

THE MICHIGAN GOOD FOOD REPORT CARD 2018



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the fourth biennial Michigan Good Food Report Card. Since the Michigan Good Food Charter was first released in 2010, this report card series has aimed to highlight some of the many efforts across the state to re-envision the food system in ways that promote equity, sustainability and thriving economies.^{1,2,3}

This 2018 report card comes at a key moment in which we must simultaneously intensify our efforts to meet the goals of the Michigan Good Food Charter by 2020 and look beyond 2020 to build a robust and resilient movement for the coming decade. The breadth of good food work reflected here can serve as the foundation to more deeply embed food system priorities within organizations and institutions statewide and to build a more inclusive and diverse movement.

The Michigan Good Food Initiative is coordinated by the Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems (MSU CRFS) with input and support from the Michigan Good Food Steering Committee, which represents 20 organizations across Michigan. Many other organizations, networks, local councils and collaborations around the state bring the Charter to life by working to achieve the goals and priorities that advance good food in their sectors and communities.



GOALS

Have we made progress toward the six goals?

Goal 1: Michigan institutions will source 20% of their food products from Michigan growers, producers and processors.

- By July 2018, Cultivate Michigan had 65 member institutions committed to working toward the goal of 20% Michigan food by 2020. Members include 42 schools and school districts, 13 hospitals, 5 early child care and education programs, 3 colleges and universities, 2 senior facilities. Seven others businesses or organizations also participate.⁴ By the end of 2017, participating institutions had reported more than \$4 million (\$4,041,007) in spending on Michigan products. Looking at percentages of Michigan spending, individual quarterly surveys report a range of 3–50% of total spending. Looking across all institutions in all years (2014–2017), spending on Michigan products accounts for 14% of total food spending reported.⁵
- Of Michigan's 133 hospitals, 78 have committed to locally sourcing 20% of their food by 2020 through the Healthy Food Hospitals Initiative or other efforts.⁶
- In the budget for Fiscal Year 2018-19, the Legislature again increased funding for 10 Cents a Meal for School Kids & Farms from \$375,000 to \$575,000. The current budget also expands program eligibility, adding two prosperity regions to bring the total to five. During the 2017–2018 school year, 112 farms in 34 counties—plus 19 businesses such as processors, distributors and food hubs—supplied the program.⁷
- According to Farm Logix, Michigan schools spent \$516,836 on Michigan produce during the 2016–2017 school year through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Pilot Project for Procurement of Unprocessed Fruits and Vegetables, accounting for 33% of all of their spending through the program.⁸
- Michigan schools also spent \$3,142,997, or 38% of all of their spending through their Department of Defense food dollars, during the 2017–2018 school year. Most of this spending was on whole Michigan apples or apple slices.⁹

Goal 2: Michigan farmers will profitably supply 20% of all Michigan institutional, retailer and consumer food purchases and be able to pay fair wages to their workers.

- According to the 2015 USDA Agricultural Census, Michigan is second only to California in total direct farm sales with a total of \$459 million in 2015; this number includes products sold directly to consumers, to institutions or to retailers for consumption in state. Of this, \$132 million in sales was from farms directly to consumers.¹⁰ The 2017 Agricultural Census will be released in late 2018.
- The fourth and fifth annual Pure Michigan Agricultural Summits, put on jointly by the Michigan Department of Agricultural and Rural Development (MDARD) and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Pure Michigan Business Connect, brought together buyers and sellers of Michigan food products. In 2018, over 350 attendees, including 187 Michigan suppliers and 29 purchasing companies (buyers such as Meijer and Beaumont Health), came together to forge connections that would lead to more Michigan products on shelves and menus across the state. During the 2018 Summit, there were over 150 matchmaking meetings between buyers and suppliers.^{11,12}



- Many major retail buyers from Michigan promote their local purchasing.¹³ Meijer, for instance, supports an estimated 200 apple growers in the state and purchases 1 million pounds of Michigan asparagus and 2.5 million pints of Michigan blueberries each year.¹⁴
- Direct sales from farmers to consumers is strong in Michigan, as evidenced by the estimated 300 farmers markets operating across the state.
- Eastern Market launched the Baskets to Pallets training program, developed by Cornell University. This program is aimed at giving small- and medium-scale farmers the skills to scale up and sell through wholesale channels.¹⁵
- 923,000 people are employed in Michigan agriculture, representing 22% of the state's workforce.¹⁶
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the mean annual wage of farming, fishing and forestry occupations in Michigan was \$29,440 in 2017,¹⁷ down from \$31,390 in 2015.¹⁸
- Labor shortages continue to be a major issue on Michigan's farms, following the disruption in annual migrant and guest worker labor after the 2012 freeze that wiped out many of the state's tree fruit crops.
- As Michigan's agricultural sector relies more and more on H-2A temporary agricultural workers (a federal government program that allows foreign workers to be in the United States for a defined season of work), the minimum required wage is set based on a weighted average of regional wages, ensuring that guest workers are willing to be paid less than a local going rate and will not take jobs that domestic workers may be willing to do.¹⁹ Thus, this Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) is a proxy for average wages for seasonal agricultural workers. The AEWR in Michigan continues to increase annually. In 2018, it was \$13.06 per hour;²⁰ in 2017, \$12.75 per hour;²¹ in 2016, \$12.02 per hour;²² and in 2015, \$11.56 per hour.²³ However, not all guest workers are being paid those required wages, as incidents of wage theft, often through paying piece rates, have been documented and temporary workers face language, knowledge and other barriers to bringing concerns about wages, housing and working conditions to light. There are also limitations within agencies charged with regulating these conditions for migrant workers,²⁴ as there are many other factors contributing to their wages and working conditions.
- In late 2017, Attorney General Bill Schuette issued an opinion that the state minimum wage law does not apply to small farms that are exempt from the federal minimum wage law.²⁵
- There is no precise count of the number of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Michigan each year. One estimate is approximately 33,337 migrant farmworkers and 16,798 seasonal farmworkers, plus their accompanying nonworking family members.²⁶
- The Michigan Statewide Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) working group has conducted a statewide survey of CSA farmers to gain a better understanding of what makes a CSA viable, to promote CSA models across the state and to help CSA farmers earn a living wage for themselves and their families.²⁷

Goal 3: Michigan will generate new agrifood businesses at a rate that enables 20% of food purchased in Michigan to come from Michigan.

- The Michigan Good Food Fund is a \$30 million public-private partnership loan fund created to finance healthy food production, distribution, processing and retail projects that benefit underserved communities throughout Michigan. To date, the fund has invested more than \$11 million in 28 good food businesses and provided technical assistance to nearly 30 enterprises.



- According to its 2016–2017 legislative report, the MSU Product Center served 689 clients, supported the launch of 91 ventures and supported capital formation of \$53,435,370 in that time period.²⁸
- In 2018, the Product Center completed construction and opened the Food Processing and Innovation Center (FPIC), a key new resource to help grow Michigan agrifood businesses.²⁹
- Three major food, ag and forestry projects, supported by multiple state agencies, came on line in the last year and with a total investment of \$750 million, resulting in 1,200 new jobs. Each of these projects happened in communities with populations under 16,000.
- Federal grants continue to flow into Michigan to support food and agriculture businesses. In 2016, \$1,887,408 in Specialty Crop Block Grant dollars was awarded through MDARD, with over \$1.5 million distributed in grants. About \$1.5 million was also distributed in 2017.

