

2013

2nd Annual Headwaters Food Summit Final Report



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Introduction

The Headwaters Food and Farming Alliance (HFFA), a diverse group of for-profit, not-for-profit and public sector partners, presented the **2nd Annual Headwaters Food Summit** in conjunction with several local sponsors.

Work to develop a local food system in the Headwaters Region has accelerated rapidly since the last food summit in April of 2012. Several working groups have been formed and concrete action plans are being implemented across the priority areas identified by the stakeholders present at last year's food summit. The ongoing financial support of several of our partners most notably Headwaters Communities in Action (HCIA) and the Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health unit has allowed the groups to move forward in a meaningful way to achieve their goals.

The Summit was meant to provide updates on the progress on HFFA action plans and to build consensus on why efforts to build a local food system are worthwhile in light of the global challenges we face. The intense focus of the break-out sessions gave participants an opportunity to delve deeper into the topics which mirrored the focus of each of the working groups. The Summit had several goals, but was primarily meant to inspire and invigorate the community and the participants to take action to help HFFA build a local food system in the Headwaters Region.

Food Summit Goals

1. To update on the progress since the 2012 Headwaters Food Summit
2. To create a shared, public conversation with multiple food system stakeholders that will establish common language and dispel myths
 1. To ground what is happening in the global food system right now and why it is important that we have a strong local food system which cannot be created by one sector alone requiring collaboration
 2. How can this be accomplished?
3. To mobilize stakeholders across the system to act together and align on strategies that realize our shared vision and support one another in the execution
4. To strengthen networks across the Headwaters Food System



2nd Annual Headwaters Food Summit Partners and Sponsors

Organizations that participate on the HFFA Hub



Presenting Sponsors:



Break-out Session Sponsors:



Local Food Trade Fair Sponsors:



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Other Supporters of HFFA

Special Recognition for the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) and the United Way of Guelph, Wellington, Dufferin as their financial support of Headwaters Communities in Action (HCIA) has allowed HCIA to be a strong supporter of the Headwaters Food and Farming Alliance.



The **Summit's** 103 participants represented virtually every part of the region's food system, including: farming, distribution, restaurateurs, caterers, food policy, food access, education & academia, health, hospitality & tourism and public sector. Overwhelmingly people were excited to learn more about the work of HFFA, to better understand their role in the development of a local food system and to meet other like-minded local people interested in similar goals.

The Headwaters Food and Farming Alliance

The audience was given an overview of the work of HFFA since the initial Food Summit in April of 2012. At that time, the food work was in its infancy and the initial working group responsible for the first Food Summit had worked diligently to expand the profile of the work and the number of volunteers engaged. The group has adopted an official name, the *Headwaters Food and Farming Alliance* (HFFA), and developed a logo and tagline that will be used to promote the work of the group and the local food system in this region.

The main accomplishments of HFFA over the past eighteen months include the development of robust governance structures for each of the working groups and the Hub committee, a research project focused on uncovering barriers to growth of the local food system here in Headwaters and the delivery of the **Second Annual Food Summit**.



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HFFA revealed its main plans for 2014 which include the development of a dedicated website for HFFA, the results of the policy research project which will hopefully provide direction for focused projects and continued work on collecting and mapping food-related assets in the region.

HFFA is broken into the coordinating committee called the HUB which is primarily responsible for; monitoring and managing

HFFA's vision and strategy, the HFFA communication strategy; both internal and external communication, the creation of asset map and the identification of system-wide assets and concerns that will facilitate the working groups action plans and the advancement of a supportive policy environment for the development of a local food system in the Headwaters Region. There are currently three working groups that each has their work plans and terms of reference for operating. These working groups operate within the framework of HFFA and allow for focused efforts in these three areas.

Working Group Updates

Culinary Tourism – Jo Fillery and Michele Harris

Jo and Michele revealed the newly redesigned **Taste of Place** program that will replace the Feast Program previously delivered by the Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association. The Taste of Place program will include two feature events; the Taste of Maple to run during local maple syrup season March 28th to April 13th and the Taste of the Harvest to run in late harvest season after Thanksgiving from October 17th to November 2nd. These events will be offered during typical down times for local restaurants in an effort to boost their revenues and promote authentic Headwaters tastes.

