

2018

Suffolk County Food Policy Council



The steps and actions taken by the
Suffolk County Food Policy Council in
2017 and an evaluation of next steps.

1/1/2018

Table of Contents

- Missions and Goals** 2

- Membership** 3

- Subcommittee Updates**..... 4
 - Community Gardens Subcommittee 4
 - Food Equity Subcommittee 5
 - School Administration and Food Education Subcommittee 9
 - “Why Buy Local?” Subcommittee..... 11

- Other Initiatives**..... 14
 - East End Farm to School Project 14
 - Creating Healthy Schools and Communities 16
 - Suffolk County Food Policy Council Survey Results 17

I. MISSION AND GOALS

- The Mission of the Food Policy Council:

- Promote the production, distribution, and awareness of locally grown food.**
- Strengthen and prioritize policies that will improve food access, health, and nutrition.**
- Enhance the regional food system by utilizing local agriculture, fishing and shellfish aquaculture.**

III. MEMBERSHIP

Name	Organization	Representing
August Ruckdeschel (Chair)	SC Department of Economic Development & Planning	SCEDP
Gregson Pigott	SC Department of Health Services	SCDHS
Stephen Kramarcik	SC Department of Social Services	SCDSS
Vacant	Long Island Farm Bureau	LIFB
Michael Haynes	Long Island Cares	Food Equity Advocate
Randi Shubin Dresner	Island Harvest	Food Equity Advocate
Vacant		Food Retailers
Diane Shulman	Jerry Shulman Produce Shipper, Inc.	Food Processor
Joel Panagakos	J. Kings	Food Distributor
Michele Gervat	American Heart Association	Community-Based
Vacant		Community-Based
Nikki Kateman	RWDSU Local 338	Local Food Workers
Janet Sklar	NYSNA	School Nutrition Administration
Iman Marghoob	Long Island Community Gardens Association	Presiding Officer Designee
Josephine Connolly- Schoonen	Nutrition Division SBUMC	EPA Chair Designee
Mike Martinsen	Montauk Shellfish Company	Seafood Industry
Zahrine Bajwa	Cornell Cooperative Extension	County Executive Designee

Community Garden Subcommittee

The Community Garden Subcommittee of the Suffolk County Food Policy Council aims to help the people of Suffolk County learn to grow and gain access to foods that will help them lead healthier lives. The subcommittee is tasked to identify the means and resources necessary to build, grow, and support community gardens across Suffolk County and to help foster an appreciation and knowledge of growing one's own food.

Initiatives the subcommittee is currently exploring:

- **The re-establishment of the Long Island Community Gardens Association (LICGA) website** – A new LICGA website is being re-developed under the auspices of the Eat Smart-NY website hosted at Cornell Cooperative Extension. The website should be completed in 2018.
- The LICGA has been actively participating in North Shore Land Alliance planning committee meetings for their upcoming Long Island Food Conference and plan on participating in this conference in 2018 in order to reach more community gardeners and continue to provide education and resources to community gardens on Long Island.

2017 Accomplishments:

- The Long Island Community Gardens Association (LICGA) has been established as a 501c-3 organization to support community gardens on Long Island. The organization provides garden and nutrition education primarily on the Facebook page and with educational programs at community garden sites.
- During the summer of 2017, the LICGA provided nutrition education and cooking demonstration at the Bill Neil and Chris Hobson community garden in Bellport with emphasis on seasonal cooking and anti-inflammatory diet.

Food Equity Subcommittee

The Food Equity Subcommittee of the Suffolk Food Policy Council includes members from the Office of Minority Health Suffolk County Department of Health Services; Island Harvest Food Bank and Eat Smart New York Cornell Cooperative Extension. This Subcommittee aims to identify actionable steps to achieve greater equity within the regional food system and to create best practices that will be recommendations to the entire Food Policy Council and the Legislature, while offering suggestions on legislation to achieve those steps.

