

# **Building Community-Based Food Systems to Enhance Food Security in Missouri**

***A Joint Project of the Missouri Rural Crisis Center and the University of Missouri***

## **Progress toward Goals:**

*1. What are the increases in the number of farmers, processors, and distributors serving farmers' markets, restaurants, schools, and groceries either individually or through cooperatives?*

We have assisted with the establishment of 4 new farmers' markets in the St. Louis and Kansas City metro areas; contacted 32 restaurants in the Mid-Missouri area informing them of the availability of locally produced food and providing them with marketing tips and information; and have worked with nine restaurants, one university food service, and one distributor in the metro areas interested in accessing locally grown food products. We have assembled databases of farmers who have local products for sale (with our databases containing about 110 names), and are now combining those databases with other existing sources of information, such as AgriMissouri. We have 10 farmers and chefs who are interested in participating in a pilot internet marketing project. In addition, 3 coop farmer members have diversified their operations to include produce purchased by the MRCC food cooperative.

*2. What is the increased income per farm for those farmers serving these food systems?*

We are working with our evaluators to devise the best way to measure this information. We have included this within our evaluation plan which is being sent under separate cover.

*3. What is the level of knowledge and skills on the part of farmers, processors, distributors, and retailers in producing, processing, and distributing locally-grown food products with consistent quality and quantity?*

We know that farmers are trying to sharpen their skills for direct marketing and accessing retail and restaurant markets as evidenced by the 185 farmers, chefs, processors and retailers who attended the "Selling Local in Kansas City." We have provided 62 farmers in the East Central extension region with information on farm diversification and marketing in community-based food systems, as well as distributed information and educational materials to 1,320 livestock producers on how to access federal and state sustainable agriculture programs. We have facilitated a group of 8 farmers and 1 chef who are forming an alternative distribution network, and provided them with technical assistance on the ins and outs of building distribution systems.

4. *What is the evidence of increased awareness from urban populations about food production?*
5. *Is there an increased consumption of locally grown food products within the community, region, and state? (Answered together)*

Over 1,125 Kansas City area consumers attended two spring farmers' expos; 150 consumers in the metro area have explored local food issues as part of environment and wellness interest; 850 low-income rural families have purchased 21,800 pounds of in-season produce produced by Mid-Missouri farmers; the Kansas City Food Circle and local foods was featured in a 1,600 word article in the *Kansas City Star* (readership of 686,000); and 565 food cooperative members engaged in writing letters, signing petitions and making phone calls to support state sustainable agriculture programs. This is in addition to the mainstream produce distributor in St. Louis who contacted us to source locally produced foods in response to increased demand, and the \$3 million in Kansas and Missouri product that has moved through Ball's Foods in Kansas City as part of their participation in the "Buy Fresh, Buy Local" campaign. We continue to work with our evaluators to establish baselines for the increased amount of consumption of locally produced food, and to find the best indicators to measure this outcome.