Goal 4: 80% of Michigan residents (twice the current level) will have easy access to affordable, fresh, healthy food, 20% of which is from Michigan sources.

- In a 2015 statewide survey, 18.2% of Michigan adults indicated that distance from their home to a full-service grocery store sometimes, usually or always made it difficult to buy the variety and quality of fresh fruits and vegetables they would like.³⁰
- According to Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap (2016 data), 1 in 7 Michiganders, and 1 in 6 Michigan children, struggle with hunger. An estimated 1.4 million people in the state are food insecure (1,414,700), which represents 14.2% of Michigan's population. This is down from roughly 1.6 million food-insecure Michigan residents in 2014, potentially a sign of an improving job market and a changing food landscape.
- Among those 1.4 million food-insecure residents, 27% are above the threshold of 200% of the poverty line that qualifies a resident for government food assistance (e.g., SNAP, WIC, TEFAP), up from 25% in 2014.³¹ In other words, government food assistance is not available to meet the food needs of over 380,000 Michigan residents, and that number is growing.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participation, SNAP allocations per household and total SNAP dollars issued in Michigan have all decreased year over year between 2014 and 2018. On average, 1,473,614 Michigan residents received SNAP each month in 2016 and only 1,298,712 in 2018 (data through May 2018).^{32, 33} Whether the decrease was caused by ineligibility or other reasons, there is still a large need for SNAP, despite the decrease in resources being allocated.
- The number of farmers markets in Michigan doubled from 2006 to 2012, and there are now about 300. In 2017, 157 Michigan farmers markets reported to Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) that they had the ability to accept SNAP.³⁴ Support from MIFMA has strengthened this sector; however, markets are beginning to report decreases in both SNAP and total sales.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) uses policy and environmental indicators to understand whether components are in place that support fresh fruit and vegetable consumption. According to the 2018 State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, Michigan has seen some of the following changes since 2013:
- The percentage of farmers markets accepting the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition program (a type of food assistance) rose from 32.1% in 2013 to 46% in 2018.
- The number of food hubs doubled in that time period, from 5 to 10.^{35, 36}
- There are currently 20 active local and regional food councils across the state and 5 more in development.³⁷
- Three cities—Battle Creek,³⁸ Pontiac and Ypsilanti³⁹—and three rural counties—Antrim, Benzie and Oscoda—have piloted a survey tool to understand access to healthy food in their communities. Their findings will inform local programs and policies, and their experiences will help refine a methodology for use in other Michigan communities.

Goal 5: Michigan Nutrition Standards will be met by 100% of school meals and 75% of schools selling food outside school meal programs.

- 100% of all schools participating in the National School Lunch Program in Michigan are certified for performance-based reimbursement, meaning they were in compliance with the federal standards for school meal programs.⁴⁰
- According to the CDC's State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, 54.1% of Michigan high schools offered salad bars in 2016, and 43.2% of school districts participated in farm to school programs.⁴¹
- A less positive indicator is that Michigan lacks policies that the CDC considers indicative of an environment promoting fruits and vegetables. This includes a lack of state policy on early child care licensing regulations that align with national standards for serving fruits and vegetables.⁴²



Goal 6: Michigan schools will incorporate food and agriculture into the pre-K through 12th grade curriculum for all Michigan students, and youth will have access to food and agriculture entrepreneurial opportunities.

- Currently, there are at least 113 Agriculture, Food and Natural Resource (AFNR) Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs across Michigan. Two were added in 2018. MSU has increased its investment and faculty/staff team focusing on preparing Agriculture, Food and Natural Resource educators (AFNRE), which represent this growing demand by school districts as well as (national) issues with teacher shortages in this field. Currently, there are 127 AFNRE teachers in the state.⁴³
- Many of the CTE programs across the state are doing exemplary multidisciplinary work preparing young people for AFNR fields and to be future educators. For instance, North Huron Agriscience and FFA (formerly Future Farmers of America), in Kinde (in the Thumb area of the Lower Peninsula), and Byron Agriscience and FFA, in Byron, both have programs where high school FFA members teach AFNR to elementary school students.
- With 43.2% of Michigan schools reporting that they participate in farm to school, most programs include educational components with students.⁴⁴
- According to the CDC, the percentage of secondary schools requiring health education instruction decreased from 87.3% in 2014 to 80.4% in 2016. In 2016, though, 81.4% of secondary teachers tried to increase student knowledge about chronic disease prevention and 92.2% tried to increase knowledge about nutrition and dietary behavior. About 70–85% of secondary teachers covered specific nutrition and dietary behavior topics.⁴⁵
- In the 2016–2017 program year, 14 FoodCorps service members served 26 Michigan schools with a total enrollment of 12,798 students. In the 2017–2018 school year, 13 FoodCorps service members worked at 25 schools statewide with a combined enrollment of 11,634. Michigan will have 16 service members for the 2018–2019 school year.

AGENDA PRIORITIES

The successes reported under the agenda priorities here relate to the strategies articulated for each agenda priority in the Michigan Good Food Charter. The successes listed here are examples and are not necessarily exhaustive. For further details, please see www.michiganfood.org.

AGENDA PRIORITIES SCORE

Being Implemented:	15 priorities x 3 points = 45
Gaining Momentum:	6 priorities x 2 points = 12
Slow Progress:	4 priorities x 1 points = 4
Minimal Action:	0 priorities x 0 points = 0

61 points out of 75 possible

In the 2012 report card, the score reported was 42.
 In the 2014 report card, the score reported was 47.
 In the 2016 report card, the score reported was 58.

BEING IMPLEMENTED – 15 PRIORITIES

1 – Expand and increase innovative methods to bring healthy foods to underserved areas as well as strategies to encourage the consumption of healthy foods.

Food hubs, kitchen incubators and other innovative business models have expanded across the state, including in many communities with food access barriers. Farmers markets, farm stands and mobile groceries have expanded operating days, hours and seasons in many locations, most with a primary goal of increasing access to healthy foods.

Food hubs are distributing food to nearly half of Michigan’s 480 zip codes, both urban and rural. Most customers (over 75%) are within 73 miles of the hub. Michigan food hubs source local products from more than 400 Michigan farms, of which 75% are small and mid-sized farms, 50% are beginning farmers/producers, 26% are women-owned farms and 11% are farms owned by people of color. The Flint Fresh Food Hub is the latest operation to launch, bringing the total number of active, self-identified food hubs in Michigan to 12.⁴⁶

The Flint Fresh Food Hub opened in April 2018. The site, a climate-controlled warehouse, light processing facility and distribution center, allows producers to aggregate their products to sell to larger purchasers more cost-effectively. The food hub will also supply two new food access initiatives with local product: the Flint Mobile Market, which brings healthy foods to underserved neighborhoods, and its Veggie Box subscription program, a subscription-based produce delivery service.⁴⁷

In Battle Creek, FireKeepers Casino initiated an innovative model of giving back to the community, partnering with the Food Bank of South Central Michigan to allow a food pantry to be set up in part of its new Fire Hub restaurant (in a renovated historic fire station). Eighty percent of all restaurant profits will be donated to local charities. Fire Hub also plans to set up a large greenhouse on nearby tribal land to grow food for salad bars in Battle Creek schools.⁴⁸



In 2017, Sprout Battle Creek expanded its operation to include a food business incubator, retail grocery store and wholesale food hub in the former Springfield Farmers' Market building, thanks in part to a Michigan Department of Agricultural and Rural Development (MDARD) Value-Added and Regional Food System grant. The expansion includes walk-in coolers, a commercial kitchen and a retail grocery store. It also houses the Sprout Box local food subscription program.

