TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SASKATOON FOOD CHARTER: A REPORT

RACHEL ENGLER-STRINGER AND JUSTIN HARDER

WITH THE SASKATOON FOOD COALITION

Community-University Institute for Social Research

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ABSTRACT

The City of Saskatoon adopted in principle the Saskatoon Food Charter in 2002. The Charter contains a series of five principles and areas for action that are needed to achieve food security including: Food Security and Production, Food Security and Health, Food Security and Culture, Food Security and Justice, and Food Security and Globalization.

This report compiles and briefly documents programs and initiatives currently underway in and around the City of Saskatoon that contribute to the principles set out in the Saskatoon Food Charter. They include: farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture initiatives, local food in grocery stores and food co-ops, institutional procurement, food policy groups, food box programs, local product auctions, new farmer training programs, incubator kitchens, and agricultural land protection.

The second purpose of this report is to present ideas from the policy and research literature or articulated by people contacted through the documentation of initiatives already underway that would further implementation of the Charter. The report ends with a timeline of specific recommendations for the Saskatoon context to further the implementation of the Saskatoon Food Charter and its five principles.

INTRODUCTION

The City of Saskatoon adopted, in principle, the Saskatoon Food Charter in 2002 (Kossick, 2004). The Charter contains a series of five principles and areas for action that are needed to achieve food security including: Food Security and Production, Food Security and Health, Food Security and Culture, Food Security and Justice, and Food Security and Globalization (Kossick, 2004; Saskatoon Food Coalition, 2002). The complete Saskatoon Food Charter is attached in Appendix A.

Inspired by a Food Charter adopted by Toronto in 1999, the Saskatoon Food Coalition (SFC) was officially formed in 2000 when a number of partners came together to develop a Saskatoon Food Charter. The SFC created a platform to bring interested stakeholders to the table to champion food security in Saskatoon (Kossick, 2004). Early members of the SFC included children's nutrition program organizers, organic farmers, food bank representatives, public health representatives, and international NGO development workers concerned about fair trade. Ten years later, the Coalition's on-going mandate is to monitor progress on the Saskatoon Food Charter and to encourage its implementation through work with the City of Saskatoon and other relevant organizations.

This report's purpose is two-fold; first to compile and briefly document programs and initiatives currently underway in and around the City of Saskatoon that contribute to the principles of the Saskatoon Food Charter and second, to present ideas from the policy and research literature and those articulated by people contacted through the documentation of initiatives already underway that would further implementation of the Charter. Before presenting these initiatives and ideas, a brief explanation of food security and sustainable food systems, as understood by the authors, will be presented.

What is Food Security?

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization ("Special Programme for Food Security," 2010), "food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." At the household level, food insecurity is the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, or the limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (Radimer, Olson, & Campbell, 1990). The opposite of household food insecurity, household food security, has four dimensions that are quantitative, qualitative, social and psychological in nature (Frongillo, 1999; Radimer et al., 1990). The quantitative dimension means having sufficient food to meet basic needs. The qualitative dimension focuses on food that is safe (no dented cans for example) and sufficiently diverse (dietary monotony and consumption of a narrow range of inexpensive foods are quality issues that are associated with food insecurity). Social acceptability, the third dimension, is focused on how food is acquired. For example, charitable sources such as food banks are

associated with feelings of humiliation. The psychological dimension is focused on issues such as anxiety about running out of food and other psychological distress. According to Chen and Che (2001), household food insecurity in Canada follows a predictable sequence of severity from worrying about not having enough money to buy food, to compromising on quality, and then finally to compromising on the quantity of food eaten.

Recent Canadian Community Health Survey analyses have put rates of household food insecurity in Canada at 9.2 per cent with certain populations such as Aboriginal peoples and single women with children at higher risk of experiencing food insecurity (Willows, Veugelers, Raine, & Kuhle, 2009). According to the most recent food bank usage statistics (Food Banks Canada, 2009), 704,414 individuals in Canada receive food from a food bank in the average month. The 2009-2010 Annual Report for the Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre (Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre, 2010) reports that a total of 59,668 food hampers were distributed between April 1, 2009 and March 31, 2010 while 141,757 food hampers were requested in the same time frame, indicating a significant gap between the need for food hampers and what the Saskatoon Food Bank is able to provide. Almost half (44%) of Food Bank users in Saskatoon are children. Recent national analysis has shown a jump of 14.5 per cent in the number of employed people frequenting the food bank.

