



GROW
WABASH
County



NORTHEAST INDIANA 
REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Growing Our Local Food Ecosystem in Northeast Indiana

IEDC Annual Conference 2017
Toronto, ON Canada



About Us

■ MISSION

Together, Growing a Prosperous Wabash County

■ VISION

Wabash County will be the model for small town America, making a relevant impact on the global community, by offering vibrant cultural experiences, enriching lifestyles and growing economic opportunities while building on our heritage.



Indiana

INDIANA AGRICULTURE

INDIANA
STATE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE



83%

Indiana has roughly 23.3 million acres of land, of which, 19.4 million are farms and forests.

Agriculture supports more than 107,000 Hoosier jobs.

INDIANA'S AGRICULTURAL EXPORT GROWTH



\$31.2B

Total value of sales for all Indiana agriculture-related industries.

\$11.2B

Total value of agricultural products sold in Indiana in 2015.

1

Duck production, wood office furniture and kitchen cabinet manufacturing

2

Popcorn production, tomatoes for processing and ice cream

3

Egg layers inventory and total eggs produced


4

Turkeys raised, peppermint, spearmint, fresh market cantaloupe and snap beans for processing

5

Corn (for grain), soybeans and hog production

NATIONAL RANKINGS



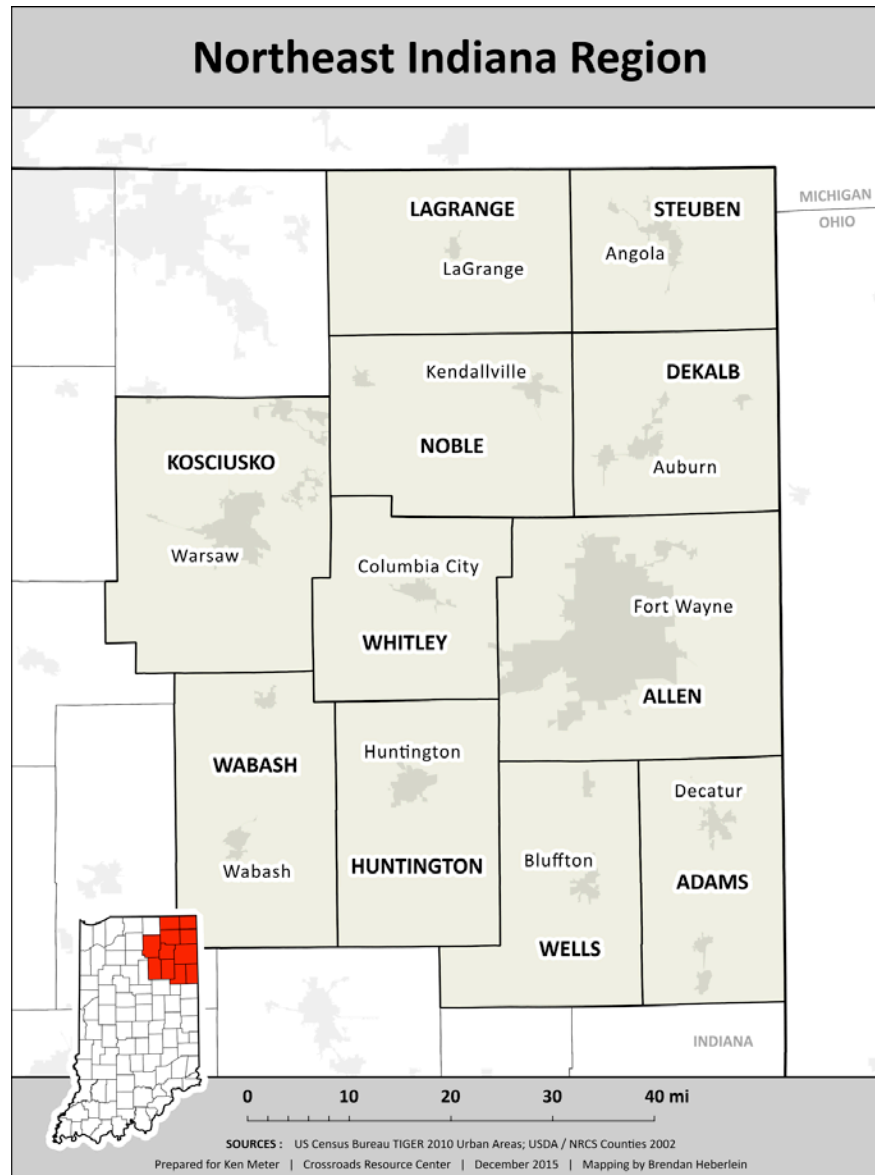
“Indiana is the 10th largest farm state in the U.S., yet 90% of the food Indiana residents eat is sourced outside of the state. In particular, 98% of the fruits and vegetables Hoosiers eat were imported into Indiana.”

