a community group or a municipality by providing best practices from other communities.

10. Developing Provincial and National Networks – raise awareness (6.18 in the report)

HFFA is currently developing networks locally within Headwaters region. It is our intention to broaden this in the future and in the meantime we will support the development of larger networks by our partners in the community.

11. Regional Marketing Network (Culinary) (6.20 in the report)

The Culinary Tourism working group of the Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association is already working on this through their relationship to [Central Counties](#), the regional tourism organization that covers the Headwaters region and York and Durham.

12. Peer Mentorship Program (6.21 in the report)

This is another great recommendation that HFFA can support, but not deliver.

13. New Farm Grant/Incentive Program (6.22 in the report)

There are several granting agencies out there that already do this (e.g., Farm Start) and HFFA will support their continued presence in the Ontario agriculture sector as useful incubators of farm businesses.

14. Community Gardens (6.25 in the report)

There are many community gardens already in the Headwaters region. There is always room for more and HFFA will support these where we can through advocacy or via facilitating learning between groups interested in creating community gardens.

Name	Description	Address	Town	Phone	E - Mail	Website
Island Lake Public School	Community Garden	50 Oak Ridge Drive	Orangeville	519-941-3292	IslandLake.ps@ugdsb.on.ca	http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/islandlake/
Broadway Pentecostal Church	Community Garden	556 Broadway	Orangeville	(519) 941-3981		http://www.broadwaychurch.ca/
Princess Elizabeth Public School	Community Garden	51 Elizabeth Street	Orangeville	519-941-0220	PrincessElizabeth.ps@ugdsb.on.ca	http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/princesselizabeth/index.aspx
Orangeville Community Garden and Orchard	Community Garden	30 Centre St	Orangeville	519-941-0440 ext. 2246	planning@orangeville.ca	
Palgrave Community Kitchen/Albion Hills Farm	Certified Kitchen with an adjacent farm.	34 Pine Avenue	Palgrave	905-880-0303	info@palgravekitchen.org	http://palgravekitchen.homestead.com/about.html

15. Gleaning Program (6.26 in the report)

This is a popular program in other regions and could be brought to the Headwaters region with the support of HFFA or another group.

16. Protecting Farmland from Development (6.27 in the report)

Please see comments on land use. HFFA supports the preservation of good quality farmland for farming.

Recommendations Beyond the Scope of the HFFA Mandate

1. Support of an Authentic and Aesthetically Pleasing Built Environment (6.6 in the report)

2. Promoting Cottage Industries (6.10 in the report)

While this recommendation is beyond our scope there is some evidence of this throughout the Headwaters region with the proliferation of certified kitchens available for rent by home-based entrepreneurs to prepare foods that can be sold through farmer's markets or other avenues. Palgrave hosts a community kitchen in conjunction with the community farm mentioned above and the Township of Amaranth has certified the kitchen in its community centre and made it available for rent.

3. Establishment of a Seed Bank (6.23 in the report)

There are organizations in our region that are involved in various seed initiatives such as the Everdale Farm in Hillsburgh and HFFA supports their efforts.