Initiatives the subcommittee is currently exploring:

- Increase and capitalize on customer spending power. Promote resident participation in nutrition assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and the Women with Infants and Children program (WIC) to bolster the purchasing power of local residents, while ensuring that retailers accept WIC and SNAP benefit cards.
- Building relationships with store owners to help them feel supported and provides an opportunity to better understand the owners' needs and concerns. Corner stores are businesses and need to make money. It is important to position healthy products as a strategy for increasing profits. By working with owners to understand their stores' particular customer base and operations, we are able to help owners decide which products would work best for the store and determine what additional support may be needed to ensure success.

2017 Accomplishments:

This past year the Food Equity Subcommittee focused its efforts on strengthening the **Suffolk County Healthy Corner Stores Initiative**.

- During 2017, the subcommittee members worked with the current stores - *Neighborhood Country Market Mastic Beach, Weirs Community Market Medford, La Tiendita"- Latin Grocery Southampton, and Riverhead Supermarket Riverhead* participating in the Healthy Corner Stores Initiative.
- The La Tiendita"- Latin Grocery kick-off, located at 262 Hampton Rd, Southampton, was held on Friday, May 19th, 2017. On September 16th, the store received merchandiser fridge where we worked with the store owner to promote water, yogurt and milk and locate the fridge in the front of the store with healthier options. The corner store carries a large variety of flavored sugary beverages we are slowly promoting water and dairy over sodas and nectar juices as the first item seen in the first fridge is an accomplishment. A large amount of soda has been relocated to the end of the store.



- Beatriz R. was the winner of a healthy food ESNY /SNAP grocery bag raffled in the month of June at La Tiendita Latin Grocery Store in Southampton, NY. Store owner Ximena A. (pictured on the right) donated the raffled healthy food items.
- Healthy messaging posters were displayed along with baskets of fruits and vegetables.
- Acceptance of EBT was visibly posted to attract more customers.
- Dissemination of SNAP resources and outreach materials to store customers.
- Improved choices in hot and cold meals such as “Grilled Chicken Salad.”
- The milk refrigerator has a large stock of milk, 2%, 1%, fat free and some whole milk
- Addition of healthy fresh produce (apples, bananas, nectarines, avocados, etc.), low-fat milk, and low-fat yogurt to the stores regular inventory
- The shelves have been reorganized in the entire store and added more whole grain cereals.
- Based on assessments, we developed enhancement strategies for improving store layout, lighting, storage space, refrigeration, pricing, signs, and façade improvements. Staff shared strategies with store owners for feedback and to solidify steps for moving forward in each store. These strategies included three main components:
 - Creating a produce display that can be seen upon entering the store.
 - Incorporating other healthy foods and recipes in the display.
 - Placing grab-and-go items such as bananas, oranges, and apples at the point of purchase.

Though enhancement strategies primarily leveraged existing structures in each store to better display healthy foods, staff created standard signs and supplied displays with produce baskets and pricing labels. Window clings

served as exterior enhancement strategies to attract community members to the fresh produce and other healthy food offerings.

- Conducting customer engagement activities - organized kick-off events. Press releases and ads for community-based newspapers.
 - Recipe and cooking demonstration by Bilingual Eat Smart New York nutritionist educators to healthy meals that could be prepared with ingredients sold at the store.
 - Healthy food recipes and tastings promoted decreasing sugary beverages, high fat and high sodium foods.
 - Coupons to promote healthy food items
 - Included sales on healthy food and beverage items, free re-usable shopping bags for customers (with purchase of sale items), a survey to gauge customer perceptions of healthy food options available at the store, educational materials on healthy eating and lifestyle, and free recipe booklets.

