



Regional Plan for Sustainable Development  
Coordinating Committee  
December 19, 2012

The mission of the Houston Food Policy Workgroup is to nurture the growth of a sustainable local food system, accessible to all, through education, collaboration, communication, and creation of a food policy council for the Houston region.

## **MISSION**

Our vision is a vibrant food system providing abundant nutritious and responsibly produced food for the entire Houston-Galveston region.

**VISION**

Food Policy **HAS** to be a Part of the  
Regional Plan for Sustainable  
Development.

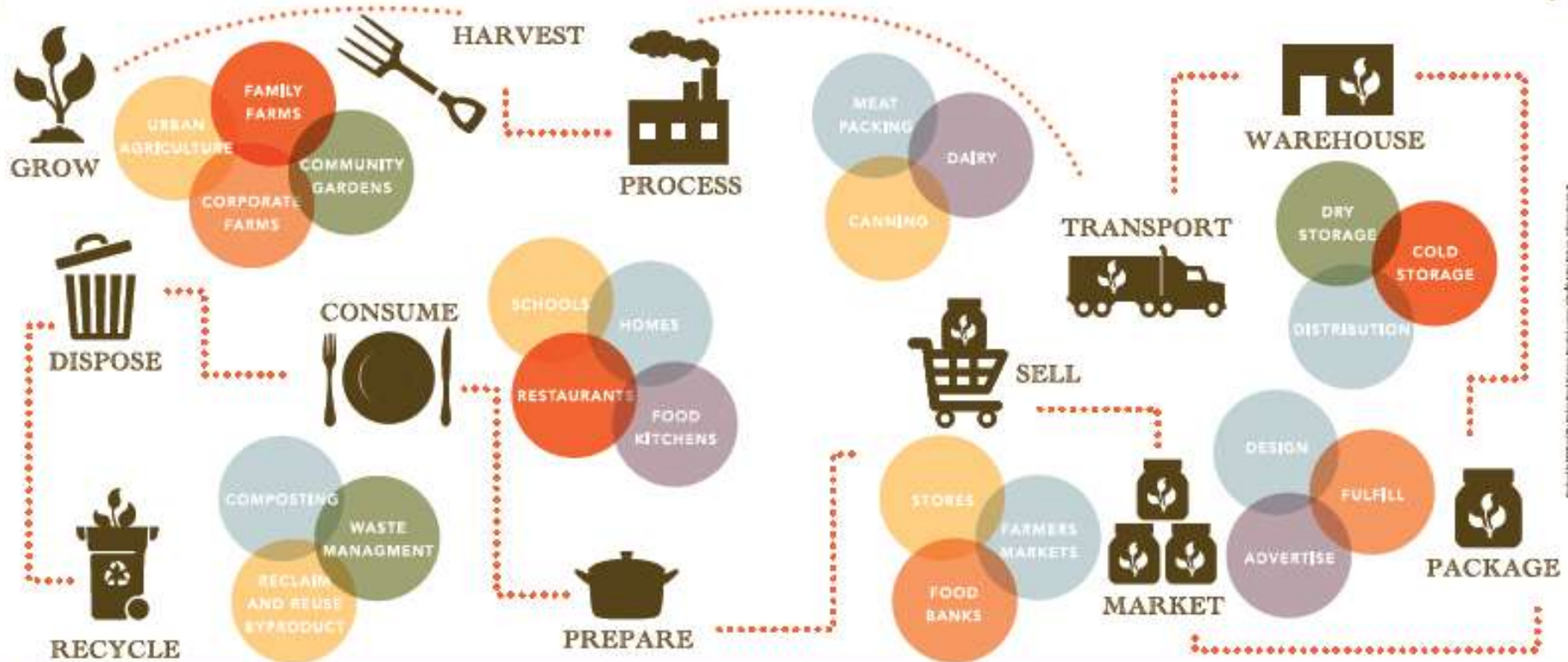
THERE WILL BE 10 MILLION HUNGRY MOUTHS TO FEED!

5 fruits and veggies a day = 18,250,000,000 servings of fruits and veggies  
a year

**WHY?**

# A Healthy Food System

# DEFINED



A FOOD SYSTEM IS THE LIFE CYCLE OF GROWING, PROCESSING, TRANSPORTING, SELLING, CONSUMING AND DISPOSING OF FOOD.

An effective and healthy food system makes the healthy choice the easy choice by providing sufficient quantities of safe and nutritious food to maintain a healthy diet. The healthiest system is one where food is produced, processed, transported, and marketed in ways that are respectful of our environment and the communities where they exist.

Community Level

# **STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Support local ordinances that remove the barriers to growing and selling locally grown food in residential areas.