The mandate of the Culinary Tourism group was shared with the group:

“The Headwaters Culinary Tourism Group has formed to cultivate and celebrate the Headwaters area (Caledon, Dufferin & Erin) as a place where visitors will experience a strong, locally grown and raised agriculture, food & culinary culture.”

The Goals of the Culinary Tourism Working Group:

- Showcase Headwaters' farm to fork talent – from the ground up.
- Make the connection between the food and land in Headwaters to the people who actually create the

product.

- Promote the Headwaters food culture as accessible and welcoming.
- Showcase the holistic, organic and “real” nature of our Headwaters food culture to visitors.
- To nurture positive and supportive working relationships with municipal partners, food/agriculture & culinary sector businesses, groups and organizations, and other community partners.

Education, Access and Literacy – Jennifer Payne

Jennifer provided an update on the very active EAL group that has been able to advance the local food program at Primrose Public School tremendously. The group was successful in winning the Farm to School Challenge from OntarioFresh.ca competing against schools from across the province. The group was able to secure many local food providers for the school as well integrating local food education into the classroom. The students at the school also participated in the student video project sponsored by HCIA and WDG Public Health which were shown at the Food Summit (see below for more information). Next steps for the EAL group are to take the successes from Primrose school and replicate it across the region.

The mandate of the EAL Group was shared with the audience:

“The mandate of the HFFA Education, Access & Literacy Working Group is to educate all residents through school-based food and farming programs, community programs and outreach campaigns on food and farming issues & opportunities including food literacy, food access issues and farming education.”

The Goals of the Education, Access and Literacy Working Group are :

- To educate and engage people in Headwaters about food & farming issues and opportunities within the region by identifying, replicating, developing and executing successful programs and/or events
- To increase food literacy skills to prepare and consume healthy foods
- To increase access to culturally acceptable, safe and nutritious foods to meet their dietary needs; in a manner that maintains human dignity
- To educate and engage our youth about local food and farming

Facilitating Distribution – Theresa Sauren

Theresa offered a brief overview of the groups work to date which has included the development of the terms of reference, the recruitment of key members of the team that can facilitate the work and the gathering of best practices from other regions. The group has spent much time on understanding what other regions are doing, how they are doing it and what resources can we gather in Headwaters to implement similar initiatives. Future plans for the group include a producer focused survey to capture information on current distribution methods and identify possible gaps and potential solutions.

The mandate of the Distribution group was also shared:

“The mandate of the HFFA Distribution Working Group is to enhance links between food producers and consumers to strengthen our food economy and food access.”

The Goals of the Facilitating Distribution Working Group are:

- Determine gaps/opportunities for distribution to augment existing channels
- Investigate best practices for distribution from other communities
- Enhance the financial viability of local food producers

Success Story #1: Bonnie Den Haan from Sheldon Creek Dairy

Bonnie spoke eloquently on the history of her farm, how her family decided to move into their own processing operation and how they have been successful to date. She also shared some challenges they faced along the way which was well-received by the crowd. On farm dairy processing is a monumental challenge given the strict regulations the dairy industry is subject to, but it appears that the demand for locally and naturally produced milk and dairy products was high enough to justify the capital investment required. The story of Sheldon Creek Dairy was inspiring and one that many other primary producers could benefit from hearing if they are considering entering the processing side of the sector. Her presentation is online [here](#).

In addition to sharing her story Bonnie brought along samples of the Sheldon Creek Chocolate Milk for the entire crowd which went very well with the lunch that was served shortly after her talk.

The Keynote Presentation, Dr. Ralph Martin, University of Guelph

Dr. Ralph Martin presented an engaging talk entitled “Does it Make Sense to Build a Local Food System in a Globalizing World?” that covered an incredible amount of information in a short period of time. He began with a look at the global food system of over 7 billion people on the planet and an additional .8 billion pets that require feeding with projections for growth to be as high as 9-10 billion by 2050 coupled with the rising income levels of developing countries resulting in projected food production increases of 70-100% for 2050. However, Dr. Martin offered his “Plan B” scenario of increased education for women, less food waste, less meat consumption and less fat, sugar and salt which could result in much lower food production growth rates and be more sustainable.