Examples of some of the signage added to the stores -



Other Support Provided:

- Designed and printed new banner and signage.
- Purchased new shelving and deli case to showcase healthy offering.
- Assisted with application to become a WIC-authorized vendor.
- Connected store with local lenders to discuss financing new equipment for the store.
- Provided free recipes and demonstrations to showcase seasonal healthy items.
- Promote and increase local food access by promoting and expanding farmer's markets, that will include a Mobile Farmers Market under Eat Smart New York which is an approved market aiming to increase SNAP benefit (EBT) usage at farmer's markets and deliver new ways to expand the reach of seasonal and local foods to low income families.

- Initial Evaluation Results:
 - Competition from brand name, unhealthy product advertising has made marketing healthy products a continuous challenge. Stores have unhealthy products advertised in mediums within and outside the store, while healthy products were only advertised with in-store advertising and shelving.
 - Finding distributors willing to work with corner stores is a continuous challenge. We sought distributors that could deliver local or high-quality produce at affordable prices; however most small corner stores could not meet distributors' minimum order volume to qualify for delivery or could not afford distributors' delivery fees. In addition, distributors, who were used to working with larger and more consistent supermarkets, were not willing to be flexible with corner stores' inconsistent or infrequent orders.

- Process Evaluation is being conducted by Cornell University for Eat Smart New York on the Implementation of the Healthy Corner Store. This will systematically describe how this intervention looks in actual practice. Process assessments are used to determine if an intervention was implemented as intended. This checks for fidelity, that is, if an evidence-based intervention is delivered as designed and likely to yield the expected outcomes.

Next steps (subject to change per subcommittee guidance):

The Food Equity Subcommittee will convene in February 2018 to discuss next steps moving forward and identify goals for the coming year. Potential priorities include:

- Continue promotion of the Healthy Corner Stores Initiative and development of a best-practices toolkit.
- Promote and increase local food access by promoting and expanding farmer's markets, increasing SNAP benefit (EBT) usage at farmer's markets explore new ways to expand the reach of seasonal and local foods to low income families.
- Assemble and distribute information about state and local regulations for cooking demonstrations and food sampling, and identify and explore possible changes in policy to encourage more use of cooking demonstrations as educational tools at farmers' markets in a safe, appropriate manner.
- Continue to support work on nutrition standards for foods and beverages purchased and served by agencies, organizations, and worksites.

School Administration and Food Education Subcommittee

The mission of the School Administration and Food Education Subcommittee is to strengthen, promote and prioritize policies that will improve education, health and nutrition through school programs and community involvement.

Initiatives the subcommittee is currently exploring:

New York has introduced several bills encouraging expansion of the Farm to School Program and education:

- S5241B Current law allows state agencies to spend up to \$200,000 annually to purchase locally-grown foods without going through a bidding process. This bill extends similar exemptions to BOCES and municipalities.
- S4281B Raises the monetary limit to \$150,000 for school districts to purchase local produce without approval from the state DOE.
- S5664B/A2409B Authorizes the Commissioner of Education to establish guidelines providing donation of excess, unused, edible food from school meals to food assistance programs. (signed by Gov. Cuomo in 2017)
- A1446 Relates to the reimbursement of schools for purchasing NY farm products.

2017 Accomplishments:

- The Council has expressed support for legislation proposed to increase the state reimbursement from 6 cents to 25 cents per meal if school districts purchase 30% of their produce locally. The proposal is included in Governor Andrew Cuomo's new Budget.
- The Council also supports Governor Cuomo proposal to add \$1 million to grow "Farm to School" (F2S) programs across New York State. Suffolk County has recently been very successful in securing funding for these programs and anticipates future success as additional funding becomes available. See the "East End Farm to School Project, listed under "Other Actions, Issues and Recommendations" for ongoing successful implementation of "Farm to School" efforts in the Southampton Union Free School District.
- The Council was invited to address New York School Nutrition Association (NYSNA) members at the Long Island November Regional Industry Seminar. The panel members discussed F2S issues including procurement, transportation and storage issues. As a result of this participation, a survey has been developed to gauge farmer interest in participating in Farm to School programs. The survey can be viewed at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HM6JL6N>. So far, five local farmers have indicated interest in the program, which has been shared with NY Agriculture & Markets (with the farmer's understanding).