Launched in 2013 by ProMedica Bixby Hospital and Lenawee Health Network, the ProMedica Veggie Mobile is a mobile grocery store that partners with area farmers markets to provide fresh, affordable produce and accepts multiple forms of food assistance.⁴⁹ The Veggie Mobile is among several integrated health-promoting initiatives supported by ProMedica and others. A Prescription for Health program, a diabetes prevention program and a soon-to-be-developed hospital farm are all helping create an environment that makes it easier for Lenawee residents to make healthy, local food choices.

Allen Neighborhood Center (ANC) in Lansing has a Veggie Box program featuring sustainably grown, in-season produce from local farmers. It also offers add-on food staples (e.g., dried beans, eggs) and accepts SNAP as a payment option. This program is one of several integrated food access and farm programs at ANC; among the others are a year-round farmers market, incubator kitchen, The Exchange (for farmers to sell to wholesale producers) and a year-round greenhouse.⁵⁰

Growing Hope's Ypsilanti Farmers MarketPlace in Ypsilanti turned two long-empty downtown buildings into a year-round, indoor/outdoor facility. Their mobile farm stand takes product grown by farmers as well as at Growing Hope's own urban farm to residents across Ypsilanti.

In April 2018, a team from Michigan State University (MSU) launched Flint Eats, a new healthy food app for Flint residents. The app was designed to give residents a platform to influence local food retail businesses to increase the amount and quality of fresh produce they carry. App users can rate businesses on the availability of certain foods, search for specific products and special deals and access tips about healthy eating. The project was funded by MSU Extension SNAP-Ed and the Michigan Department of Education.⁵¹

Double Up Food Bucks was awarded new federal, state and philanthropic support in August 2017. This program, coordinated by the Fair Food Network, matches the value of SNAP dollars spent on locally grown fruits and vegetables, thus supporting increased consumption of healthy foods and providing financial support to local growers. Fair Food Network is using the funds to expand Double Up Food Bucks use in grocery stores and implement technological innovations for use at farmers markets.

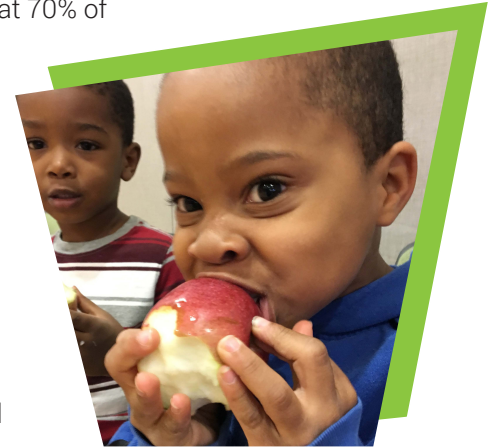
A newly reorganized Michigan food hub practitioners group began meeting quarterly in 2017 to provide a space for business-to-business technical support and collaboration. The group is currently exploring partnership opportunities to increase supply, distribution and access to healthy, locally produced foods across Michigan communities.

The Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) convened a Prescription for Health Network in 2017, now including more than 100 partners, including representatives from farmers markets, public health departments, healthcare systems and funders. This network has outlined priorities for the next two years and meets quarterly to share best practices around program facilitation, communication and implementation.

2 – Improve school food environments and reduce school sales of low-nutrient, high-sugar, high-fat and calorie-dense foods through snack and vending machines or competitive food sales.

The FoodCorps program, which connects kids to healthy food in schools, reached 8,816 Michigan students in the 2016–2017 school year and 10,878 students in the 2017–2018 school year. An evaluation showed that 7 in 10 students in FoodCorps schools improved their attitudes toward vegetables and that 70% of participating schools had measurably healthier school food environments.

Michigan food service directors continue to make a major shift in procurement choices. Among schools participating in the Department of Defense fruit and vegetable program (which facilitates schools procuring fresh produce), in 2009–2010, food service directors across the state purchased \$1.8 million in produce; by the 2017–2018 school year, their spending had increased to \$8.5 million. Those were federal entitlement funds that districts could have instead spent on processed food or brown box (other raw) ingredients (which can include canned fruits and vegetables, for instance). In addition, \$1.6 million was spent through the Unprocessed Fruit and Vegetable Pilot in 2017–2018, bringing the total fresh fruit and vegetable spending that year to at least \$10 million from federally funded programs alone.



In December 2016, MSU Extension educators launched a new SNAP-Ed statewide athletic performance curriculum for teen athletes in collaboration with Spartan Performance. The curriculum aims to teach teens how healthy dietary habits improve sports performance and how to reduce hunger in areas with limited food access.⁵² Since the program began in 2016, there have been 681 participants.⁵³

Fuel Up to Play 60 is a program sponsored by the National Dairy Council and the National Football League that empowers students to make healthy food choices and participate in physical activities. Michigan schools such as Kalkaska Middle School have participated.^{54, 55}

Blue Cross Blue Shield's Building Healthy Communities (BHC) Program supports initiatives that increase the availability of healthy food options for schoolchildren. Schools in northeast and northwest Michigan have received funds from the program thanks to a collaboration between Taste the Local Difference and the CDC to bring funding to the regions. Posen Consolidated Schools used BHC awards to install a salad bar, which provides fresh salad options for school lunches. Cheboygan Schools received funds to make two purchases: a mobile heated cabinet, which has improved meal display and increased the capacity for cafeteria staff to serve meals with lower sodium levels and more vegetables, and an industrial blender, which enables students to have smoothies made with fresh fruits and vegetables.⁵⁶

3 – Maximize use of current public benefit programs for vulnerable populations, especially children and seniors, and link them with strategies for healthy food access.

Public benefit access at Michigan farmers markets has been an area of focus and growth. According to the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA), more than half of Michigan's estimated 300 farmers markets accept SNAP benefits. However, there are costs associated with purchasing and using the point-of-sale devices necessary to process such transactions (costs range from \$5 per month to \$1,000 per year). Thanks largely to the advocacy and education efforts of MIFMA and Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan, the Fiscal Year 2017-18 budget added \$500,000 in one time funding for farmers markets to obtain no-cost wireless point-of-sale devices, thus increasing the opportunity for more vulnerable families to have access to healthy food.^{57, 58}

Fair Food Network's partners distributed \$2,563,305 in Double Up Food Bucks to SNAP recipients across the state in 2017.⁵⁹ Double Up Food Bucks, which is coordinated by the Fair Food Network, matches the value of SNAP dollars spent on locally grown fruits and vegetables, thus supporting increased consumption of healthy foods and providing financial support to local growers.

To increase awareness and use of the Summer Meet Up and Eat Up program, which provides free summer lunches to the 535,000 Michigan children who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch during the school year, Michigan No Kid Hungry sponsors a text message resource. Parents who text Food to 877-877 will receive a response that shows the closest Meet Up and Eat Up sites that their children can access. Parents can also dial 2-1-1 in some communities to find this information.