Dr. Martin delved into some interesting and little known facts on nitrogen use, soil organic matter and the oft quoted AG energy ratio which is 10 calories of energy input to produce 1 calorie of food; a highly unsustainable equation. He offered several solutions for these challenges including the including the use of cover crops to increase nitrogen levels and the capture of nitrogen through anaerobic digestion of organic matter which has other benefits such as creating energy. In addition, he focused on the benefit of diversifying crops and using several varieties of common crops which would have multiple benefits; increase soil organic matter which has its own benefits, increase resilience to withstand increasing erratic weather events and finally could earmark classes 3-5 soil for growing cover crops leaving classes 1 and 2 for high yield crops.

How do global trends relate to the building of a local food system? Dr. Martin believes that a local food system would result in our ability to feed ourselves better and build a strong local economy. The social aspects of a local food system are equally important as people tend to have ten times more conversations at farmer’s markets than at grocery stores (McKibben, 2007) allowing consumers to have a more active role in the food system. This vested interest can have positive results in eating habits, environmental issues such as food waste and the promotion of community and social justice issues. Dr. Martin also stressed several times the challenge of food waste. It is currently at approximately 40% of total food is wasted across the globe with roughly half being wasted pre-consumer (through production and processing) with the remainder wasted at home. Reducing food waste at the home level would have positive impacts on the environment, reduce the need to ramp up global food production and save people money.

Overall Dr. Martin’s presentation was thorough and provided excellent information on a number of topics that appealed to the majority of attendees. His full presentation can be found on the HCIA website [here](#).

Break-out Sessions:

The Food Summit Planning team spent considerable time designing the summit and in particular the break-out sessions. The First Food Summit in April of 2012 was a participatory event that was designed to gather maximum input from the attendees on potential issues and topics to be addressed through the development of a local food system. However, the second Summit was designed to put those initial ideas into actionable project plans and therefore the themes of the break-out sessions mirror the existing working groups of HFFA. It was the intention to bring forward a local or regional expert in each topic area and pair them with the chair or champion of each working group in order to review existing work plans, determine gaps if any and apply best practices from other regions resulting in a highly refined action plan that can elicit support and immediate steps forward.

Local Food Promotion and Culinary Tourism: Rebecca LeHeup & Trevor Benson

Rebecca LeHeup and Trevor Benson of the Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance (OCTA), engaged participants with information on the importance of culinary tourism and gave some “how to” information for those businesses which are interested in building the Headwaters region as a culinary tourism destination.

While food may not be the primary motivator attracting travelers to a destination, food is of growing importance to that overall experience – everyone has to eat, and will talk, tweet or blog about great food experiences, often purchase a memento that is unique to a region and return to a place that has created a great memory for them.

The speakers offered these business basics to the participants:

- Create a unique experience
- Be authentic
- It’s about “Taste of Place” ... what is that in Headwaters?
- Participate with the Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association, build experiences
- Must be online and current – social media is important but a current website is a must
- Consistent business hours – be open when you say you are open
- Tell the “local” story, if you have a restaurant that serves local tell people about the farm/producer that the food came from

The Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association through Central Counties Tourism is working with OCTA to develop a pan-regional culinary tourism strategy in 2014.

Policy Challenges of a Local Food System: Jamie Reaume

Jamie did not provide a formal presentation, but improvised his talk based on input from the audience in the two sessions. This allowed for very detailed answers to specific questions and a few funny stories. His primary points were to truly believe what you are fighting for as this passion is required to climb the mountains required to see policy change happen. In addition to passion, one must possess longevity as these changes happen by inches and not by feet so be prepared for the long-term. These tidbits may sound offhand, but were very useful to the crowd and were nice to hear as many folks have been at this for some time already and have seen little progress. To hear that this is normal was reassuring.

In addition to passion and time, Mr. Reaume offered very helpful advice to the crowd about how to work with the agricultural community and the political crowd to achieve positive outcomes. Tactics such as refining the message into short “elevator speeches” and being ready to recite it at a moment’s notice was a useful tip. Overall Mr. Reaume’s primary message was policy change is a long-term game that requires commitment, but

the outcomes can be worth the investment.

