

March 22, 2006

Fellow Community Members:

Greetings from the Growing Partners of Southwest Colorado. Thank you to all of you who attended the first community food forum in Ignacio. Nearly 60 people attended the forum from Bayfield to Hesperus, Durango, Ignacio and Aztec, representing farmers, producers, educators, doctors, and youth. Thank you for sharing your thoughts, concerns and hopes for a stronger local food system. We were very pleased with the turnout, the level of interest in the assessment and the hope that a food assessment can be a powerful tool in strengthening our local food system.

We look forward to the coming forums (dates and places still to be decided). We hope that throughout the assessment we will be able to provide a complete picture of our community's food needs and resources by speaking with more members of our community.

We would like to follow up by providing a summary of the comments received at the forum and extend once again the invitation to share with us any other comments you have on the forum or the La Plata County food assessment.

At the forum we divided into discussion groups and handed out surveys to answer questions pertaining to the planning of the food assessment, the strengths and obstacles of our local food system, the meaning of community food security and most importantly how we as a community can become more food secure?

The information given at the forum was incredibly useful to the planning of the assessment, guiding us where to focus our attention next and to begin answering some of the food needs and resources of our community.

The following is a summarized version of responses to the questions posed:

(1) How could a community food assessment help?

- *“Provide baseline data to demonstrate (food) needs and benefits”*
- *“cooperative efforts for food distribution”*
- *“develop a system for production schedules”*
- *“network between growers, land owners, and consumers”*
- *“Bring more funding into the community”*
- *Profile local production capabilities*
- *And the most common response was to.... “EDUCATE”*

(2) Who needs to be involved in the La Plata County community food assessment?

Each spectrum of community was listed as an area of interest, including a focus on youth, low-income families, human services (organizations), churches, city officials, educators, and restaurants. Thank you for the specific responses of organizations and individuals. We have compiled that list and plan on contacting those specific groups throughout the study.

(3) What does food security mean to you?

Safe, Healthy, Diverse, Available, Affordable, Dependable, Local and Sustainable.

(4) How could La Plata County become more food secure?

This question evoked the most various responses which reminds us that there is no single solution to food security and no single project, program our effort. Specific responses from the survey:

- *Implementing CSAs, community gardens, seed exchanges, demonstrational gardens, backyard gardens, Farms to Schools*
- *Implementing a distribution system*
- *Working with policy makers,*
- *Educating on the food resources including wild foods, storage, season extension, preservation, how to eat seasonally, and how to grow*
- *Providing subsidies to small farmers,*
- *Working on land use codes and protecting agricultural land*
- *Better access for low income families*

The following is a summary of the results from the individual surveys:

A list of positive examples in our food system:

....The food forum, farmers market, Farms to School Programs, the level of interest and support for local growers, and the level of commitment of growers to make wholesome food available to the community.

A list of examples that need improving:

....Education of the general public, connecting traditional and new farmers, more producers, accessibility to people of all backgrounds, and a better system of distribution.

How could you help contribute [to the local food system]?

... providing education (about growing, gardening, season extension, wild plants, cooking, and other local food issues), writing articles for the local newspapers, assisting in the distribution system, purchasing local products, creating websites for networking, building greenhouses, and living by example

What do you want to see at the next forum?

.... More information on local food production (what is our growing potential), specific examples of growing, and practical ways to get involved, action groups, and getting more people a more diverse crowd at the table!

Thanks again to **Sunnyside Meats, Turtle Lake Refuge, Durango Natural Foods, Desert Sun Coffee, and Bread** for the generous donations of food for the night's event. And a special thank you to **SunUte Community Center** for the space and **Road Runner Transit** for their services.

Discussion Questions

☞ **Growing Partners of Southwest Colorado**

☞ **Community Food Forum**

☞ **February 28, 2006 Ignacio, Colorado**

☞ **How could a community food assessment help you? Your group/ organization? The La Plata community?** What do you want the assessment to look at?