In spring 2018, the Community Foundation of Greater Flint, MSU and the Center for Regional Food Systems (MSU CRFS) were awarded a research grant from the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research Tipping Point Program to use participatory modeling to better understand how the various healthy food access incentives and interventions could better work together to be more effective.

Organizations across the state are working to educate and counsel clients on eligibility for federal food assistance benefits. Residents of select counties with high unemployment rates had been exempted from Federal work requirements. But starting in early 2017, lower unemployment rates in those counties meant the re-instatement of work requirements for able-bodied adults (ages 18 to 49) without dependents. Now, beginning October 1, 2018, all such recipients in Michigan will also be subject to a time limit, meaning they are eligible to receive food assistance benefits for only three months within a 36-month period without working 20 hours per week, participating in education/training for 20 hours per week or volunteering. Waivers to these requirements under certain circumstances (e.g. pregnant women) are available and many local food councils and organizations such as the Food Bank Council of Michigan are working to make clients aware of the new requirements and assist them in submitting proper paperwork to maintain eligibility.^{61, 62}



5 – Establish food business districts to encourage food businesses to locate in the same area and to support their collaboration.

The Detroit Black Community Food Security Network plans to break ground in 2018 on the 30,000-square-foot Detroit Food Commons, a new mixed-use development in the north end of Detroit that will feature a new Detroit People's Food Co-operative grocery store, a restaurant, a kitchen incubator, DBCFSN offices and adjacent 65 units of new housing.^{63, 64}

The new downtown Saginaw Farmers Market opened in spring 2018. The year-round market includes amenities such as a food hub and processing center, expansive indoor farmers market and a demonstration kitchen.

Flint Food Works is a food business incubator located in the Flint Farmers Market. Food Works rents out commercial kitchen spaces to local food entrepreneurs, granting them a low-cost, low-risk opportunity to develop a food product and create a sustainable business. Though the co-location of the incubator inside the Flint market was planned since the facility was first developed (it opened in its current location in 2014), another co-location not originally planned is Hurley Children's Clinic, a pediatric medical office located on the second floor of the market. This clustering of services beyond food businesses shows the synergy of food acting as an anchor for multiple positive community benefits.

The Food Innovation Center at Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) is a food district focused on a college campus and adjacent hospital. The Bronson Healthy Living Campus is across the street from the KVCC building that houses the college's culinary, sustainable brewing and health programs. Just around the corner is the Food Innovation Center, housing a food hub that processes and distributes local food to Bronson. This campus represents the partners' holistic view of health, food and sustainability, all in the context of education.⁶⁵

A new Food Processing Innovation Center (FPIC), part of the MSU Product Center, opened in Okemos in summer 2018. The FPIC offers opportunities for food businesses to enhance the value of their existing products, scale up production and commercialize their products.⁶⁶

Plans are underway for an expanded Food Innovation Zone in the Eastern Market District. The expansion will include food processing, warehousing and distribution facilities to help small and medium-sized local food entrepreneurs develop and scale up their businesses.

FEAST Detroit (Food Entrepreneur Accelerator and Startup Terminal) opened in Inkster in late summer 2017. The facility is a state-licensed, 16,000-square-foot climate-controlled production and warehouse space co-owned by three partner companies: Marcia's Munchies, Scotty O'Hotty and M&R Ventures. FEAST Detroit also provides specialty food manufacturing services to growing Michigan food entrepreneurs to help them efficiently scale up their businesses. By supporting local food businesses, FEAST Detroit has helped increase access to affordable, healthy food in underserved communities, created jobs and stimulated the local economy.⁶⁷

Can-Do Kitchen, a nonprofit kitchen incubator that has rented in two different facilities during its 10-year history, is searching for a permanent home in Kalamazoo. Its support goes well beyond providing kitchen space and includes business planning, funding navigation, food labeling, branding and marketing, licensing, insurance and pricing. Can-Do Kitchen actively works to remove barriers to people realizing their food entrepreneurship dreams and to raise funds for scholarships to ensure it is as inclusive as possible. As a result of its success, entrepreneurs who have graduated from the space need help (and face barriers to) finding next-size-up kitchens to scale their businesses.



Cherry Capital Foods, a Michigan local food distributor based in Traverse City, moved to a new space—a converted ice hockey rink—and added 1,000-square-foot “white box” spaces for entrepreneurs who graduated from kitchen incubators.

A new business model developed by Argus Farm Stop in Ann Arbor works to let farmers and other producers set the prices on the products sold in Argus' retail spaces. This gives a greater share of the consumer food dollar to farmers, but outside of a direct-to-consumer setting (often open only one day a week) such as a farmers market. Argus has openly shared its model, which is beginning to be replicated, including in a store in Corktown, Detroit, called The Farmers Hand.^{68, 69}

6 – Use policy and planning strategies to increase access to healthy food in underserved areas.

As of 2018, there are approximately 20 local food or local food policy councils around Michigan and five more under development. MSU CRFS supports a Michigan Local Food Council Network that has not only built capacity within councils but also become a forum for people to come together to share best practices, collaborate and pursue shared goals. Three rounds of seed grants have supported new and existing councils in furthering their goals and/or growing their organizational capacity.

Communities of many scales are using food as an anchor tool not only to increase healthy food access but also to spur economic development. The U.P. Food Exchange's Food Policy Committee continues to be a partner in implementing Marquette County's Master Plan, which contains five major sections related to local food. The committee provides recommendations to local units of government and recommends food system-related projects during work program and budget preparation. Kalamazoo, in working to include food in its master plan, is partnering with Good Food Kalamazoo, a local food council.

The Detroit Food Policy Council started an urban livestock ordinance process in 2016. The amendments are still under consideration, but there is now an agricultural zoning classification in Detroit.

In 2017, the Food Systems Workgroup (now the Capital Area Food Council) was successful in its efforts to amend existing land use policies in the city of Lansing, allowing farming and gardening to be a primary use of a lot and allowing accessory structures, such as hoophouses, on vacant lots affiliated with gardening.

Sprout Urban Farms and Good Food Battle Creek partnered to pass an urban livestock ordinance in March 2018. The ordinance allows rabbits, hens, miniature/dwarf goats and honeybees by animal units based on parcel size.

In Tecumseh, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority matched \$20,000 raised by the community to turn a barren lot into a thriving public marketplace and functional gathering space for the community.⁷⁰ In Hudsonville, the city and Downtown Development Authority (DDA) also used food as an anchor for community revitalization of its DDA district, turning a long-empty auto dealership into a year-round farmers market, event space and coworking space.⁷¹ They won the Michigan Municipal League's 2017 Community Excellence Award for this project.⁷²

At the state level, there have been some wins and some losses for increasing access to healthy foods. Legislation was passed that created financial incentives for grocery stores in underserved areas to carry more healthy foods. Public Act 239 of 2017 directs at least 5% of annually-appropriated community revitalization dollars within the Michigan Strategic Fund toward facilitating the development of grocery stores within urban and rural areas of the state that lack access to healthy food. If the funds are not utilized by June of each year, the dollars revert to other community revitalization programs. A new store receiving funds must be at least one mile away from an existing store that carries healthy products, and the program has a five-year sunset.