Next steps (subject to change per subcommittee guidance):

The New York State Farm to School Program (administered by NYS Ag & Markets) was created in 2002 to connect schools with local farms and food producers to strengthen local agriculture, improve student health and promote regional food systems awareness. School administrators, teachers and parents are engaging students in F2S through field trips to local farms and farmers' markets, food-producing school gardens and related curriculum such as "Agriculture in the Classroom". The F2S Program works to make it easier for school districts to incorporate local food into their meals and to enhance the overall learning environment.

Our goal is to continue to maximize the use of locally-grown food in schools and institutions. Expand the definition of "products" to include growers, processors and manufacturers. This process will boost county production and consumption of Suffolk County-grown food and increase access to healthier food for underserved populations.

“Why Buy Local?” Subcommittee

The “Why Buy Local?” subcommittee of the Suffolk County Food Policy Council serves to promote the production, distribution and accessibility of locally grown and harvested food. The subcommittee aims to facilitate access to local healthy food, enhance food security, promote sustainability, and expand economic opportunities for local agricultural and fishing harvesters, growers, processors, and distributors.

Initiatives the subcommittee is currently exploring:

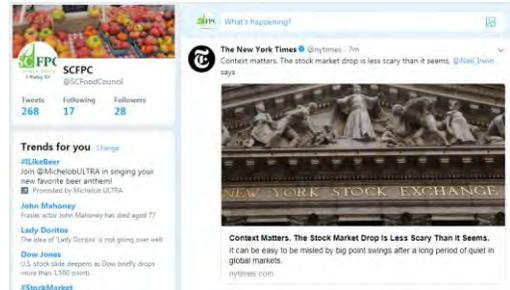
- The Council has been engaged by baymen and commercial fishermen to expand the time and attention dedicated to the marketing, regulatory, and environmental challenges to this heritage Long Island industry. Greater outreach is needed to this community in 2018.
- The development of a craft beverage portal that will expand economic development opportunities for new and fledgling wine, craft beer, cidery and distilleries in Suffolk County.
- Engage new farmers in “Farm to School” efforts.

2017 Accomplishments:

- **Experience the North Fork by Trolley** - Council members helped initiate pilot “train to trolley” services on the North Fork, featuring the Town of Southold’s natural assets and downtowns including agritourism destinations, parks, local vineyards and restaurants. The trolley was intended to complement existing LIRR and Suffolk Transit services to help overcome “last-mile” challenge within the region and to create a seamless transportation network that would showcase local businesses while taking vehicles off the road. It is hoped that visitors will be able to leave their cars behind while experiencing North Fork wine country and the local farms, parks, B&B and shops that characterize this unique region. The pilot project was an attempt to gather empirical data so that all interested parties would have additional intelligence in order to make decisions around a longer-term transportation solution on the North Fork. The pilot was used as the basis to secure \$112K in additional funding from Empire State Development in December 2017. Funding is intended to expand marketing and promotion and subsidize services into the Town of Riverhead.
- **Agricultural Visitor’s Campus** – Planning and design efforts continue on the Agricultural Visitor’s Campus at the Suffolk County Farm in Yaphank. The Suffolk County Department of Public Works and the Suffolk County Department of Economic Development & Planning have been working with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) and the chosen planning and design firm, Burton Behrendt Smith (BBS) on the designs of this facility. The new "agricultural complex" will serve the following functions 1) Act as the "Greeting and Visitors Center" for guests to the Suffolk County Farm 2) Serve as the Administrative heart and classroom center of County funded and CCE administered 4-H programming. 3) Create a comprehensive training ground for "next generation" farmers 4) Promote local agritourism and drive Long Island visitors to nearby agricultural destinations such as farmstands, U-Pick farms, and beer, wine, hard cider, and spirits tasting rooms. 5) Create a sustainable, green campus center that will serve as a learning laboratory for both young students and established architects, engineers, and consultants and planners in the region. This century old working farm already draws over 25K visitors a year. Increased

attendance will then expose thousands of new visitors to the agritourism activities available across Long Island.