Building a Business Case for Local Food Systems: Janet Horner

Ms. Horner’s session began with a short presentation of what is possible in the community and then moved into an interactive session designed to elicit feedback on potential project ideas for HFFA to pursue in order to build the local food system here in Headwaters.

Some of the ideas/issues raised by the various small groups in the two sessions are presented below:

Group 1	<p>Create A Food "Knowledge" Hub</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☉ to educate on how to use local food ☉ distribute excess local food to food banks ☉ to mentor new producers and provide knowledge transfer <p>*Note – group identified that there were pockets of interest but no one group willing to take this on</p>
Group 2	<p>What could the lasting legacy be of a local food system?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☉ a website promoting healthy eating and highlighting places to do local food shopping ☉ tell the stories of the local heroes, people, producers, businesses that are making a difference in local food
Group 3	<p>Increase demand and improve access and distribution of local foods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☉ develop a marketing strategy ☉ survey the farmers to determine how they wish to sell their products ☉ work to develop a year round farmers market
Group 4	<p>Pilot a local distribution system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☉ work with existing distributor to develop the model for April to October ☉ apply for funding for a driver and vehicle expenses utilize existing infrastructure ☉ create a social enterprise
Group 5	<p>Create a Headwaters Wholesale Depot or Terminal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☉ some facilities available throughout the region ☉ partner with a major food distributor and use their best practices ☉ utilize logistic and transport skills of a major partner/ supplier <p>*Note: these would require consistent level of supply</p>
Group 6	<p>Distribution is the Issue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☉ logistics are the challenge ☉ missing some of the key players around the table who need to be part of the solution
Group 7	<p>Module for the education system promoting local foods and benefits of healthy eating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☉ work with the School Board to create community gardens at schools ☉ Definition of success – parents start to buy more and involve children in shopping and preparation of local foods ☉ Need a champion in the school system or parents council ☉ Some startup costs and ongoing maintenance would be required ☉ students could use volunteer hours

These discussions show significant overlap which is a great opportunity to build on these ideas and the folks that were in the room to move these ideas forward. The HFFA Hub and the Distribution working group will be discussing these ideas to determine next steps.

Food Education, Access and Literacy: Challenges and Opportunities: Brendan Johnson & Erin Nelson

The session started with an update from the working group chair, Jennifer Payne who outlined some of the success of the group to date and the immediate plans for future projects. The guest speakers contributed to the interactive conversation throughout the session with tips and best practices from other regions. The following lists are the results of the groups brainstorming throughout the session.

Education Opportunities:

- incorporating local food into school curriculum
- food skills workshops
- summer cooking camps for kids/other hands on food opportunities
- involve seniors, farmers, professionals to inspire youth and encourage farming careers
- community kits to improve skills in self sufficiency
- education as part of Food and Friends school nourishment programs as well as local food purchase
- farm trips such as Albion Hills Community Farm, Everdale
- Garden Fresh Box Program
- policy activities such as school improvement plans and board wide policies

Food Access Opportunities:

- share good news stories from community services organizations moving beyond food bank food delivery model
- development of an inventory of community supports such as community kitchens, gardens and creation of a food access plan, including policy influencing economic access.

Key takeaways from the conversation:

- networking and building relationships is one of most successful methods of getting started
- projects should be fun
- food can be the beginning of many other projects/issues – it can be a bridge to other topics

Several Students that were involved on the video making project were present at the afternoon session and provided some youthful insight into the conversation.

- they view junk food differently now
- they read ingredients and labels
- they now investigate ingredients they don't recognize
- they are now aware of the importance of local foods and subsequently influenced the shopping decisions of their parents

Success Story #2: Rebecca Landman from Landman Gardens and Bakery

Rebecca Landman delighted the crowd with the story of her new business and how it has grown into a full family affair. As a young professional with culinary and sustainable agriculture training, Rebecca has taken her family farm into new directions with the addition of a commercial bakery, a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) that includes meat as well as produce and on farm dinners in the very special “Black House”. The farm is a family affair where each of the children has their own “business” and is responsible for managing that component of the farm. This has allowed them to diversify their products and to thrive. Rebecca youthful enthusiasm inspired

the crowd and she was applauded for her commitment to the local food scene. A full copy of her presentation can be found [here](#).