Legislation was introduced in the previous (2015–16) legislative session that would have created a new act, the Healthy Food Assistance Act, which in turn established a new state-restricted fund, the Healthy Food Financing Fund, with an appropriation of \$6.6 million. The intent of the bill, House Bill 5180, was "to increase the availability of fresh and nutritious food, including fruits and vegetables, in underserved communities by providing financing for retailers to open, renovate, or expand grocery stores." Efforts to pass this bill and the associated funding failed in that session, and the bill was not re-introduced in the 2017–18 legislative session.⁷³

The Fiscal Year 2017–18 Omnibus Budget bill, Public Act 107 of 2017, included a placeholder for the "Michigan Corner Store Initiative," to be administered by MSU Extension. It allowed for the program to be created by a supplemental budget bill (requiring only a vote of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees) if funding was identified. The program allowed the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to allocate up to \$1.5 million, to be used for grants to "small food retailers to increase availability of fresh and nutritious foods in low and moderate income areas." The funding was not identified within the time frame and therefore, there was no Michigan Corner Store Initiative created.⁷⁴



7 – Review and seek appropriate revisions to state and local land use policies to preserve farmland and blend protection with farm viability programs.

In summer 2017, a new website called Farmer to Farmer was launched to help preserve Michigan farmland. This online platform, serving the Grand Traverse Region in Northwest Lower Michigan, connects farmers looking to sell land and farmers—especially beginning farmers—wanting to buy land. The website is a collaboration between the Leelanau Conservancy, the Grand Traverse Conservancy, Taste the Local Difference and MSU Horticulture Station.⁷⁵

Michigan Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS) Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development program offers services and resources for new and beginning farmers who are looking for farmland or seeking to transition to farming. MIFFS provides resources such as land leasing tutorials, platforms to search for and post available farmland, support for farm succession or transition and guides for working with land conservancies. In 2017, MIFFS also launched Land Chat, a social media forum to connect people in Michigan looking to lease or sell land with those who are seeking land to farm.⁷⁶ MIFFS operates two incubator farms in Washtenaw and Genesee Counties. Its Tilian Farm Incubator was created through farmland preserved in Ann Arbor's Greenbelt.

The Michigan Department of Agricultural and Rural Development (MDARD) increased support for its Farmland Preservation Program in fiscal year 2017–2018, adding \$305,600 in restricted fund support of farmland preservation efforts. The Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) continues to help Michigan farmers implement environmentally sound production practices through education and training, farm-specific assessments and on-farm verification and support. So far, more than 4,000 farms in Michigan have been MAEAP verified and 10,000 farms have started the verification process.

8 – Encourage institutions—including schools, hospitals, colleges and universities—to use their collective purchasing power to influence the food supply chain to provide healthier food and more foods grown, raised and processed in Michigan.

The Michigan Farm to Institution Network (MFIN), which launched in 2014, now has about 600 members statewide, up from 450 members in 2016. Cultivate Michigan membership has grown, with 65 institutions and eight other businesses or organizations participating in 2018.⁷⁷ Members pledge to source 20% of their food from Michigan sources by 2020. Meet-the-buyer events are helping institutional food service buyers and suppliers make new connections. For example, in early 2018, MFIN, MDE, MDARD, MSU Extension and local partners co-hosted Cultivate Michigan Marketplace events in Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, Petoskey and Flint attended by more than 120 people total. More Marketplace events are planned for 2019 and 2020.

Michigan's Healthy Food in Health Care (HFHC) program motivates health care facilities to purchase healthy Michigan foods to create a more sustainable food system and encourage preventative care. HFHC is coordinated by the Ecology Center and is part of the nationwide Health Care Without Harm campaign.

9 – Expand opportunities for youth to develop entrepreneurship skills and learn about career opportunities related to good food that support youth and community economic development.

In addition to career and technical centers providing vocational education to high schoolers, the largest program in providing food and agriculture career development to youth is FFA (formerly Future Farmers of America), which has seen an increase of about 1,500 young people over the past five years. In 2017–2018, FFA had just over 8,000 members; in 2016–2017, it had nearly 7,900 members.⁷⁸

Detroit Food Academy created Small Batch Detroit, a social enterprise that employs high school graduates from the Academy and teaches them hands-on good food job skills to prepare them for future success and personal well-being.

The World Food Prize Michigan Youth Institute holds an annual event for youth in grades 8–12 to present research and recommendations, connect with other student leaders, interact with global leaders and take part in interactive immersion experience sessions related to food and food security. The 2017 Michigan Youth Institute selected three high school student leaders to represent Michigan at the World Food Prize Global Youth Institute, where the topic was global food security.

In November 2017, 20 Michigan teens involved in 4-H attended the National 4-H Congress in Atlanta, Georgia. The conference helps youths develop leadership skills and encourages civic engagement.

Through the Lenawee County Intermediate School District Center for a Sustainable Future, 120 high school juniors and seniors are learning skills to prepare them for the workforce and higher education in agri-technology, agri-science–natural resources, horticulture and biochemical technology. Approximately 75% of these students go on to postsecondary programs in these areas.^{79,80}

Gov. Snyder recently signed legislation (Public Acts 227 and 228 of 2018)^{81,82} establishing the “Marshall Plan for Talent,” intended to reform K12 education to better prepare students with the skills and training needed to match available jobs. The plan provides \$100 million in funding over the next three to five years for the following initiatives:

- Allowing schools to use a competency-based approach in graduation;
- Scholarships and stipends for pupils and low-income residents to get credentials for high-demand jobs;
- Establishing the Innovative Educator Corps, teachers nominated by their schools to travel the state to share their success stories;
- A public awareness campaign; and
- Funding for schools to hire career navigators.

12 – Implement a reimbursement program to provide an additional 10 cents per school meal, as a supplement to existing school meal funds, in order to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables.

Significant progress has been made on this model program since its start as a small, privately funded pilot in 2013 and its adoption by the state legislature in two prosperity regions in 2016. In the budget for Fiscal Year 2017-18, the State of Michigan increased funding for the 10 Cents a Meal pilot from \$250,000 to \$375,000 and expanded eligibility to schools in a third prosperity region. In the budget for Fiscal Year 2018-19, the State again raised the amount awarded (to \$575,000) and expanded eligibility to include two additional prosperity regions, bringing the total to five eligible regions (regions 2, 4, 6, 8 and 9).⁸⁴ Results published in the Michigan Department of Education 2017–2018 Legislative Report show that 10 Cents a Meal has stimulated local food business economies while also improving nutrition for schoolchildren. The report lists the following successes during the 2017–2018 school year:

- 32 districts in prosperity regions 2, 4 and 9 were awarded state grant funding, benefiting 95,000 students.
- 112 farms in 34 counties—plus 19 additional businesses such as processors, distributors and food hubs—participated in the program.
- Through December 2017, students were served 65 new Michigan-grown vegetables, fruits and legumes for the first time, including Brussels sprouts, red and green cabbage, sweet cherries and pinto beans.



10 Cents a Meal has been such a success that residents and legislators continue to demand its expansion to their communities. Alliances such as Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan are supporting advocacy around this expansion.

13 – Amend Michigan’s General Property Tax Act to exempt certain on-farm renewable energy installations.

Michigan’s tax laws and laws regarding renewable energy (e.g., solar, wind, geothermal) – more accurately referred to now as “alternative energy” – have changed significantly since the Michigan Good Food Charter was first issued in 2010.

Additionally, sweeping changes to personal property taxes were made in 2012, including exempting all commercial and industrial personal property owned by a single tax payer provided the combined market value is \$80,000 or less (effective January 1, 2014). This would have provided tax relief for some farm-based alternative energy systems.