1. Lead to a more diverse local economy/jobs
2. improve quality of life
3. reduce our consumption
4. provide base line data to demonstrate needs and benefits
5. bring other issues to awareness/communication
6. Horse-drawn – less fuel for bringing food in
7. Data can include jobs, local dollars,... short run it will cost more but needs creative re-organizing finances
8. Organization and distribution of food... develop a system for production schedules
9. Care taken with local product to make sure (they) remain healthy
10. Provide information about existing and potential markets... supply and demand
11. Bring more funding to the community – subsidies for small farmers
12. Cooperative efforts for food distribution
13. breakdown barriers
14. education
15. Consumer Networks
16. How good are the markets? What are their rules?
17. Educate the people
18. Shift values
19. Farmers seen as valuable to the community
20. Figure out who is growing what
21. Educate kids about where to get great food
22. Figure out how to share cost for season extension
23. Cooperative efforts to increase production and delivery
24. GP could put together people with land (35 acres owners) with people who want to grow food allowing proper management of the land
25. Find out what we can produce here and defining parameters and varieties
26. Individual communities trading with regions instead of just farmers????
27. Surveying number of people growing gardens
28. Knowing sociological patterns and cultural patterns
29. SLOW food
30. Research into patterns of consumption vs. what can be produced
31. Set a base line to assist in reasonable goal setting
32. Economic impact and job production
33. Available options in the area- more advertising making information available on growers and farmers
34. Creation of networks of growers to work together- seed saving, idea exchange
35. Breakdown the misconceptions about hippies and that natural foods are for the rich
36. How to buy local/ organic on a limited budget

☞ **Who needs to be involved in OUR community food assessment?** Who should we talk to? What groups/populations need to be studied?

1. Low income families,
2. Head Start,
3. Companeros,
4. Rachael Parry – Foxfire Farms,
5. educators,
6. adult education center,
7. churches,
8. Dept. of human services,
9. San Juan Basin,
10. FLC students,
11. Extension offices,
12. traditional farmers,
13. City Council.
14. Restaurant Association/Consumer
15. Doctors participate in the data base by distributing surveys
16. Producers,
17. consumers,
18. school kids
19. Hospitals,
20. schools,
21. producers,
22. retailers,
23. poor,
24. seniors,
25. youth,
26. city/county gov't officials,
27. food stamp recipients,
28. restaurants,
29. churches
30. Underserved/low-income,
31. Hispanic,
32. Mormons – who pride themselves on healthy foods (Red Mesa)
33. High income individuals & low income

☞ **What does food security mean to you?** How food secure is La Plata County? What food access issues exist?

1. Safety,
2. healthy,
3. access,
4. Adequate supply – everything but food production???

5. Fuel-free food,
6. conserving soil & land,
7. choices,
8. encourage more people to sell,
9. encourage more people to grow
10. Political support from city and county,
11. capacity to produce food,
12. food security system of survival,
13. knowledge of what we are eating,
14. organic micro-nutrients/freshness.
15. Be available, affordable to all.
16. If conventional distribution stops, we can supply ourselves;
17. kids are safe,
18. self-sufficiency,
19. land is available,
20. safety comes from knowing your grower,
21. education through example,
22. educating youth – hands-on education.
23. Freight,
24. water,
25. demonstrated markets,
26. access to land for your people.
27. La Plata county – not very secure.
28. Self-sufficient,
29. cost of production,
30. set example of our passion for local foods through education – esp. with children,
31. hands-on education,
32. dependable,
33. healthy,
34. safe,
35. access to supply,
36. ability to get to food,
37. affordable,
38. available land for production,
39. shared harvest,
40. preservation of food,
41. eat seasonally,
42. infrastructure with producers,
43. encourage more production & a variety of production.
44. Foods to schools,
45. system to support kids,
46. lots of land & greenhouses,
47. organizations supporting each other,
48. political and grass roots levels,
49. start with regional sources,
50. individual sustainability,

51. wild food education.

∞ **How could La Plata County become more food secure?** How could the current food system be improved in La Plata County? What are projects/ concrete suggestions for increased food security?