- **Agricultural Stewardship Plan and RCPP Funding**– In December 2016, the County was awarded \$1.2 million Regional Conservation Partnership Program grant from the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service. This RCPP grant will enable the County to hire an agricultural specialist who is trained and certified in Nutrient Management Planning and Integrated Pest Management Planning at the Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District. In 2017, the position was created by civil service and the job announcement is expected in 2018. The specialist will be responsible for developing, administering, and implementing certified nutrient and pest management planning program tailored to the County’s unique agricultural commodities and resource concerns for the protection and improvement of surface and ground water resources. This specialist will help accelerate on-going efforts amongst farmers and RCPP partners to test, implement, and monitor the effectiveness of best management practices (BMPs) within the Peconic Estuary Watershed, an estuary of national significance.
- **Funding New Farmers** – Approximately \$700K has so far been awarded in funding under the Peconic Land Trust "Agriculture Capital Equipment Grant Program" which was first awarded funding in 2014. This program has helped over 25 emerging and established farmers acquire the equipment needed to start or grow their business, transition to a new business model, undertake agricultural stewardship efforts and meet increasing demands for food quality and safety standards. The program is an equipment cost-share program that reimburses farmers up to 20% of the purchase cost of new or used capital equipment. Eligible parties include: 1) New and emerging farmers, including second-career farmers; 2) Farmers upgrading equipment to come into compliance with new food safety regulations and; 3) Farmers transitioning to new commodities or methods of production. The Program has approved 4 grant applications and it is accepting applications on an on-going basis.
- **NY Grown and Certified Program Funding** – The Council supported the application and award of \$500,000 in 2017 to the Peconic Land Trust from Empire State Development. This funding comes from New York State Agriculture & Markets in their efforts to support the agricultural industry’s compliance with more stringent standards for food safety, a voluntary program to help minimize environmental impacts. Peconic Land will work directly with farmers to assist them in obtaining approval for up to \$50,000 for these investments—covering 90% of total project costs.
- **Online web presence** - The subcommittee continues to maintain the Facebook account (<https://www.facebook.com/SuffolkCountyFoodPolicyCouncil/>) and a Twitter account (<https://twitter.com/SCFoodCouncil>). Editorial control currently resides in the Suffolk County Department of Economic Development & Planning. The Facebook account has 163 “Likes” which is a 27% increase since 2016. Unfortunately, it was only discovered in early 2018 that the Twitter account had become disconnected from the facebook account for all of 2017, so no new posts were created over the course of the year. Fortunately, this issue has now been remedied. The Twitter account has just 28 followers.



Next steps (subject to change per subcommittee guidance):

- Support Agricultural Stewardship Efforts – Find opportunities to support, celebrate and promote on-going agricultural stewardship efforts by Suffolk County farmers supported and enhanced by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County, Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service. As local farmers continue to implement new best management practices to protect ground and surface waters, prevent soil erosions and enhance natural resource conservation efforts, steps should be taken to educate policymakers about on-going efforts and to encourage further adoption of these practices within the agricultural community.
- Help increase ridership and expand shuttle services highlighting North Fork assets during Summer 2018-Fall 2018.
- Secure additional funds (federal/state/etc.) to close the funding gap on the Agricultural Visitor’s Campus in Yaphank.
- Explore additional marketing opportunities for Suffolk County fishermen and shellfish farmers.
- Expand online presence. Grow Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Other Initiatives - *East End Farm to School Project*

The Southampton Union Free School District, Bridgehampton Union Free School District, and Tuckahoe Common School District are fortunate enough to have received a grant in December 2016 from New York State Agriculture and Markets to bring in a Farm to School Coordinator to source seasonal produce from local farms, coordinate trainings for food service staff to work with this produce, and to bring educational initiatives into the schools through school gardens and more.