Our Meal:

The Food Summit Planning team spent considerable time with the staff at the Royal Ambassador (the event venue) to ensure as much local product was included in the meals offered as possible. This included conversations on tweaking recipes to include local food where possible. The Royal Ambassador already had several excellent relationships with local suppliers as they were previous participants in the Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association's Summer Feast program that encouraged a "Taste of Headwaters". However, new connections were made with a local bakery to provide the bread for the day and with Sheldon Creek Dairy for dairy products. The meal itself was a buffet lunch that offered many choices that appealed to everyone in attendance from vegetarians to meat-lovers and everyone in between. Effort was made on behalf of the food summit planning team to ensure the food choices were healthy, did not contravene the purpose of the day focusing on local foods and were aligned with the values present in the Health Promotion and Protection Act. This included requesting tap water instead of offering bottled water and refusing pop as an option. This process should be formalized for future events with a checklist or written overview of these requests to give to all potential venues for HFFA events.

The Student Videos

As part of HFFA's goal of engaging youth as it develops its vision for food and farming in the Headwaters region, students at local schools were recruited to provide the youth voice on local food issues. To capture a cross section of youth from the region, students from both elementary and secondary schools in Dufferin and Caledon were targeted for this activity. In total, 21 grade 7 and 8 students from Primrose Elementary School in Mulmur and 12 high school students from various Caledon secondary schools participated in digital filmmaking workshops. The youth were purposely given very little instruction on the content of the short films other than to highlight their thoughts and knowledge on food into short films that showcased local youth perspectives. The full day workshops were facilitated by [The Director's Cut](#) digital media training company and provided the participants the tools and expertise to learn a variety of digital media skills to develop their short films. The 2 digital media workshops were very successful, with 7 short films produced and later shared at the **2nd Annual Headwaters Food Summit**. The films focused on a variety of community food issues, including food security, access to local food and healthy eating and were a highlight for many of the attendees at the food summit. Furthermore, the relationships that were developed through this activity with both schools and students will be the foundation for further food focused youth engagement activities in the future. The videos will be uploaded to the HCIA [website](#) and shared through social media to ensure wide distribution of the videos and recognition for the efforts of the young people who made them.

Local Food Trade Fair

The Local Food Trade Fair was set-up in a similar fashion to the one held at the inaugural food summit held in April of 2012. The fundamental objective of the Trade Fair was originally delivered through the Eat Local Caledon and was intended to be a business to business networking opportunity to connect producers with purchasers such as local restaurants, caterers and retailers.

The Trade Fair attracted 16 producers from the Headwaters Region including farmers, bakers, and soup producers as well as established businesses like Spirit Tree Cidery, Woolwich Dairy and Hockley Valley Coffee. The challenge with delivering an event such as the Trade Fair is in persuading producers and retailers to take the time to attend. As generally small producers the time issue is significant and ultimately these small businesses were hoping to gain potential new customers in order to grow their own business. This was unfortunately not the end result in many cases as the right mix of attendees such as restaurateurs and retailers who could purchase the products did not materialize resulting in disappointment for many of the Trade Fair vendors.

As a result, the HFFA team will reevaluate the purpose of the Trade Fair and the design of the event for future Summits in order to offer a better experience for both vendors and attendees.

Lesson Learned

The **2nd Annual Headwaters Food Summit** was designed in a very different manner from the first Summit held in 2012 and therefore resulted in different outcomes. The event was overall very well-received with 31 of 35 respondents giving it a high or very high rating for overall satisfaction, but as with many large events took many resources to plan and execute. The value of such a summit must be evaluated against the effort and money it takes to execute it in order to determine the frequency and topics to be presented. The feedback was generally positive with some reference to topics that were not addressed such as organic food and GMO's (genetically modified organisms). Feedback specific to the format of the summit with respect to the length, venue and design were asked of participants to aid the Hub planning team in the design of future events. In addition, this feedback recognized potential topics for future events through identifying topics not addressed at the food summit, but those that participants thought were useful.