1. How many working farms are there?
2. Leasing partnership b/w people who want to farm and raise livestock and people with land. Linking food with restaurants, but making it a reciprocal relationship.
3. List of places and restaurants to get local food.
4. Mormons – be prepared: 1 year supply of food. (Community gardens easily diluted as a gesture.)
5. Community gardens – people invested in their plots,
6. CSAs,
7. distribution – bringing everyone together,
8. seed exchange,
9. city space – grow dome,
10. knowledge of wild foods map,
11. Hispanic native community open to FM,
12. working with policy makers,
13. educate people – elder growers educating,
14. distribution network,
15. demonstration gardens,
16. season extension,
17. connect people with knowledge with those who want knowledge – bring people together.
18. Have a co-op,
19. make it easier to sell excess produce from small gardens,
20. more markets.
21. Subsidies to small farmers for policies,
22. education,
23. land-use.
24. Seed exchanges,
25. food education in schools,
26. community gardens,
27. Rec center growing spaces,
28. grow dome,
29. education to people other than the choir,
30. education on cold storage,
31. knowing our capacity to produce food,
32. access to land,
33. compost teas,
34. improving quality of soil,
35. wild foods mapping,
36. more food,

37. having FM accept WIC and Senior and Food Stamp coupons.
38. Community outreach,
39. more infrastructure,
40. integrate with ranchers,
41. education for people who want to farm,
42. classes in preservation,
43. dairies,
44. basic staples,
45. mills,
46. & land trusts.
47. Season extension,
48. cold storage,
49. distribution,
50. communication,
51. education – sharing land management skills specific to this climate,
52. welfare/WIC programs – low income access,
53. connecting the haves with the have-nots – linking resources,
54. connecting those with knowledge with those who need it,
55. community educational center,
56. school gardens,
57. creating models for water security and water preservation and conservation,
58. backyard gardening,
59. sustainable building.

**Individual Survey Results
Ignacio Food Forum
February 28, 2006**

List one aspect or example in our local food system that you are excited about in La Plata County?

1. The Event Tonight (forum)
2. desire of growers/producers in our area to make wholesome food available
3. Shared Harvest Project
4. **farmers market**
5. commitment to sustainable communities and food systems from so many locals ...
6. **farmers market**
7. local processing plant for local animals
8. *farmers market- supporting local and keeping it local*
9. amount of food related resources and engaged people, gardens markets, farms to school, non profits, etc
10. food assessment, that people are thinking holistically about food issues also excited that there still is ag land close to Durango
11. *Options of where to get food and stronger farmers markets...*
12. ... how receptive people are about helping sustain local producers and
13. *proliferation of farmers markets and local meat production*
14. **growing vibrancy of farmers markets**
15. **expand org. product and Durango Farmers Market**
16. **Farms to School, Forum, farmers market**
17. **farmers market**
18. **Farms to Schools**
19. barter produce
20. good that we produce our own grass fed beef
21. **local food in schools**
22. Greenhouses
23. **Food in schools - better cafeteria food and education programs**
24. level of interest
25. **The Event Tonight (forum)**
26. **Farms to School and vending machines**
27. GPSWC conduit for putting land owners with growers to make the land produce food for community
28. local facilitation and community efforts
29. wild food
30. Growing local produce.
31. **farm to school**
32. **farmers markets-**
33. **community awareness- education**
34. **farmers market**
35. **farmers market**
36. **farmers market**
37. **Sunnyside Meats processing facility**

List one example of a food issue in La Plata County we could improve

1. Land Use- food not parking lots
2. **lack of education to the masses on how to affordably eat healthy, local foods**
3. native plant growing
4. more connections between new and traditional farmers
5. Water conservation, water restrictions and rain appreciation
6. **education of general public**
7. **distribution and education as to what is really out there**
8. **education is a true requirement for affordable good food**
9. more growers, community gardens in town, season extension possibilities, more diversity
10. *farmers markets more visible to the public*
11. **better system of distribution of surplus fruit**
12. **education**
13. **education for K-12**
14. **education on the true cost of conventional industrial farming to help realize that in many ways it is more expensive to shop that way**
15. more local producers supplying to local markets
16. establish specific locally produced product food
17. affordability, accessibility
18. a forum for exchange of ideas and action
19. vogs in winter
20. PR vehicle
21. **improve education on non like-minded people**
22. extend market year round, Restaurant and Producer Consumer Association
23. Improve accessibility to people of all backgrounds
24. expectations of what should be available to eat
25. getting to market efficiently
26. improve local markets
27. more food in winter, so more cold storage, dried and canned for public
28. greenhouses, buy food from local, food in schools
29. need community gardens, buy local
30. positive vibes about weather for farmers
31. soils and knowledge of what makes healthy soil
32. **education on local healthy foods**

How can you contribute to [the local food system]?