In the later 1990s, the term 'community food security' (CFS) began to be used (Allen, 1999) broadening the scope of areas for research and action (Dietitians of Canada, 2007; OPHA Food Security Work Group, November 2002). According to Michael Hamm and Bellows (2003): "Community food security is defined as a situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice" (p. 37). CFS added to the concept of household food security by explicitly emphasizing issues of human rights, community empowerment and self-reliance, and the importance of food system environmental sustainability. This includes linking issues of agricultural sustainability to food insecurity at the household and community levels. A community food security approach includes, for example, making the links between the drop in the number of small-scale family farms, the exploitation of workers within the food system and the poverty that contributes to household food insecurity. CFS is the definition implicitly used when discussing food security in the Saskatoon Food Charter.

The Food System & Agriculture

A sustainable food system "is one that provides healthy food to meet current food needs while maintaining healthy ecosystems that can also provide food for generations to come with minimal negative impact to the environment. A sustainable food system also encourages local production and distribution infrastructures and makes nutritious food available, accessible, and affordable to all. Further it is humane and just protecting farmers and other workers, consumers and communities" (American Public Health Association, 2007, pg. 1). Our current industrial agriculture system is not sustainable because of, amongst other things, its depletion of soil fertility, water resources and fossil fuels, as well as its exploitation of people. Worldwide, agriculture (especially industrial agriculture) is estimated to cause about one third of global warming, through, for example, its use of fossil fuels, the cutting of forests to create additional

agricultural land, its destruction of fertile soil and emissions from intensive livestock production. Of the varying types of agriculture worldwide, the industrial agriculture system is the biggest contributor to global warming (Horrigan, Lawrence, & Walker, 2002).

While agriculture has been extremely productive over the last century in particular, there are significant costs to this success (Jackson, Minjares, Naumoff, Shrimali, & Martin, 2009). Food today is relatively cheap as a proportion of average Canadian income, but costs are low because of 'externalities' – environmental, social and health costs that are being borne outside of the food sector (Jackson et al., 2009; MacRae & Toronto Food Policy Council, 1999; Neff, Palmer, McKenzie, & Lawrence, 2009)."The price of food to consumers does not contain the true costs of its production. The true costs include the cost of environmental cleanup, the cost to human health of toxic exposure and a lack of clean water sources, the cost of overusing fossil fuels, as well as the cost to future generations of growing food with the loss of severely depleted agricultural land." (Jackson et al., 2009, p. 403). Although the artificially low cost paid by Canadians for food would appear to increase household food security, the reality is that this short-term increased food security creates long-term community food insecurity through environmental damage to land, and loss of local farming and other food infrastructure. For example, one local producer contacted for this report suggested that if international trade were to stop inexplicably, it would take four years to establish enough local farms to sustain the local population. Her words were a reminder of how precarious the current food system is even in a province with a strong export agriculture focus.

METHODS

This report was developed as a preliminary effort to capture local efforts to further implement the Saskatoon Food Charter. In order to inform future implementation of the Charter, academic and non-academic literature was reviewed in the area of community food security.

The organizations and groups identified and contacted throughout the writing of this report were identified primarily by members of the Saskatoon Food Coalition. The SFC was approached to develop a list of organizations and groups that were seen as supporting the five principles of the Saskatoon Food Charter. Based on this initial list, the two authors conducted brief interviews with the diverse groups and organizations identified over the summer of 2010. The topics discussed in the interviews included:

- How the work of the group/organization supports community food security and the Saskatoon Food Charter;

- What challenges the group/organization faces in furthering their work in the area of local food security;

- What policies are in place that are particularly beneficial and/or prohibitive to the work the group/organization does.

Based on these topic areas, the authors received a great diversity of responses and ideas, many of which are presented in the report.

The first author (Engler-Stringer) has undertaken extensive research in the area of food security and was able to provide an overview of the academic and non-academic literature related to the areas identified within the Saskatoon Food Charter as a starting point for the literature and policy review within the report. In addition, as the authors spoke with the participants, other key literature was identified and other topics were revealed. It was through the complementary perspectives of those working locally and the literature that the specific recommendations identified in section five arose.

PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES THAT FURTHER THE SASKATOON FOOD CHARTER

When Canadians think of "local food initiatives", they often think of their local farmers' market or other opportunities to purchase locally produced food such as community-supported agriculture. In 2008, the Canadian Co-operative Association (2008) did a survey of what it described as "local food initiatives" across Canada. These initiatives include: farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture initiatives, local food in grocery stores and food co-ops, institutional procurement, food policy groups, food box programs, local product auctions, new farmer training programs, incubator kitchens, and agricultural land protection. Many of the initiatives described in the Canadian Co-op Association report exist within the area around the City of Saskatoon.

