



Network 11

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR NORTHEAST RURAL DEVELOPMENT • JUNE 2011

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Northeast Center & Partners Receive \$5mn Global Food Security Grant*

Over 7 million Northeast citizens are estimated to be food insecure. Families in low-income communities are disproportionately affected by lack of access to healthy, affordable foods and face many barriers to achieving food security. At the same time, farmers are struggling, farmland is disappearing, and most of the food consumed comes from outside the region. The Northeast Center along with a long list of partners shown below recently received a \$5mn, 5-year Global Food Security competitive grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture titled "Enhancing Food Security in the Northeast with Regional Food Systems," with the goal of better understanding the forces leading to these outcomes.

This new project will study whether greater reliance on regionally produced foods could improve food access and affordability for disadvantaged communities, while also benefiting farmers and others in the food supply chain. The project brings together researchers, educators, entrepreneurs, and

community leaders from the twelve-state northeast region. It is an ambitious, large-scale undertaking that will shed light on how the food system can better serve all Americans.

Project partners will explore the benefits of re-regionalizing the food system. We suggest that with our region's geography and potential to develop regional supply chains, we can produce, distribute and meet a greater share of our population's food needs in ways that improve food access and availability for disadvantaged communities in particular.

Our research will examine how regional food systems can make more efficient use of natural resources, benefit communities, and improve the economic and social welfare of farmers, distributors, retailers and consumers. The project takes a systems approach, connecting food production, processing, and distribution with a community's total food environment. We also will examine the public policy



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*This column draws substantively on material prepared by project partners, notably Kathy Ruhf of the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group.

CONFERENCE

What Works II Conference

What Works! The Future of Entrepreneurship & Community Development

What Works! will be held **September 18-20, 2011** at the Sheraton Society Hill, Philadelphia, PA. The conference will bring together practitioners, researchers, educators, and decision-makers to address critical issues in promoting entrepreneurship in the U.S. northeast. The workshops provide opportunities for:

- extension educators and other service providers to learn about new strategies and programs that work in different communities to stimulate job creation and business formation,
- researchers to share science-based analyses that could be further developed into programs that will enhance economic development, and
- town managers and local planners to share their experiences given new budget constraints and to learn about new research and outreach projects related to entrepreneurship and business development.

You should attend this conference if you want to learn about state-of-the-art research documenting the impact of local small business entrepreneurship on regional economic growth and development. The conference will help you make the case why entrepreneurship and small business development programs are critical in the current economic climate, and

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landscape and make recommendations.

This food environment consists of all the stores, markets, community and individual gardens, and other outlets that supply food to residents. As part of this grant, we will study strategically selected stores and their neighborhoods in nine urban and rural locations across the Northeast. These nine partner communities will be full “participant researchers” throughout the five-year project. We will involve community members along with planners, entrepreneurs, agricultural experts and students in learning opportunities on the ground and online.

In addition, a hallmark of this project is that we will assess the overall capacity of the Northeast to satisfy more of its own food needs. This involves large-scale GIS analyses across the nearly 300 counties in the Northeast of detailed production capacity, including climate and soil suitability for different crops as well as of food processing infrastructure, distribution channels, retail stores, and consumption preferences. We will also survey consumers and stores in nine target communities to better understand food buying patterns as well as barriers to accessing healthy foods. Then, we will map and describe the key food supply chains entering selected food markets at these sites from local, regional, national and global sources.

This project is unique and significant in three ways. First, we focus explicitly on the regional rather than national or local level. The region (which includes ‘local’) may be the optimal scale for assuring adequate and affordable food supplies over time. Second, we take a systems approach that links production, distribution and consumption processes in a deliberate and logical way. This approach will expand knowledge and understanding of these complex systems

and support action on the ground in our partner communities.