Ken Meter

Crossroads Resource Center

*Hoosier Farmer? Emergent Food
Systems in Indiana* (commissioned by
the IN State Dept. of Health), 2012

Northeast Indiana



NE Indiana Large Food Processors

FOOD PROCESSING - MAJOR EMPLOYERS		
Company	Product	Employment In FTE
Maple Leaf Farms	Chicken and duck processing	762
Miller Poultry	Poultry-processing plant	560
Edy's Grand Ice Cream	Ice cream and other frozen treats	542
Kraft Food	Marshmallows, marshmallow crème and caramel	373
Living Essentials	Energy drinks	340
Red Gold	Tomato preserving and canning	310
Pretzels Inc.	Pretzels and other snack foods	300
Dean Foods	Ice cream, milk, and other milk products	279
Creighton Brothers	Chicken eggs	269
Bunge North America	Oilseed Milling	258
Kralls Brothers	Poultry Processing Plant	210
Inventure Brothers	Chips and other snack foods	150
Prairie Farms Dairy	Milk producer	129
Saratoga Potato Chips LLC	Photo chips	100
New Horizons Bakery	Buns and muffins	87

NE Indiana

■ 11 Counties

- 779,167 total regional population
- Employment roughly equal split between blue & white collar jobs
 - Manufacturing Intensive

■ A number of previous efforts to wrap our heads around food and food processing

- Food Processing as a regional target industry
 - Built an asset map of food cluster for NE Indiana - 2009
 - Found 97 companies employing
 - Issues – not a consistent definition of what should be included; as a result, some farms were included such as those that processed raw products but some were not. Same situation with associated services

Previous Efforts

■ Food Cluster Development - 2009

- Engaged with a regionally based consultant to draft a strategic plan to propose a vision of becoming “nationally recognized as a major food processing cluster”
 - Conducted stakeholder meetings from company reps to economic development officials, SWOT, created a strategic plan
 - Concluded that the key ingredients for a cluster were there, but a commitment to support it was the challenge
 - Started to get diverse stakeholders to engage but stalled out
 - Couldn't get mostly large companies to engage with each other on ideas like group purchasing, etc.
 - Limited focus on smaller operations

Previous Efforts Continued...

- Food Cluster Development – 2011
 - Same 2009 consultants picked this back up and called for the creation of an organization to run this initiative and launch outreach/education as well as creation of a Specialty Foods Center and a shared kitchen
 - Did not move forward – main drawback was that business leaders thought they could pursue their business goals without greater regional cooperation

Previous Efforts Continued...

- Various other state and regional efforts, from feasibility studies to farmers market studies and everything in between....still, no traction, no connectivity to bring small producers, large producers, government, economic development, and non profits into one strategy
- 2014 – Two local economic development organizations applied for a USDA-RD Grant to examine this again, this time focusing on creating a local food network with small producers – focus on getting locally produced food to local consumers; Support for NEIRP/ROC

Northeast Indiana Local Food Network

- Engaged Manheim Solutions who then engaged Ken & Crossroads Resource Center to help us flesh out the idea
- Initial Phase 1 report:
 - While we focused previous efforts on food processing, we paid little attention to our ability to produce food for ourselves or farming in general
 - Despite this, vibrant local networks between growers, retailers, restaurants, food banks, and others had formed (while our efforts stalled)