The programs and initiatives described below are divided into the five key principles outlined in the Charter in an effort to link local projects to the implementation of the Charter. These five principles include: Food Security and Production, Food Security and Health, Food Security and Culture, Food Security and Justice, and Food Security and Globalization. It is important to note that some organizations support a number of the areas of the Charter, and although their initiatives are separated into the various areas of the Charter for our purposes, the work they do is intimately linked to all of these principles. Furthermore, the principles of the Charter are interdependent and many organizations view their projects as supporting many, if not all of the areas of the Charter. There are also a number of initiatives or projects that are important to increasing local food security that did not fit under any of the five categories but merit mention. These initiatives are located in a sixth category entitled "Other."

Lastly, this compilation is not all-encompassing of the work that is being done reflecting the principles of the Charter in the Saskatoon area. Rather, we hope this compilation has captured a representative sample of the different types of work being done that support the principles of the Charter. We also hope that it provides an opportunity to engage others to think creatively about how the goal of community food security can be achieved. For a list of the organizations identified in each of the categories, see Appendix B.

Food Security & Production

Meeting at the Table: Strengthening Farmer-Eater Links

One approach to strengthening community food security is to strengthen the connections between local producers/farmers and local eaters. This link is strengthened in numerous ways outside of the mainstream food system and various organizations within the Saskatoon area are working towards this goal, whether it be through community-supported agriculture, the local farmers' market, or chefs consciously presenting locally produced foods in their restaurants.

Community-supported agriculture (CSA) is a novel approach to strengthening the farmer-eater link through not just the consumption of food, but also highlighting the costs and risks of food production (Lang, 2005; Maxey, 2006). Within the traditional food system, the farmer bears the cost of planting and, therefore, the risk associated with food production. The CSA approach involves households buying a share of a farm's production, often paying monthly and, as foods are harvested, they are then divided among the CSA members. Because household members pay the same amount no matter the season's conditions, they are sharing in the risk of crop failure that would otherwise be fully absorbed by the farmer. The CSA approach requires a fuller commitment on the behalf of the eater, as well as a new type of learning for the producer. There are a few CSA projects in and near Saskatoon. Two examples include the Little Urban Garden CSA and the Pine View Farms CSA. The Little Urban Garden CSA is located in the Caswell Hill neighbourhood of Saskatoon and is run by a young woman who apprenticed with another local CSA in 2009 and then began her own CSA in 2010. Utilizing her urban yard and two other residents' yards, she is able to produce vegetables (and some fruit) for sale. One of her challenges as a new food producer on this scale is determining how much food she can produce on a weekly basis to provide to her supporters; however, the greatest challenge she has faced thus far is marketing the shares in her CSA. A different CSA model within the Saskatoon area is the Pine View Farms CSA. Prior to the development of the CSA in 2010, Pine View Farms already operated as a central hub for local farmers to sell their animal products, meat and eggs, to consumers. Their CSA project has expanded this role to include vegetables as well as some fruit. Interest in CSA is also growing in Saskatchewan among researchers.

Both of the local CSA projects expressed common challenges despite their different scale and level of establishment. One challenge is the lack of knowledge the average consumer has of the work involved in producing fruits and vegetables especially when using no pesticides and synthetic fertilizers. This additional work results in a potentially increased price for the food relative to the grocery store. This approach can serve to limit the number of consumers who will support a CSA approach for financial reasons, but also due to the lack of value eaters sometimes place on sustainably produced food.

Another opportunity for local eaters to strengthen their connection with local farmers is through food stores that intentionally procure locally produced foods. For example, Steep Hill Co-op, located in the Nutana neighbourhood, is one of the longest standing Saskatoon-based stores with an explicit interest in locally produced food. The Steep Hill Co-op purchases as much

product as possible from local producers including honey, garbanzo beans, squash, garden seeds, etc. In fact, Steep Hill has adopted a policy to buy local, to buy organic, or to buy the least processed foods whenever possible. A more recently established food store with a focus on local food in Saskatoon is Souleio. Souleio, a food store and restaurant, opened in downtown Saskatoon in 2009 with a focus on selling local products first. If the product is not available locally, then they buy from regional, national and finally international sources. Since its inception, Pine View Farms has been a partner in Souleio and this relationship has served to strengthen ties with local farms,while providing Pine View Farms with a consistent market. While few supermarket chains focus on providing local or regionally produced food in their stores, the Saskatoon Co-op has made efforts in recent years to provide customers with locally produced options for produce and meat and there are indications that this commitment to providing local products is growing.