However, there have been inconsistencies in how the Michigan State Tax Commission interprets the laws and how local tax assessors apply these laws. As the 2018 Michigan Good Food Charter Report Card goes to print, two bills are advancing in the legislative process that are intended to clarify the tax treatment of small-scale alternative energy systems and to clarify tax exemptions for these systems, whether residential in nature (House Bill 5680)⁸⁵ or commercial or industrial in nature (HB 5143).⁸⁶ The bills align with the original intent of this Agenda item, which is to encourage the adoption of these environmentally beneficial energy systems by providing property tax benefits (or exemptions).⁸⁷

15 – Direct \$10 million to regional food supply chain infrastructure development investments through the Michigan state planning and development regions or other regional designations.

Local and regional dollars, along with investments from other state agencies including the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), continue to support food and agriculture projects, such as supply chain infrastructure. In 2018, the Central Upper Peninsula Regional Planning and Development Commission provided \$30,000 in funds to Marquette County for work on a produce processing study and funds to some farm to school projects. Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning and Development Commission has provided \$15,000 for food system work and \$7,500 toward produce processing projects.

The city of Harrison was awarded \$751,344 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to expand its current farmers market into a permanent home that will be a three- to four-season market. The expansion will include the rehabilitation of two adjacent buildings in downtown Harrison that will allow the market to expand the number of vendors and offer options year-round, including a fully equipped and licensed community kitchen that will be available to the public. The project will also include converting a vacant lot into parking and seating space for patrons. The CDBG funds will be used for the complete renovation and build-out of the spaces, with improvements including façade renovation, selective demolition, new mechanical and electrical systems and roof repair. The city of Harrison will contribute \$254,924 toward the project, and the U.S. Department of Rural Development will contribute \$331,500.

SVRC Industries, Inc., was awarded a \$3,475,000 Michigan Community Revitalization Program direct loan for redevelopment of the former Saginaw News building into the mixed-use SVRC Marketplace, which features an indoor/outdoor farmers market, food processing hub, business incubators, restaurants and wine bar, autism clinic, children’s summer camp and offices and retail spaces. The development opened in summer 2018 and is expected to create a children’s trauma assessment center, culinary arts training programs, cooler rental space, offices and retail spaces. 53 full-time equivalent jobs with total capital investment of \$22,189,043.^{88, 89}

Emerging from the recommendations of the Michigan Food Policy Council (no longer in existence), the Michigan Good Food Fund was modeled on healthy food financing funds in several other states but was unique in that it aimed to support capital needs across the supply chain. Launched in June 2015, the Michigan Good Food Fund has invested

more than \$11 million in 28 good food businesses across the state. Supported businesses have ranged from large mixed-use development projects anchored by a community grocery store to a shared commercial kitchen and smaller-scale food entrepreneurs. Financing has contributed to the creation or retention of more than 420 jobs across the state and the good food value chain. The fund has also provided a range of business assistance to nearly 30 enterprises, including one-on-one support, multi-day business boot camps in Flint and Battle Creek and a bodega boot camp supporting healthy food retailers from across Michigan. Such assistance is helping more good food entrepreneurs succeed and take their enterprises to the next level.

The Michigan Good Food Fund has also grown its network of lending partners to better serve Michigan's entrepreneurs. As of spring 2018, fund partner Northern Initiatives had invested nearly \$900,000 under the banner of the Michigan Good Food Fund. Detroit Development Fund also joined the fund with a commitment to loan \$1 million over the next five years to Detroit food entrepreneurs. Additional lending partners include Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women (GROW) and the Michigan Women's Foundation. Such partnerships are deepening the fund's geographic reach and expanding its financial offerings while activating more Michigan lenders to support good food enterprises.

Just between Fiscal Year (FY) 2016-17 and FY 2017-18, the state has provided funding for almost \$19 million in grants and loans for food and agricultural industries and rural development. The FY 2016-17 Budget (Public Act 268 of 2016) for the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) included \$1.5 million in funding for "value-added grants." In the FY 2017-18 Budget (Public Act 107 of 2017) for MDARD the Value-Added Grant Program was replaced by the Food and Agriculture Investment Program and funded at \$4.7 million. Guidelines for the new program allow funding to be spent for grants, loans or loan guarantees, infrastructure development, other economic assistance, program administration and export assistance and promotion. The Legislature increased funding for the program in the current fiscal year (FY 18-19) to \$5.1 million.^{90, 91}



Also in the FY 2017-18 Budget for MDARD, a new Agriculture Industry and Development line was added with \$8.4 million in funding for a number of one-time programs, including: \$2.5 million for an animal agriculture initiative (see more detail below); \$3.2 million for a fruit and workforce development initiative; and \$1.5 million for a tree fruit commission.⁹²

The Animal Agriculture Initiative deserves special mention, and despite its intended status as one-time funding, funding for the initiative was recently continued in the FY 2018-19 Budget at \$2 million. The program is a partnership between livestock producers, industry groups, MSU and MDARD. The initiative develops sustainable farm production practices, environmentally sound manure management systems, efficient new energy sources, safer food products and more humane animal care systems based on science.⁹³

Since the 2016 Michigan Good Food Report Card, new funding started being provided by the Rural Development Fund. This particular fund was created by Public Act 411 of 2012, which created the Nonferrous Metallic Minerals Extraction Severance Tax Act. The fund receives tax revenue collected from mines to improve and strengthen local communities. The fund is permitted to be used for grants, loans, and loan guarantees addressing: the expansion and sustainability of land-based industries; worker training related to those industries; and energy, transportation, communications, water, and wastewater infrastructure to benefit rural communities. The fund was fully established with sufficient revenues to being making just under \$2 million in grants in FY 2016-17 and has continued at that dollar level in subsequent MDARD budgets.⁹⁴

16 – Implement a food safety audit cost-share or reimbursement program targeted at small and medium-sized farms, and work to ensure that audits are conducted in the context of the farm scale.

Development of a GroupGAP pilot emerged from the recommendations of the Michigan Food Policy Council. GroupGAP is a USDA food safety program that certifies farms as providing fruits, vegetables and related products that have been produced using Good Agricultural Practices (GAP).⁹⁵ It has evolved into a network and training program that is still expanding in Michigan and has caught the interest of other states. The GroupGAP Network has been meeting regularly since 2017 to advance on-farm food safety training, support and certification for small and medium-sized farms. The Network engages representatives from across the food system, including staff from MIFFS, MDARD, MSU Extension (MSUE), MSU CRFS, farmers and food hubs. Currently, 23 farms are participating in GroupGAP, and 10 auditors have trained out of eight locations. Since 2016, 12 farms have been certified and maintained yearly certification. Partners have been brought to two national conferences (the National Good Food Conference and the Association of Food and Drug Officials Conference) in the last year to speak on GroupGAP and the training workgroup surrounding it. In 2017, Grow Eastern Market joined the GroupGAP pilot program to help farmers in southeast Michigan collectively meet food safety regulations, access new markets and improve product quality and consistency.

20 – Ensure that all state and higher education business, workforce and economic development programs include farming and agriculture in their target audiences for programmatic development, training, investment and technical assistance.

Some Michigan communities are funding staff in roles that grow the local food economy. Examples include Washtenaw County, where an extension educator focuses on this role, and Macomb County, which tasks an economic development staff member with local food. The expansion of economic development teams at MDARD has facilitated greater understanding among state agencies of the needs and roles of food and agriculture projects when it comes to funding and financing considerations.