Northeast Indiana Local Food Network

- Gunthorp Farms, Hawkins Family Farm, Cook's Bison Ranch, Joseph Decuis Farm and Restaurant, Trellis Growing Systems, Seven Sons, Chapman's Brewery, EE's Winery, Farmers Markets, CSA's, numerous Amish businesses, and many others
- Each business built social and commercial networks in cooperation with each other

Northeast Indiana Local Food Network

- This report set our region up for the 2nd phase of the report, which was to develop an action plan for supporting the NILFN
- Phase 2 – interviewed all key stakeholders, held a series of public meetings, and culminated in a large public meeting wherein suggestions for strategies were presented and 48 key stakeholders cast real-time electronic votes on what the initiatives they supported
- Key Recommendation: Create a Strong Regional Network with Strong Leadership
 - Smaller goals, action steps, and objectives were included, but the overarching goal was to move forward with the NILFN

Northeast Indiana Local Food Network

- The Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership invited engaged stakeholders to a meeting with the goal of creating the network. At the first meeting in fall of 2016, the group chose an interim steering committee to lead the effort
 - Committee consists of a mix of growers, economic development, business end-users, activists, higher ed, and non profits
- Operating under the umbrella of the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership
- Committee developed a governing structure, is in the process of finalizing formal board of directors
- Outreach efforts have been successful – local restaurants, co-ops, growers have been receptive
 - The feeling that someone is finally paying attention...
- Created official “branding”

Northeast Indiana Local Food Network



Our land. Our tables.

The mission of the Northeast Indiana Local Food Network is to support growth of a vibrant local food marketplace across Northeast Indiana, by increasing the visibility and economic opportunities for our region's local food producers and businesses, so they can expand their sales both locally and beyond.

Website coming later in 2017.

In the meantime, we'd love to hear from you!

[GET IN TOUCH](#)



www.neifood.org (under development)

Our land. Our tables.

Northeast Indiana Local Food Network



*We're investing in our Quality of Place through local food.
Will you join us?*

Our land. Our tables.

Northeast Indiana Local Food Network

We're investing in our Quality of Place through local food. Will you join us?

Why focus on local food?

Local food is key to economic vitality & quality of place.

"Research from the U.S. Department of Agriculture shows that local food systems are more resilient to economic downturns than global supply chains. Local food systems also provide a natural market for local products." —Local Food Network

"Local food is a key to economic vitality & quality of place. It is a natural market for local products. It is a natural market for local products. It is a natural market for local products." —Local Food Network

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"Another key part of the jobs battle is improving our quality of place. Our workforce is mobile, and we must provide the amenities that attract jobs and talent."

—Tom Pappas, Vice-Chairman, NorthWest of Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.

"Local food is about as much more than the food. It's about the relationships made between the consumer and the producer, the farmer and the land, the restaurant and the farmer. The Northeast Indiana Local Food Network will build existing connections and spark new connections as well, highlighting the excitement for supporting local producers. Gateway Farms is excited to be involved with the Network, and see what opportunities will come forward from this new support system."

—Tom Carberry, 3rd generation Gateway Farms farmer and Director of Sales and Marketing at Gateway Farms

"People in our region are rediscovering the delight of eating fresh food, raised nearby. It is a way of farming and eating that was ordinary to past generations in this place, of course, given our rich soils and deep-rooted agricultural heritage. The Northeast Indiana Local Food Network has undertaken the important work of providing us that place, of course, given our rich soils and deep-rooted agricultural heritage. The Northeast Indiana Local Food Network has undertaken the important work of providing us that place, of course, given our rich soils and deep-rooted agricultural heritage." —Lark Hamilton, 3rd generation farmer, Gateway Farms (Folk Book Economy)

Our History
The Northeast Indiana Local Food Network was formed in 2011 to support local food producers and consumers. It is a non-profit organization that is committed to promoting local food systems and supporting local food producers.

