

PRESENTATION SNAPSHOT

Governance and innovations in local food system development: A bottom-up approach in North Carolina



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Presentation Abstract

Governance is a collaborative and systemic approach to governing that fosters innovation and inclusiveness of a broad combination of actors, processes, and instruments (Jordan, Wurzel, & Zito, 2005). It draws from the energy, expertise, and resources of the collaborative to employ more sustainable, bottom-up policy solutions. The growth in popularity of local foods and community-based food systems as a pushback to the globalization of our food industry has given rise to a network of coalitions, institutions, and actors in North Carolina that are engaging in local food system development and governance to create a place-based local food economy in the state. The case reviews the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS), a trans-disciplinary, interinstitutional collaboration between the state's two land-grant institutions, (North Carolina State University and North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University), and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences, as an active and prominent stakeholder in the process of local food system governance. The Farm to Fork Initiative, now over 10 years in operation, is reviewed to provide both insight into and reflection of a bottom-up approach to creating a local food economy through governance, innovation, and the implementation of community-based food system initiatives.

Keywords: Governance; Food System Governance; Local Food; Local Food Economy; Regional Food Systems; Sustainable Agriculture

Key Points

This publication reviews the case, including lessons learned, of how North Carolina's land-grant universities were involved as active stakeholders in an initiative of governance developing the North Carolina local food system. Critical to the initiative's success was the use of professional facilitation services to support the

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participants in navigating complex topics and identifying mutually agreed upon and achievable outcomes spanning the food system. Local funder engagement early on in the process was important to keep the initiative moving forward and creating successes to leverage for expanded funding opportunities. Finally, responding to identified challenges, such as addressing a lack of critical infrastructure, catalyzed observable growth in areas of the local food economy.

Conclusion

This snapshot provides a preview of a forthcoming publication that enters a current and relevant conversation in the literature of universities' roles in governance of food systems by introducing and reflecting on the case of North Carolina's statewide Farm to Fork Initiative. The publication shares insight into how the NC local food system has implemented an initiative of governance as well as set and prioritized objectives. Also highlighted is the universities' role in developing and implementing initiatives to achieve those objectives. The forthcoming paper will serve as a high-level introduction and review of those initiatives, with the intent of providing deeper dives in each of the initiatives in subsequent presentations and publications. 

Resource

Center for Environmental Farming Systems: <https://cefs.ncsu.edu/>

Reference

Jordan, A., Wurzel, R. K. W., & Zito, A. (2005). The rise of 'new' policy instruments in comparative perspective: Has governance eclipsed government? *Political Studies*, 53(3), 477–496.
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