Several programs supporting veterans in agriculture continue to grow and serve the estimated 800 veterans in the state who are working in agriculture. MIFFS Veterans in Agriculture, the MSU Vets to Ag Program, the Michigan chapter of the Farmer Veteran Coalition (which is the fastest growing in the country), the Hero to Hives beekeeping program (now operating through MSUE) and the Women's Veterans Empowerment Center's Dirt Therapy trainings are all lifting up these new and expanding farmers.

22 – Include Michigan food and agriculture in state marketing efforts, such as the Pure Michigan campaign, to build awareness of the state's great variety and quality of local food products and farm amenities.

The Pure Michigan Agriculture campaign, a segment of the Pure Michigan tourism campaign, was launched in 2015 and built on interest from residents and visitors in local food and agritourism. The Pure Michigan website has many categories of things to do in Michigan that highlight food and agriculture, including farmers markets, cider mills, breweries and vineyards.^{96, 97}

Starting in 2017, the Michigan Restaurant Association partnered with the Michigan Ag Council and MDARD to create the Michigan GROWN, Michigan GREAT Restaurant Award. The award was established to recognize Michigan restaurants that prioritize sourcing fresh Michigan-grown foods in their menus. In 2017, five restaurants received this award, and the 2018 awardees will be announced in October. This represents a growing recognition of the importance of local food to consumers across Michigan.⁹⁸

Governor Rick Snyder declared March Michigan Food and Agriculture month in 2014. As part of the celebration of the month in 2018, Michigan Agriculture was publicly unveiled. This magazine, produced by Farm Flavor, features stories about Michigan farmers and food producers. Free versions of the magazine are available in print at featured businesses and agriculture-related events across the state, at Michigan welcome centers and online.⁹⁹ Also in March 2018, as a part of Michigan Food and Agriculture month, MDARD partnered with Pure Michigan Business Connect to host the Pure Michigan Agriculture Summit. The annual event, now in its fifth year, connects food buyers and producers through networking opportunities.¹⁰⁰

Taste the Local Difference (TLD) is a local food branding agency whose mission is to sell more local food through affordable marketing services. It curates a comprehensive digital and print database of farms and local food businesses to help connect consumers to local food resources in their area. TLD's print guide covers 47 counties in Michigan, and it is hoping to expand to 58 counties in 2019. It currently works with 1,778 food business (840 of which are farms) to market and support their work through the print guides (110,000 copies printed annually), social media promotion, e-newsletters and blog posts. TLD also supports food businesses by connecting them to other sectors of the food system (e.g., farms to restaurants and retailers, event venues to farmers or local food producers). Farmers are further aided by TLD's marketing efforts thanks to a partnership with MIFMA starting in 2017. The organizations exchange services at a reduced fee, sharing a goal to better support and advise Michigan farms and farmers.

23 – Charge business support entities, such as the 18 Michigan Technical Education Centers, with identifying and supporting the equipment and process engineering needs of farmers and other agrifood enterprises and ensure that food and agriculture are included in state and local economic development plans.

Technical education centers, community colleges and four-year institutions continue to want to enter and expand in the food and agriculture space. Mott Community College is expanding its culinary school and moving it to a 36,000-square-foot facility in downtown Flint.¹⁰¹ Kellogg Community College is embarking on a curriculum centered on food systems. Kalamazoo Valley Community College's Culinary Arts and Sustainable Brewing programs are uniquely taking a food systems approach to their curriculum, requiring students to enroll in multiple classes to learn about sustainable food systems and crop production. Brewing programs are popping up at the community college and university level, with Central Michigan University, Ferris State University, Western Michigan University, Eastern Michigan University, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Grand Rapids Community College, Schoolcraft College and Wayne County Community College offering certificates or degrees in this area.^{102,103}

Other efforts by nonprofit organizations are occurring throughout the state as well.¹⁰⁴ Food Lab Detroit launched its Good Food Business Accelerator program in 2017. The RECIPES accelerator course, in which 10 Food Lab Detroit members can participate, is an intensive 16-week course that teaches business strategies and provides access to up to \$45,000 in capital. Each of the entrepreneurs who participated in the RECIPES course in 2017 successfully grew their business and increased sales.

GAINING MOMENTUM – 6 PRIORITIES

4 – Provide outreach, training and technical assistance to launch new grocery stores and improve existing stores to better serve underserved people in urban and rural areas.

In 2017, the Michigan Good Food Fund added two micro-lending partners, Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women (GROW) and Michigan Women Forward, enabling them to lend amounts from \$2,500 up to \$6 million. Such partnerships are deepening the fund's geographic reach and expanding its financial offerings while activating more Michigan lenders to support good food enterprises.

Using funding from the CDC, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services has supported a healthy corner store initiative in communities across Michigan. This work includes both assistance in equipment to stock produce items and support for ensuring that price, produce and placement are all conducive to customers wanting to purchase and consume fresh produce in these outlets. In Grand Rapids, for instance, the YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids increased food availability to 42,000 people through its Healthy Corner Store Initiative, with 93% of survey respondents reporting that they ate more fruits and vegetables.

A community nonprofit in Pontiac, Micah 6 Community, opened a Sprout Fresh Food Store in early 2017 as one of several food and nonfood-related community development initiatives. The community is preparing to renovate an old elementary school they purchased, and they also run pop-up markets, community gardens, small business support and an underground church.^{106, 107}



10 – Establish Michigan as “the place to be” for culturally based good food that is locally grown, processed, prepared and consumed.

Annual events such as the Michigan Apple Crunch and Michigan Cherry Slurp are bringing statewide attention, pride and fun to major Michigan fruit crops. Both events encourage Michigan students and all of its residents to celebrate two of Michigan’s most popular fruit crops and support local food systems. The Michigan Apple Crunch, now in its sixth year, encourages groups of students, families or community members to do a collective group “crunch” on Michigan apples.¹⁰⁸ The Michigan Cherry Slurp is a weeklong event that highlights tart cherries and includes a group “slurp” of a cherry smoothie.¹⁰⁹

Edible WOW, Edible Grand Traverse and Edible Michiana, local food magazines (part of the Edible Communities company), have been telling the rich stories of local food in the southeast, southwest and northwest lower peninsula.^{110, 111, 112} The craft beer industry in Michigan continues to grow, and the Michigan Grape and Wine Industry Council, established by the legislature, is broadening its focus. In late spring 2018, Governor Snyder signed bills into law to change the name to the Michigan Craft Beverage Council on Oct. 1, 2018. The new council will include Michigan wine, beer, hard cider and spirits.¹¹³

In northeast Michigan, Farm to Fork Alcona is working to rejuvenate the area’s economy by building on the local food movement. In 2017, a successful crowdfunding campaign on Patronicity worked to build momentum and marketing for the group’s work in local food. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) matched \$7,500 of what the campaign raised.¹¹⁴

Public Act 135 of 2017 was quickly passed and signed into law, prohibiting local governments from establishing local taxes or fees on food. The law preempts potential local ordinances like those in other states that are designed to reduce consumption of unhealthy foods such as sugar-sweetened beverages (commonly referred to as a “soda tax”), though it covers all “food for immediate consumption or nonimmediate consumption.”¹¹⁵

11 – Incorporate good food education into the pre-K–12 curriculum for all Michigan students.