Third, this project develops, uses and integrates innovative research methods. We will develop a model to study these complex systems, including future production, distribution and consumption scenarios. We will implement new procedures to gather missing data. The wide geographic reach (scale) of this project assures scientific rigor, including replicability. This project will help us propose and test promising avenues for improving food access in disadvantaged northeast communities and elsewhere. For further details and regular updates about the project as it evolves, please visit www.nercrd.psu.edu/efsne. The project website is under construction.

Stephan J. Goetz

List of Project Partners

Project Director: Stephan J. Goetz, NERCRD and Penn State University

CO-PD/PIs: *Alessandro Bonanno, Deno De Ciantis, and Clare Hinrichs*, The Pennsylvania State University

Kubi Ackerman, Michael Conard, and Richard Plunz, Columbia University

Oliver Gao and Miguel I. Gómez, Cornell University

Carol Giesecke, Delaware State University

Kate Clancy and Anne Palmer, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health

Kathryn Ruhf, Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG)

Timothy Griffin and Christian Peters, Tufts University

Linda Berlin, University of Vermont

David Fleisher, USDA-ARS, Beltsville, MD; *Robert Larkin*, USDA-ARS, Orono, ME;

Patrick Canning, USDA-ERS, Washington, DC

Kate Alie, West Virginia State University

why they need to be supported. The conference will provide you with tools for identifying potential new business opportunities in communities and it will help you learn about successful programs for developing and supporting new businesses and entrepreneurs.

Products to be presented include research, case studies, best practice models, assessment tools, virtual presentation stations (to replace traditional posters). A peer-reviewed proceedings of selected papers, programs and posters will be published. We anticipate that this event will also provide a platform for constructing a regional economic development plan that capitalizes on the strengths of educators and researchers while benefiting from the input of community leaders.

Please submit your proposal online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/sl/DR2C2YV> by midnight on July 1, 2011.

Additional information is available at: <http://nercrd.psu.edu/Entrepreneurship/WhatWorksITWksp.html>

Northeast Landscapes

Urban Growth in the Northeast Megaregion,

Regional Plan Association, March 2011.

Over the next generation, the 13-state Northeast Megaregion is expected to grow by 26%, adding about 18 million residents. To assess the implications of this change for landscape conservation, Regional Plan Association and America 2050's Northeast Landscape Initiatives Atlas (www.rpa.org/northeastlandscapes) now includes maps showing historic and current land use, and projections of future urban growth in the Northeast Megaregion through 2040.

The Northeast Landscape Conservation Initiatives Atlas is available at: <http://www.rpa.org/northeastlandscapes/2011/01/northeast-landscapes-conservation-inventory-goes-live.html>

Rural America

Rural America in an Urban Society: Changing Spatial and Social Boundaries,

Daniel T. Lichter and David L. Brown, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 37.

This review outlines several key aspects of the new rural-urban interface and the growing interpenetration of American rural and urban life. The historical coincidence of spatial and social boundaries in America is changing rapidly. This review highlights (a) the enormous scale of rural-urban interdependence and boundary crossing, shifting, and blurring – along many dimensions of community life – over the past several decades, and (b) the symmetrical rather than asymmetrical influences between urban and rural areas, i.e., on bidirectional relational aspects of spatial categories.

Transforming U.S. Agriculture

Science, Policy Forum, Volume 332, 670-1, May 6, 2011.

Former Northcentral RRDC director, Dr. Cornelia B. Flora, is co-author of the article “Transforming U.S. Agriculture. The authors argue that achieving sustainable agricultural systems will require transformative changes in markets, policies, and science, rather than just incremental changes in farming practices and technology.

Developing Viable Farmers Markets in Rural Communities: An Investigation of Vendor Performance Using Objective and Subjective Valuations,

T.M. Schmit and M.I. Gómez, *Food Policy*, 36, 119-127, 2011.

Farmers markets are drawing increasing attention by consumers as a local source of fresh foods; by producers as an alternative marketing opportunity to improve farm

sales; and by policy makers concerned about the limited availability of affordable, nutritious foods in low-income, sparsely-populated rural areas. Using unique data collected from customers, vendors, and markets in a rural region of New York State, we develop an empirical model of subjective and objective measures of vendor performance to identify important factors for improved market sustainability.