Some restaurants have similar purchasing practices to Steep Hill and Souleio. The restaurant at Souleio has a unique arrangement in the way that it bridges with the food store, allowing their chefs to serve the same local foods the store sells. Weczeria, a small, family-owned restaurant, has taken a novel approach to promoting its use of local produce and meat with a marketing campaign focused on the relationships between the restaurant and the producers of the food it prepares. For example, it has a print advertisement that shows a picture of a beef producer with the caption "Would you buy beef from this guy? We do." Truffles Bistro chef/owner described his relationship with local food as evolving over the last 20 years when he started wondering why local products weren't being used in Saskatoon restaurants. The Truffles journey began with incorporating local herbs, then meats, fish, and most recently vegetables into their meals. The chef of the restaurant at Wanuskewin Heritage Park also has a keen interest in using locally produced food whenever possible. Wanuskewin's restaurant aims to offer First Nations cuisine with a modern twist and uses local meats in the food it prepares. The chef is hoping to expand the restaurant's focus on local food production in the coming years by, for example, establishing a garden on site that would supply food for the restaurant as well as the broader community. Various other local businesses focus on processing local ingredients such as making preserves out of Saskatoon berries and other local fruit, and breads or perogies out of local grain and other ingredients.

Some local restaurants and chefs come to their focus on local food through Local Bounty, a provincial organization that aims to increase the connection between producers and chefs in Saskatchewan. Initially driven by Saskatchewan Tourism in an effort to take advantage of the growing interest in agritourism, Local Bounty has made their mandate to explore creative ways to expand the local food market. Local Bounty's relationship with the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) Professional Cooking program in Saskatoon provides an opportunity to teach the next generation of cooks and chefs in Saskatchewan about the importance of a local food system.

Both the retailers and restauranteurs we spoke to who focus on local food expressed similar challenges to achieving their local food goals. The majority of these challenges relate to the need for a more established local food infrastructure. First, local chefs and store owners all described the additional time commitment needed to build relationships with local producers as well as to

navigate numerous supply channels. Once relationships are established, it can also be challenging to find a new producer if the established producer retires or is otherwise unable to provide product. Secondly, there are challenges with consistency when utilizing or providing local product, particularly as winter arrives and challenges arise for storing vegetables. Third, and similar to what is experienced by CSA projects, the public is not necessarily aware of why the restaurants and retailers are utilizing or providing local food and the philosophy and significance behind this approach. Lastly, some producers can sell at higher prices at the Farmers' Market than restauranteurs can afford, and this impacts what the suppliers have available to sell to restaurants or stores.

Farmers' markets, the most visible example of a way to link rural producers and urban eaters, have grown exponentially in the last two decades. According to Smithers, Lamarchea, & Joseph (2008) farmers' markets hold various meanings for different groups of people. For some they are about being different or for consciously choosing an approach to food that is in opposition to the dominant system. For others they are about maintaining tradition or building/maintaining community.

The Saskatoon Farmers' Market, founded in 1975, serves as an avenue for local producers to sell and market their products on a regular basis. Although the farmers' market is busiest within the summer and fall months when fresh produce is most readily available, it is open year-round, providing an opportunity for producers to have a consistent avenue to sell their products. Weather is a significant barrier for an institution like the farmers' market. It has profound impacts on when and what is available for producers to sell and can detrimentally impact a smaller producer in a very short period of time. In addition to the larger Saskatoon Farmers' Market, there are several smaller markets that operate one day a week during the peak growing season in various neighbourhoods across the city.

For various reasons, certain groups of people can find farmers' markets exclusionary. For example, low-income people and certain groups of people of colour may not feel comfortable in these spaces for various social and economic reasons. For whatever reason there is a very visible lack of Aboriginal peoples at markets in Canadian prairie cities, for example. A program in the United States that specifically aims at getting low-income people shopping at farmers' markets is the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture. Food stamp recipients receive coupons that can be redeemed at farmers' markets for produce, meats and other foods. Research indicates that the program has two impacts: it increases the diet quality consumed by nutritionally vulnerable people and it increases the revenues of farmers who participate in the program (Dollahite, Nelson, Frongillo, & Griffin, 2005). The program also provides nutrition education materials for participants that specifically focus on using the produce that can be purchased at a local market. In British Columbia, a similar program was piloted with great success in 10 communities in 2007-2008 (BC Association of Farmers' Markets, 2010).