This school year, students and faculty have been enjoying fruits and vegetables from East End farms including Balsam Farms, Halsey Farm, Invincible Summer Farms, the Milk Pail, Open Minded Organics, and Shulman Produce. Food Service Directors at each of the school districts have incorporated a variety of local produce into the cafeteria offerings--from recipes learned at a Farm to School food service training provided to all food service staff (through grant funding) earlier this school year, to their and their staff's own homemade recipes.

The districts have been utilizing the Harvest of the Month program, a Farm to School initiative that promotes a different locally grown food in the school cafeteria each month. The goal of this initiative is to increase access and consumption of fruits and vegetables and to encourage healthy food choices. School cafeterias have been serving the featured produce several times during each month, with the Farm to School Coordinator, providing taste tests of the Harvest of the Month fruit or vegetable, in addition to other local products, several times a month in the cafeteria. Several of our successful taste tests have included: local apples and Asian pears from the Milk Pail Orchard; seedless yellow watermelon from Balsam Farms; roasted shishito peppers from Open Minded Organics; kale and apple salad with kale from Satur Farms; and a sustainably caught local Northern Porgy and Long Island potato fish stick from Haskell's Seafood (with potatoes from Shulman Produce).

Due to the small size of the school districts (and therefore small quantities ordered) as well as the small size of farming operations out on Long Island, the program has encountered several difficulties in identifying local farms that are willing to deliver to the districts. While there are three school districts which should increase purchasing power, the school districts are still fairly small and thus not large enough to justify the costs to many of the small farms in delivering to the individual schools. Schools further require a select window of distribution (Monday mornings generally) which does not work for many of the farms. Additionally, many farms do not have trucks at all.

The Farm to School Coordinator has presented these difficulties to several partner organizations—including the Suffolk County Food Policy Council and the Long Island Farm Bureau—to identify a best practice resolution to the issue. The Coordinator has been working alongside the Creating Healthy Schools and Communities Community Coordinator to speak with local organizations that might be open to piloting delivery—including Long Island Cares and Island Harvest food banks as well as platforms Crave Foods' Source What's Good, Rustic Roots, and OurHarvest. In the interim, the Coordinator has identified farms that will deliver, has delivered herself when available, and has utilized local distributor Baldor Foods to acquire produce from hyperlocal and New York State farms.

In order to create a sustainable model after the grant cycle, the Farm to School Coordinator is exploring the use of an online platform to aggregate documents and purchasing information for the business administrative staffs at each of the school districts. Having easy access to purchasing information will also allow schools to provide information to farmers as to what their typical purchasing looks like. The online platform also allows for the option of recording "projected need" from the schools—which would allow schools to record what they would

ideally like to purchase in terms of fruits and vegetables throughout the school year; this data can then be used when meeting with farmers to identify in a best-case-scenario what the schools would purchase from local farms. The Farm to School Coordinator has been tracking amounts of local produce purchased thus far, and she has started recording the amount of “projected need” for produce from each of the districts. These amounts have been recorded in Excel and through the online platform Source What’s Good.

2017 Accomplishments

- Began purchasing local produce from six local farms for the three school districts. Purchasing of local produce (and produce generally) within each of the districts has grown exponentially (in terms of weight and funds put back into the local community) through these efforts.
- Presented on the project as well as its challenges, particularly distribution and food cost, to the Suffolk Food Policy Council, Long Island Farm Bureau, and School Nutrition Association’s Regional Industry Seminar Day.
- Provided taste testing and additional education within each of the school districts. Additional service training was held for food service staff on cooking with and eating local produce in season.

Next Steps

- Continue to meet with potential distributors and local farmers to determine feasibility of distribution to the three school districts. The Farm to School Coordinator will then further determine if this model may work to pilot for other like-minded programs.
- Determine “projected need” each month for school food service and record these numbers to present to local farms at the beginning of the growing season.
- Educate students and staff through additional taste testing, school garden curriculum, food service staff and community partner trainings on marketing local produce to students.
- Increase community awareness of the Project through media outreach and collaborating with community partners.