# Promote Community Gardens



Develop incentives for businesses:  
-increase local food production and jobs  
-increase sales of healthy foods at local

Commit staff time and funds to focus on **Food Policy** or create a local **food policy council**.



Regional Level

# **STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Develop a **campaign** that promotes locally grown food and food products. **“Grown Local. Made Local. Buy Local.”**



**GO TEXAN.**

Pursue nontraditional collaborations across the **region**.



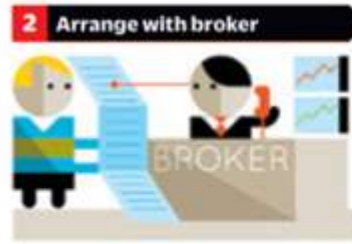
# Assess the local food distribution network.

## HOW SYSCO GETS PASSORELLI'S BASIL TO MICHIGAN STATE:



### 1 Prepare

Before Michigan's planting season, Sysco's Jennisch talks to farmers about how much food the distributor needs. The demand for basil this year was high, so Passorelli planted two field acres and 1,500 square feet of greenhouse.



### 2 Arrange with broker

Jennisch forwards the list of growers he's working with to Walsma & Lyons (W&L), a broker in Grand Rapids. Brokers had already been placing daily orders around the world for Sysco, but now they also collect local food.

Depending on the size of a local farm or Sysco's needs, Sysco's system directs food differently.

### 3 Food leaves farm



Small, remote farms deliver to a "food hub"—a sort of satellite station run by brokers such as W&L.



Farmers who live near a broker's headquarters can deliver food there. Passorelli delivers hauls to W&L three times a week.



If Sysco needs a farm's product bad enough, its truck will swing by on its way back from a delivery and pick up the food.



### 4 Broker consolidates food



Brokers pay farmers for their food, then consolidate local products with those of other growers. W&L codes the food for Sysco's inventory system, assigns tracking numbers for traceability in the event of a food-illness outbreak, and labels the cases GROWN IN MICHIGAN. If Sysco's needs change, W&L can sell the food to other customers.

Jennisch pushes local produce on Sysco sales reps, circulating marketing materials about the farms and their histories. The company then prioritizes local food—making sure, say, that all of Passorelli's basil sells out before it begins selling basil from another state.

### 5 Sysco distributes food



### 6 Customer eats

Passorelli's basil goes into Michigan State pasta dishes.

## HOW EVERYONE BENEFITS:



**FARMER:** Passorelli's farm is expanding, thanks to the new business. He sold Sysco 50 pounds of basil a week last year. This year he's selling 500 pounds a week.



**BROKER:** "Our company's downtime was during the local growing season," says Gary Lyons, co-owner of Walsma & Lyons. "But now we have more consistency with volume."



**SYSCO:** Last year, the company moved about 100,000 cases of Michigan produce, roughly twice 2008's yield. On some produce, it emits 40% less carbon by shipping locally.

# Develop a Regional Food Policy Council.



Houston **Food Policy** Workgroup  
a coalition hosted by Houston **Tomorrow**



# Land of plenty (potential)

adzuki beans • amaranth • apples • apricot • arugula • Asian peas • asparagus • asparagus beans • avocado • blackberries • bananas • basil • beetberry • beets • black beans • blueberries • bok choy • broccoli • Brussels sprouts • buckwheat • Burdock • butter beans • cabbage • cantaloupe • cardoon • carrot • cassava • cauliflower • celeriac • celery • chava • chicory • chile peppers • Chinese cabbage • chives • cilantro • collards • corn • cress • cucumber • cumin • dill • dill • Edamame • eggplant • epazote • fava beans • Feijoa • fennel • field corn • fig • gai lan • garbanzo beans • garlic • ginger • grain amaranth • grapefruit • grapes • green beans • groundcherry • head lettuce • horseradish • Irish potato • Jerusalem artichoke • jicama • jujube • kale • kiwi • kohlrabi • kumquat • leaf lettuce • leeks • lemons • lentil • loquat • luffa • mango mulberries • mesclun • mint • Muscadine • mustard greens • nectarines • nopales • okra • onions • orange • oregano • papaya • parsley • parsnip • passion fruit • pawpaw • peach • peanut • pear • pecans • peppers • persimmons • pinto beans • plum • pomegranate • popcorn • pumpkin • radish • raspberries • rice • roselle • rosemary • salsify • savory • scallions • shallots • sorghum • Southern peas • spinach • strawberries • sugar cane • summer squash • sunflowers • sweet corn • sweet peppers • sweet potato • Swiss chard • taro • thyme • tomatillo • tomato • tropical yam • tumeric • turnips watermelon • winter melon • winter squash