Although a program similar to those in the US or B.C. does not presently exist in Saskatchewan, there are a number of local programs aimed at increasing access to locally produced food that are managed by CHEP Good Food Inc. CHEP Good Food Inc. is a Saskatoon-based not-for-

profit organization that promotes Food Security and works to improve access to good food for children, families and communities through its programs. For example, CHEP regularly sets up outlets at senior centres, the University of Saskatchewan high-rise residences and at St Paul's Hospital during the local growing season to sell produce with a small mark-up to cover costs. The largest and most well-known program operated by CHEP to increase access to locally produced food is the Good Food Box. The Good Food Box is an "alternative food distribution system that provides a variety of top-quality, fresh, nutritious foods at affordable prices" (CHEP Good Food Inc., 2010). The food boxes are dropped at neighbourhood pick-up points in community organizations and businesses throughout Saskatoon, and households collect their pre-paid box of vegetables, fruit and grains sold at a small mark-up to cover the costs of the program. The program provides Saskatonians with the opportunity to access food at a fair price in their own community, addressing some of the barriers people may feel when accessing the Farmers' Market. During the local growing season the Good Food Box program sources local products where possible. Specifically it has a Sunshine box program that focuses on local produce and is somewhat more expensive than the regular box. As well as providing high quality local produce to families and households in Saskatoon, CHEP's programs pay local producers a fair price for their products. Through CHEP, "more than 200,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables each year in Saskatoon [are purchased], including approximately 25% from local organic and non-organic producers" (Bromm & McRae, 2009, p. 7).

Local institutional procurement practices can have an impact on local food access. In a few jurisdictions across Canada, community institutions such as universities have policies that require their food services to utilize some locally produced food. Although no such policies presently exist within Saskatoon institutions, there are a number of programs in Saskatoon that aim to increase the connection between community institutions and local farmers. The Saskatoon Health Region's (SHR) Food Charter is the closest thing locally to a guiding policy within a public institution that is working towards institutional local food procurement. Efforts to expand the presence of local food within the SHR have benefitted from the strong relationship between the SHR and CHEP. Together with the School Boards, they have created Nutrition Positive, a program intended to create and support healthy food environments in schools. It offers schools different levels of commitment; at the high level, the program promotes the purchasing of local foods in an effort to increase local food security. The Big Crunch is another CHEP program in partnership with local schools that encourages healthy living and education about the local food system. Held on World Food Day, the Big Crunch uses locally grown carrots to promote discussion of nutritious snacks and the local food system.

Outside of the SHR, there are other community institutions that make use of locally produced food. For example, CHOICES cafeteria in St. Thomas Moore College at the University of Saskatchewan purchases vegetables and meat from various local sources as well as food from the University's Horticulture Club when available. The Horticulture Club, formed by student and general public volunteers, are able to sell their produce at a very low price because of their lack of labour costs. They also sell their extra produce to SWITCH, a student-run health clinic located in a core neighbourhood in Saskatoon. The money that is raised from these sales contributes to the limited operating costs of the Horticulture Club. Because the Horticulture Club relies on volunteer labour, the initiative is unique among Saskatoon programs and further expansion of their model would likely be limited.

Another approach to strengthening farmer-eater links is through developing a directory of local producers. Despite the Canadian public's growing interest in consuming local food, a common barrier to doing so is public knowledge of where to purchase local food (Infact Research and Consulting Inc., 2008). The Saskatchewan Organic Directorate (SOD) is an organization that serves as an "umbrella organization that unites the province's producers, processors, buyers, traders, certifiers and consumers of certified organic food and fibre" (Saskatchewan Organic Directorate, 2010). One of SOD's roles is as a directory of sites throughout Saskatchewan where consumers can purchase organic food, as well as locally produced food grown without synthetic fertilizers or pesticides. A barrier to this goal of connecting local producers with an available market is limited local production and this is particularly evident when exploring meat production in Saskatchewan. SOD, as well as the National Farmers' Union (NFU), whose main office is in Saskatoon, identified the loss of local meat processing facilities as a significant barrier to local meat production. Although some small, local abattoirs still exist in Saskatchewan, in order to sell meat across provincial lines federal inspection is required. To sell meat within Saskatchewan requires provincial inspection, and the provincial standards were written to mirror the federal standards. The result is that finding a local federally- or provincially-inspected abattoir that will process on a small scale is (near) impossible, or the cost is prohibitive to the producer. A study undertaken by SOD and CHEP in 2009 reports that, "at this point, there is no federally inspected facility with organic certification for beef and no facilities for small animals, organic or otherwise" (Bromm & McRae, 2009, p. 5). Local restauranteurs with an interest in utilizing local (organic) meat also mentioned the lack of appropriate facilities as an important barrier.