Our Purpose
The Northeast Indiana Local Food Network is committed to promoting local food systems and supporting local food producers. It is a non-profit organization that is committed to promoting local food systems and supporting local food producers.

Our Mission
The Northeast Indiana Local Food Network is committed to promoting local food systems and supporting local food producers. It is a non-profit organization that is committed to promoting local food systems and supporting local food producers.

Our land. Our tables. We're ready to make it happen.

Midwest Indiana Local Food Network is currently seeking local food producers and consumers. We are looking for people who are interested in supporting local food systems and promoting local food producers.

Local Food Producers:
• Fresh produce (vegetables, fruits, herbs)
• Meat and poultry (pork, beef, lamb, chicken, turkey)
• Eggs and dairy (eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt)
• Value-added products (jams, preserves, breads, etc.)

Local Food Consumers:
• Restaurants and food service establishments
• Retail food stores and markets
• Community organizations and schools
• Individuals and families

Our Action Plan

Learning & Marketing Tools
• Develop marketing materials (brochures, flyers, social media posts)
• Create a website for local food products
• Host workshops and seminars for local food producers and consumers

Entrepreneur Support
• Provide technical assistance to local food producers
• Offer financial counseling and business plan development
• Connect local food producers with potential buyers and distributors

Help us promote & serve our local food economy

Support our local food economy by promoting local food products and supporting local food producers. We are looking for people who are interested in promoting local food systems and supporting local food producers.

Local Food Producers:
• Fresh produce (vegetables, fruits, herbs)
• Meat and poultry (pork, beef, lamb, chicken, turkey)
• Eggs and dairy (eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt)
• Value-added products (jams, preserves, breads, etc.)

Local Food Consumers:
• Restaurants and food service establishments
• Retail food stores and markets
• Community organizations and schools
• Individuals and families

"How can we reach consumers? ... We can reach consumers by promoting local food products and supporting local food producers. We are looking for people who are interested in promoting local food systems and supporting local food producers." —Local Food Network

"We're investing in our Quality of Place through local food. Will you join us?"



Community Engagement & Education

Engage the community in local food systems and supporting local food producers. We are looking for people who are interested in promoting local food systems and supporting local food producers.

Local Food Producers:
• Fresh produce (vegetables, fruits, herbs)
• Meat and poultry (pork, beef, lamb, chicken, turkey)
• Eggs and dairy (eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt)
• Value-added products (jams, preserves, breads, etc.)

Local Food Consumers:
• Restaurants and food service establishments
• Retail food stores and markets
• Community organizations and schools
• Individuals and families

Indiana is the 10th largest farm state in the U.S. yet only 1% of the food we consume is sourced locally. Let's change that!

Support our local food economy by promoting local food products and supporting local food producers. We are looking for people who are interested in promoting local food systems and supporting local food producers.

Local Food Producers:
• Fresh produce (vegetables, fruits, herbs)
• Meat and poultry (pork, beef, lamb, chicken, turkey)
• Eggs and dairy (eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt)
• Value-added products (jams, preserves, breads, etc.)

Local Food Consumers:
• Restaurants and food service establishments
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• Individuals and families

Our Team

Local Food Network is a non-profit organization that is committed to promoting local food systems and supporting local food producers. It is a non-profit organization that is committed to promoting local food systems and supporting local food producers.

Regional Steering Committee:

- Tom Pappas, Vice-Chairman, NorthWest of Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.
- Tom Carberry, 3rd generation Gateway Farms farmer and Director of Sales and Marketing at Gateway Farms
- Lark Hamilton, 3rd generation farmer, Gateway Farms (Folk Book Economy)

"The Northeast Indiana Local Food Network is a non-profit organization that is committed to promoting local food systems and supporting local food producers. It is a non-profit organization that is committed to promoting local food systems and supporting local food producers." —Local Food Network

Next Steps...

- Finalize the Board of Directors
 - While currently operating under the NEIRP, looking at a stand-alone in the future
- Marketing/Branding
- Continual Engagement of Stakeholders
- Partnership with Indiana Grown
- Food Hub/Central Kitchen





Thank You!

Contact

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