1. ***providing an educational format***
2. learn to use native plants for food
3. Write article about drip, water conservation, rain appreciation. Lessons of drought and mulching
4. work on our kids and friends
5. network or community bulletin board of volunteer drivers to deliver food
6. ***Education***
7. ***growing food and providing education to the community and kids***
8. ***help with planning for education and outreach through FLC Environmental Center***
9. participate in CSA and food coops, spread the word about more food options, change local policies affecting food
10. I can contact town council members, or FLC about providing a location that will provide high traffic and visibility to
11. Small organizations of putting producers with people who want fruit or would be willing to juice and package
12. school tours of our farm
13. complete food assessment, visit schools and programs
14. living by example
15. make sure local markets provide a profitable and satisfying alternative of rat least some of their product
16. purchase the products
17. create local distribution center and network (website)
18. ***show local foods available thru education***
19. I could help build greenhouse in this are that will withstand winters, how to heat and cook
20. Food Section of the Herald .. Educate 10,000 readers
21. buy food at local markets, and (continue) personal garden
22. Organize Rest/consumer association
23. get on FTS email list
24. could help facilitate putting the growers together
25. ***Outreach, education youth to the unknown community***
26. ***Education... That local climates can support a limited arrangement of food staffs***
27. co-ops
28. co-ops
29. discuss with others
30. extend growing seasons, storage
31. talk with others find opportunity to get hands dirty, volunteer time in local gardens
32. *involvement with farmers market*
33. ***community education on successful and sustainable models***
34. ***giving farm tours, and having information available to the public about our farm and farming techniques u***

Do you have a better understanding of community food security and the community food assessment?

yes - food security should have the "oil crisis" and its link to food security
Yes- food assessment No -food security
sure
yes
yes
yes
yes
yes- great presentation
arrived late, but I feel I have a better sense of community's interest in food issues
yes- this was a great experience
yes
yes
Yes- Dyer is informative good!
yes,
yes
yes and no- I would like more facts on what was produced 50 years ago and how much (ask Jim)
yes
no
yes
yes- it was great to meet folks who what to make a difference
yes
Yes- thought about it before but never in those terms
yes
yes
yes
yes
I have more answers and more questions
more or less
kind of - next forum
yes
yes- gets my motivation jump started
yes- thanks for bringing these components together
yes
yes

What would you like to see at our second food forum?

1. Educate the community, more action, opportunities
2. update on assessment, more on food security
3. food like we had tonight and examples of local food production
4. An analysis of the % of local food consumed in LPC that is grown locally. What is the potential
5. more SUCAP folks
6. more precise focus or specific goal
7. Less preaching to the choir... More diverse crowd..tap into their experience and skills
8. Action plan, identification of food resources and how we can involve whole community
9. Divide into work groups to come up with ideas for fundable projects
10. Specific info on OUR local food system
11. More people , have each person invite two to three people each
12. Choosing a small project to work on this summer
13. Expanding the scope to include people who are less tuned in to this subject, brainstorm solutions to increase the availability of local food
14. Programs about hands on product for our area soil, compost
15. Same discussion of local current issues
16. More producers; more practical, incremental ways to start incorporating local foods into local markets
17. Practical ways to participate and to support projects,
18. How to get more people involved
19. Action groups
20. Provide list of names and numbers to be handed out to everyone with each persons, experience and interest
21. A plan for matching resources and needs
22. More growers, processors and retailers
23. Soon
24. More specifics on who is doing what
25. Examples of season extension at the 3rd forum
26. Diverse group
27. More local issues and knowledge sharing
28. Local marketing
29. Specifics on how to get more producers in county
30. LOCAL potluck
31. LOCAL potluck
32. even more public involvement and input
33. set goals- ideas from general public, needs
34. discuss attainable goals