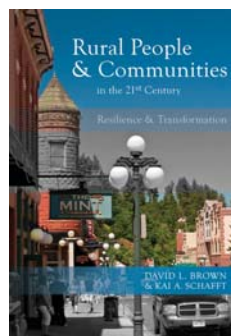
PUBLICATION

Rural People & Communities in the 21st Century, Resilience & Transformation,

David L. Brown & Kai A. Schafft, 2011, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK and Malden, MA.

Rural people and communities continue to play important social, economic and environmental roles at a time in which societies are rapidly urbanizing, and the identities of local places are increasingly subsumed by flows of people, information and economic activity across global spaces. However, while the organization of rural life has been fundamentally transformed by institutional and social changes that have occurred since the mid-twentieth century, rural people and communities have proved resilient in the face of these transformations.

This book examines the causes and consequences of major social and economic changes affecting rural communities and populations during the first decades of the twenty-first century, and explores policies developed to ameliorate problems or enhance opportunities.



Funding Update

As a result of funding reductions under the Continuing Resolution passed on April 15, 2011 we regret that we can no longer retain our two Associate Director positions. Mary Peabody and Heidi Mouillesseaux-Kunzman have been important assets to the Center over the last 21 months, taking the lead on Extension initiatives such as web-based programs, the national Foundations of Practice Training, the What Works II conference on entrepreneurship, a FEMA community-strengthening grant as well as the Stronger Economies Together (SET) project, among others. Fortunately, Mary and Heidi have secured eXtension funding to lead the development of an Enhancing Rural Capacity Community of Practice and both will play key roles in the expansion of SET-ii to New York and Vermont/New Hampshire. As such they will continue to provide important support to the Northeast region. Also, Mary Peabody has graciously agreed to continue to provide leadership to the planning of the upcoming What Works II conference (see page 1). We wish both of them the very best and look forward to future collaborations on projects in the region.

As a result of this funding change, we also will be shifting to an entirely electronic format of this Newsletter. If you have received a paper copy and wish to continue your subscription, please send an e-mail to nercrd@psu.edu with the subject line Subscribe to Newsletter. Thank you.

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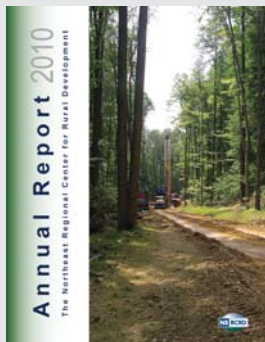
The Northeast Center is one of four regional rural development centers in the nation that focus specifically on rural challenges and opportunities. The Northeast Center provides support to the experiment stations and extension services of sixteen land-grant institutions in twelve northeastern states and the District of Columbia. The Center receives core funds from USDA-NIFA and the Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors. Any opinions expressed in Center publications are strictly those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of funders.

ANNUAL REPORT

NERCRD Annual Report 2010

The 2010 Annual Report is available at
<http://nercrd.psu.edu/Publications/Reports/AnnualReport2010.pdf>

Please contact the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development if you would like a paper copy of the report.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Personnel Update

We are pleased to welcome **Dr. Hamideh Etemadnia** to the Northeast Center, as a new post-doc. Dr. Etemadnia holds a Ph.D. in Civil Engineering from Southern Methodist University, and will be working with us on our Economic Research Service (USDA-ERS) cooperative research agreement entitled "Energy Use and Employment Impacts of a Healthier American Diet: A U.S. Multiregional Assessment."

International Senior Visiting Scholar **Professor Brady Deaton** is returning to the University of Guelph after spending a sabbatical with us.

NOTICE

Electronic Newsletter

The *Network* newsletter will be going electronic in September. If you wish to continue receiving the newsletter, please send an email to nercrd@psu.edu

See page 3 for important staffing, operational and funding changes.

Penn State Multimedia and Print Center, 2925, 06/11 (26:2)