Because there is a shortage of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (AFNR) teachers, Michigan State University (MSU) has stepped up recruitment in this sector, and the National Teach Ag campaign designated Michigan as a STAR (State Teach Ag Results) state. STAR states create and implement AFNR educator recruitment and retention plans. The website miteachag.com acts as a resource for recruiting new educators into this field.¹¹⁶

The FoodCorps program teaches K–12 students about good food through school gardens and other activities. In the 2016–2017 program year, 14 service members served 26 Michigan schools with a total enrollment of 12,798 students, and 254 pounds of local foods were sourced across participating schools. In 2018, 13 FoodCorps service members worked at 25 schools statewide with a combined enrollment of 11,634. Data on local food procurement in 2018 were not available at the time this report card was printed. Michigan will have 16 service members for the 2018–2019 school year.

In 2017, Joseph K. Lumsden Bahweting Anishnabe Public School Academy (JKL) Middle School launched its first ever Boat to School week, which included educational activities around traditional fishing practices and serving students locally caught whitefish, a traditional Anishinaabe food. Boat to School week was so successful that it will now be an annual event at JKL, and other partners are working on similar projects to connect students to other traditional foods such as wild leeks and manoomin (wild rice).

18 – Develop a farm to institution grant program to provide planning, implementation and kitchen or cafeteria equipment grants to maximize the use of locally grown, raised and processed foods in institutional cafeterias.

In addition to some private and public granting dollars, some food services directors are finding other internal funds to make these upgrades. Since 2015, the USDA has provided kitchen equipment grants for high-need schools in Michigan.

The 2017–2018 school year marks the last year of the Michigan Farm to School Grant Program, which was administered by MSU CRFS and funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation since 2011. In that time, the program has supported more than 70 different school and early care and education programs with about \$240,000 in mini-grant awards to increase procurement of local foods for school and early childhood food programs serving vulnerable children.

In June 2017, Michigan received a USDA Farm to School Grant award of \$70,280. The grant helped Michigan schoolchildren receive more locally grown produce and improved farm to school data collection.¹¹⁷

19 – Direct state agencies to maximize capital access through state-sponsored programs that provide farm financing.

There is some overlap between this agenda priority and item 15 because some financing programs fund all along the supply chain, including farmers. Please refer to agenda priority 15 for further details.

25 – Develop systems for collecting and sharing production and market data as well as other data relevant to regional food supply chain development.

The Cultivate Michigan campaign offers a mechanism for tracking purchases of Michigan foods among participating institutions, including details on quantities and forms of specific foods that the campaign features. For example, onions, berries, celery and beets are featured in 2018. However, there are not yet enough institutions providing this data to be useful for suppliers.

MIFMA's Michigan Farmers Market Metrics program was developed in 2016 to gather and interpret the impacts and economic contributions of Michigan farmers markets. Visitor surveys, vendor surveys and visitor counts are used to gather information about farm and vendor production, vendor sales data, customer spending data and other geographic and economic metrics. A 2017 summary report (of 15 participating markets) shows that farmers market visitors spent about \$25 per person on average, markets accepted more than nine different forms of payment (including Double Up Food Bucks and SNAP/EBT) and participating Michigan farmers markets have an average of 40 vendors.¹¹⁸

In late 2017, eight Michigan food hubs completed the first state-specific survey of food hub economic activity, based on certain sections of the National Food Hub survey.¹¹⁹ The newly formed Michigan food hub practitioners group plans to complete this survey annually to show aggregate sales, capture supply data and track hub-to-hub transactions.



▼ SLOW PROGRESS – 4 PRIORITIES

14 – Set targets for state-funded institutions to procure Michigan-grown, sustainably produced products.

To the best of our knowledge, most state institutions do not have set targets for procurement, though several—particularly the Michigan Department of Education and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development—have been highly supportive of and involved in efforts to increase local procurement. Voluntary participation in the Cultivate Michigan campaign also continues to grow, as noted previously.

In 2017–2018, the Michigan Good Food Charter Steering Committee's food policy subcommittee commissioned a report looking at the historic and current context and practices of local food procurement, as well as food production and training programs, by the Michigan Department of Corrections. Although the department once received favorable media attention for sourcing from Michigan farmers, particularly potatoes, that practice went away when prison food was privatized several years ago. In the Fiscal Year 2018-29 budget, the governor proposed, and legislature agreed, to end the privatization of state prison food services and return those jobs to state employees. This change may provide opportunities in 2019 and beyond to incorporate local food purchasing into procurement contracts.^{120, 121}

17 – Provide financial incentives for farmers and for the development of food system infrastructure to support institutional local food purchasing programs.

Michigan Farm to Freezer, a large-scale processor of Michigan-grown products, expanded to Eastern Market in 2017. Farm to Freezer purchases farmers' produce, flash freezes and packages it and distributes the processed product through regional food distributors. By expanding into Detroit, Farm to Freezer will help increase access to fresh, nutritious local food for residents through retail sales and institutions through larger distribution channels while also creating job opportunities.^{122,123}

Beginning in 2018, the project team supporting Hoophouses for Health will focus on the administration of participating farmers' loan repayment; however, the program will no longer provide new loans. From its beginning in 2011 with funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation through March 2018, \$833,995 in loans were distributed to 66 farmers to purchase, construct and grow in over 221,453 square feet of hoophouse production space. Participating farmers have provided 41,613 pounds of fresh Michigan-grown produce to eligible schools and early care and education program partners. Since the inception of Hoophouses for Health, the number of hoophouses and amount of indoor production space in Michigan have greatly increased and other programs, using both private and public funds, have expanded to include hoophouse funding.

21 – Contingent upon further market assessment, establish a state meat and poultry inspection program in cooperation with the federal Food Safety and Inspection Services to spur new meat processing infrastructure.

Although there are no plans for a state meat and poultry inspection program at this time, the Michigan Meat Network, which launched in 2016 and is coordinated by MSU CRFS, continues to serve as a space for meat value chain partners to connect and help grow the market viability of local and regional meat in Michigan.

24 – Examine all of Michigan’s food- and agriculture-related laws and regulations (food safety, production, processing, retailing etc.) for provisions that create unnecessary transaction costs and regulatory burdens on low-risk businesses and ensure that regulations are applied in a way that acknowledges the diversity of production practices.

Public Act 100 was signed into law in 2013, allowing farmers markets across Michigan to accept any qualified small winemaker—one who produces 5,000 or fewer gallons in a calendar year—for the purpose of sampling and selling their products at the market. Because of the industry’s growing popularity, many small winemakers are reaching or have exceeded that limit. MIFMA is advocating for legislation to increase the limit, allowing more small businesses to have the opportunity to market and sell at farmers markets.¹²⁴

MINIMAL ACTION – 0 PRIORITIES



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Michigan Good Food is a policy and outreach initiative hosted by the Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems and centered on the Michigan Good Food Charter, which was developed with input from hundreds of people across Michigan. The 2018 Michigan Good Food Report Card is intended to assess progress made on the goals and agenda priorities of the Charter, which was released in June 2010. This document is compiled by staff at MSU CRFS. Thanks to everyone who contributed information to create this 2018 Report Card. Special thanks to the Michigan Good Food Steering Committee and Jean Doss for her state legislative updates.

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