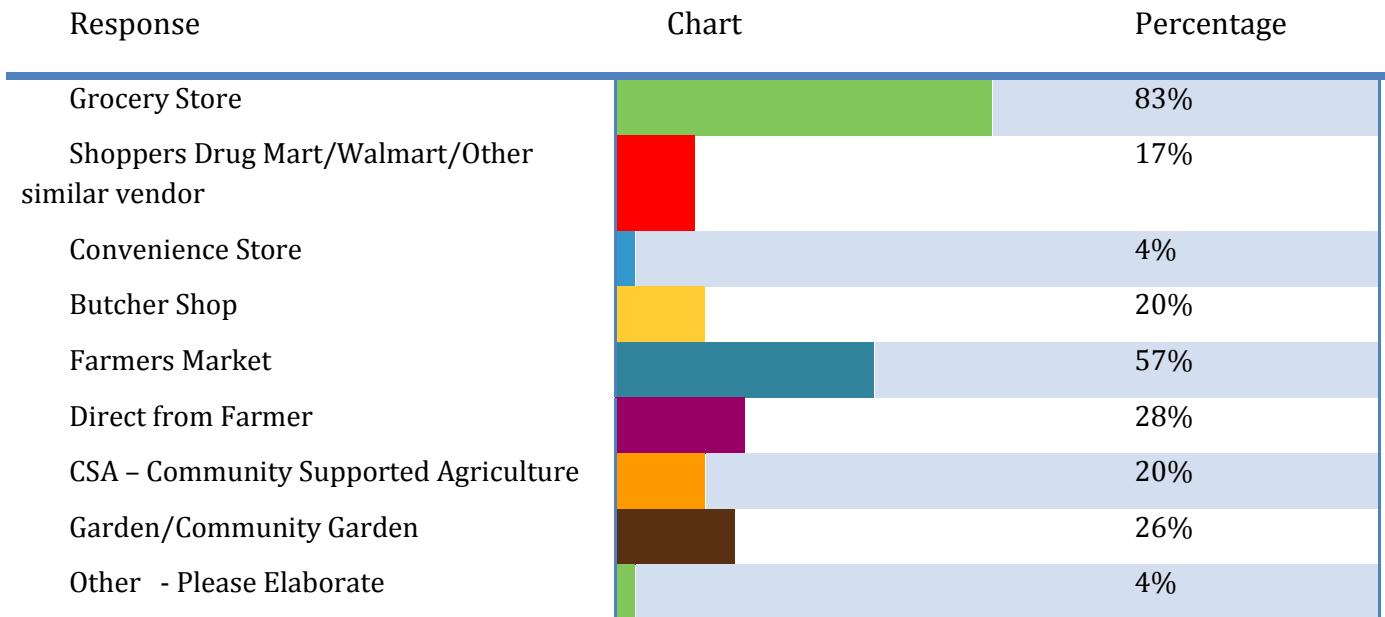
Summary of Consumer Survey

The Food Summit planning team identified an excellent opportunity to access the opinions of over 100 participants at the Food Summit through a consumer survey. The WDG Public Health office was able to loan the team four iPads to load and deliver the survey; greatly aiding in the ease of delivery and recording of results. The focus of the survey was primarily on consumer shopping and eating habits as these are useful indicators to understand when developing potential projects in the region.