Other Initiatives - *Creating Healthy Schools and Communities*

Creating Healthy Schools and Communities is a New York State Department of Health (NYDOS) funded project secured by Western Suffolk BOCES with a subcontract to Stony Brook Research Foundation. The project's goal is to access healthy food and create more opportunities for physical activity within not only targeted school districts, but throughout the communities served by these school districts - Brentwood, Central Islip, Southampton and Wyandanch. Stony Brook Medicine has been working with the Suffolk County Food Policy Council to consider additional policy and environmental changes that can positively impact these communities.

A robust discussion was held regarding a potential voluntary incentive program for small/corner stores to increase healthy offerings in optimal store locations (i.e. eye level and near register), as well as to decrease offerings of unhealthy items. The extent of the incentives (e.g. new refrigerator cases, marketing materials, expediting licensing/permit applications and modest tax incentives) would be tied to the extent of improvements made. Implementation was deemed not feasible as this time. Therefore, an alternative method of increasing access to healthy foods is being explored, i.e. creating a virtual local food hub. Such a hub is a collaborative network that integrates supply of local produce, the demand for local produce and the distribution of such produce in a manner that supports the local farming community, a healthy environment and healthy communities.

We have partnered with Crave Food Systems to encourage use of their online marketplace, WhatsGood. The platform can be used by suppliers (local farmers, fishermen and artisans) to communicate available products, manage their orders and respond to bid on long-term purchasing requests. Buyers can use the platform to discover new sources, order ingredients and project future need. Initially we are working with the targeted school districts to use the platform, as their large purchases can drive delivery to low income areas. Simultaneously, we are working with small community agencies to collaborate with their local school districts to benefit from volume-based pricing and distribution. All financial interactions would occur directly between farmers and buyers via the platform.

We are beginning to work with potential distributors that can facilitate distribution from Long Island farms to the schools, as well as one other location near the schools for small stores/agencies in the same community to conveniently pick up local produce. Crave Foods is committed to building the distribution aspect of the platform.

2017 Accomplishments

- Established partnerships with Crave Foods.
- Crave Foods has signed up five local farmers.
- Both Crave Foods and Stony Brook Medicine have made presentations to targeted school districts and the Long Island School Food Service Directors meeting.
- Brentwood School District is ordering local greens weekly using WhatsGood. Stony Brook dietetic interns are conducting nutrition education activities/taste tests in the elementary schools to encourage consumption.
- Stony Brook has had initial meeting with Island Harvest to discuss their potential role as a distributor/local drop off site for non-school community agencies.

Next Steps

- Continue to meet with potential distributors to determine cost and capacity. Work with Crave Foods to establish this aspect of the platform.

- Determine need/interest among school food service directors and build demand as appropriate.
- Promote Source WhatsGood to farmers and purchasers, facilitate sign-up on the platform.
- Facilitate partnerships among school food service departments and community agencies so they can be linked on the platform for mutual benefits.
- Conduct taste tests, cooking demonstrations and promotional events in targeted communities.
- Continue to seek additional funding to supplement the current grant to facilitate this work.

Other Initiatives – *Suffolk County Food Policy Council Survey Results*

The Suffolk County Food Policy Council created an online survey at the end of 2017 to solicit input from Council members, meeting attendees, and other interested parties as to how the Council could improve its effectiveness, expand its reach, and more appropriately direct its energies and resources. The survey can be found at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/B628J3X> and will remain live. As of February 7, 2018, the survey received seven responses. A short summary follows:

What food policy topics feel underserved by the Council?

- Distribution challenges on Long Island (2)
- Building political coalitions of support (2)
- Land Preservation and Agricultural Stewardship
- Food Waste

What does the Food Policy Council do best?

- Coalition building and networking (4)
- Disseminate information and facilitate dialogue (2)