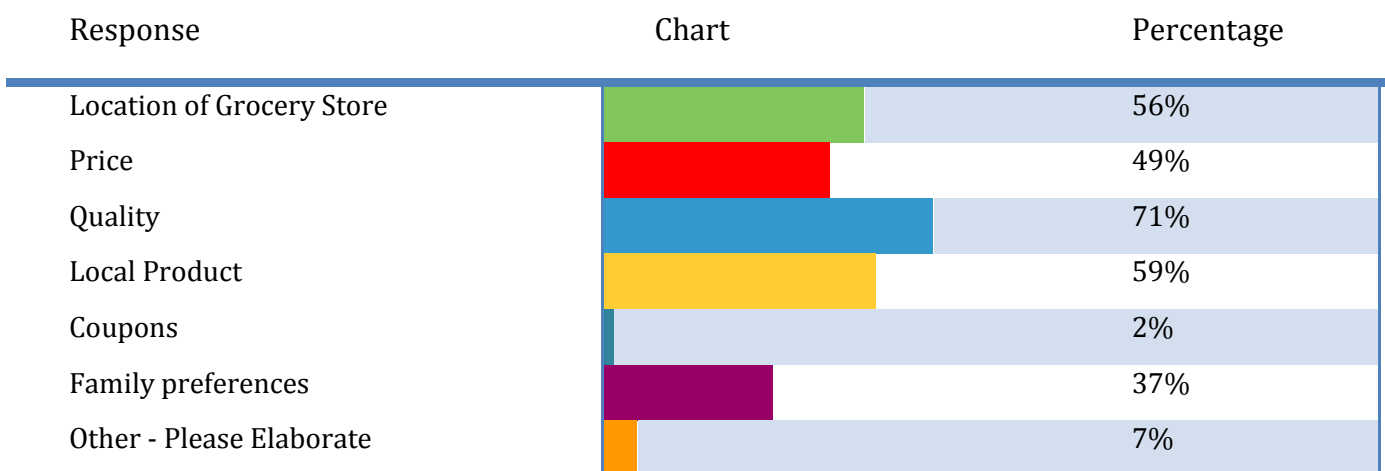
The survey captured responses from 49 food summit attendees that were roughly two thirds female and one third male ranging in age from youth (10-18 years old) to seniors (over 75) with the majority of respondents (over 50%) in the 35-64 age group. Amaranth and Orangeville were heavily represented municipalities, but there was at least one respondent from each municipality in the Headwaters Region (Caledon, Dufferin, Erin). Several respondents were from the agriculture or farming community which contradicts the commonly held thought that we are unable to attract these folks out to meetings. However, it is always possible to improve outreach to this vital sector of the food system. Other groups represented ranged from business people to educators to municipal staff or representatives.

The chart below outlines where people do the majority of their food shopping with the grocery store topping the list at 83%.

Question: Where do you do your grocery shopping? Check all that apply.



Question: What criteria do you use when making food purchases? Check all that apply.



Not surprisingly given the skewed interest of the attendees, over 90% of respondents made conscious decisions to purchase local food through farmer’s markets, farm gate sales, CSA’s (Community Shared Agriculture) or via local foods at supermarkets. These respondents cited freshness and a desire to support the local farmer/economy as their top reasons for seeking out local foods. The primary reasons touted as why they do not choose local was the availability of options due to seasonality and to the convenience of finding these local foods. Cost was mentioned as a factor by only 30% of respondents.

The survey revealed respondents thoughts on healthy eating and again due to the predisposed nature of the respondents it was easy to predict that almost 85% of respondents would identify healthy eating as somewhat important or very important. What was somewhat interesting were respondents eating habits with respect to

eating out or cooking at home. 39% of respondents stated they cook from scratch every day and eating out at a full serve or fast food restaurant was much less popular with most respondents only doing this once a week. The respondents also frequently ate together as a family (44% doing this everyday) and rarely ate standing up or in front of the TV (49% and 37% respectively answering never to these questions).

It is expected that these results will be used as background documentation to the development of future projects of the HFFA Hub or its working groups. Full results of the survey can be accessed through the action@headwaterscommunities.ca email.

Next Steps

Each of the working groups has a well-developed work plan that are currently being rolled out and the Hub also has a work plan that includes some task related activities and some overall strategic management of HFFA. The working groups will continue to solicit new members, ideas and volunteer hours while the Hub will move forward on building the required resources to support its own work plan as well as supporting the working groups. There are several grant opportunities in the marketplace at the moment as well as the opportunity to build new partnerships with our local municipalities, our business and our community organizations to further this work. Pay close attention to the HCIA website and also to the partner websites of The Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association and Dufferin.Biz as they promote culinary tourism and other activities. In addition, HFFA is planning a new website so stay tuned for that.

As always the HFFA Hub and its working groups are willing to hear feedback, gain new members or hear about great ideas from other communities so please send us an email at action@headwatercommunities.ca or theresa@dufferin.biz.

If you would like to add your name as a potential volunteer for HFFA or one of the working groups please do so by emailing: action@headwaterscommunities.ca with your contact information and your area of interest.