Some Challenges of Local Production for Local Consumption

The Saskatchewan Organic Directorate (SOD) explores food production and the related impact on the environment. There are a number of challenges facing organic producers in Saskatchewan, and one of the most significant is organic certification. In 2009, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency established the Canadian Organic Regime, a certification program for Canadian products that are grown and processed organically and intended for international or inter-provincial trade. Although this Canadian certification is a step in the right direction for organic producers, the standard is not used for products that are sold within a province and, therefore, is not applicable to small or medium scale producers who primarily sell products locally. According to the Canadian Organic Growers (2010), Saskatchewan has the highest number of farms that are certified organic of any province in Canada. Despite this encouraging statistic, these farms are primarily grain farms and there is little presence of organic certification of smaller market gardens within Saskatchewan. Furthermore, SOD argues that the lack of a regulatory body within Saskatchewan for organic production creates confusion for consumers and producers as to what products are organic. For example, some producers who are not certified organic may mistakenly believe their products are equivalent to organic simply because they avoid pesticides and genetically modified organisms (GMOs), whereas certified organic standards are more comprehensive.

Beyond Factory Farming, an organization with a local office in Saskatoon, is interested in the production concerns of small farms and the environmental impacts of industrial hog and other

animal farms. Beyond Factory Farming began as a way to inform the public about the impacts of factory/industrial farming and to support communities looking to stop companies from opening new factory farms in the area. Since the growth of factory/industrial animal farming operations has slowed in Canada, Beyond Factory Farming has been able to focus on promoting alternative ways of raising animals for human consumption that are healthier for the animals and the environment. One of the major challenges facing sustainable animal farming practices is the need for more local abattoirs that are accessible to small and medium scale farmers.

As mentioned above, there are a number of policies and regulations that have worked against smaller scale abattoirs remaining profitable. Also, despite the significant meat consumption by Canadians, communities often oppose the development of new slaughterhouses and this can be a major challenge for a small scale abattoir. Another growing challenge is the disappearance of butchers and the limited opportunities for young people to learn from experienced butchers. In the 2009 Feasibility study conducted by SOD and CHEP (Bromm & McRae, 2009), the meat producers they interviewed identified the lack of "access to a suitable food processing facility," as one of top five barriers to expanding production. The Canadian Community Economic Development Network (Edible Strategies Ent. Ltd., 2007) also reports that "new meat regulations in BC are a good example where standards for 'factory farms' are being imposed on small producers and processing plants – the result is that a lot of processors are going out of business as they cannot afford the high costs of building new processing plants to specifications that will not be recoverable in their economic cycle".

Growing in a Concrete Jungle : Urban Food Production

A proven strategy to increase community food security is for communities to produce their own food (Roberts, 2008). Despite the apparent challenges in urban centres, the interest from urban-dwellers in producing their own food is increasing. This is particularly evident in Saskatoon with the growth in community gardens, rooftop/patio gardens, bee keeping and other creative efforts to produce food in an urban centre (such as the Little Urban Garden CSA project mentioned above). Recently there has also been discussion and some support for raising chickens in Saskatoon.

Community gardens are the most visible urban food production projects and have garnered increasing interest in cities and towns across Canada. They are located in lots that were once vacant or in city parks. Community gardens can be neighbourhood-based such as the City Park and Riversdale/King George community gardens in Saskatoon or they can be aimed at particular populations such as youth (Lautenschlager & Smith, 2007) as in the case of the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op and recent immigrants (Salvidar-Tanaka & Krasny, 2004).

The reasons cited for participation in community gardening include access to fresh foods, enjoyment of nature and health benefits (Armstrong, 2000). Community gardens seem to serve somewhat different purposes beyond food production for different populations (Salvidar-Tanaka & Krasny, 2004) including gentrification, cleaning up a neighbourhood, or community organizing. In fact, according to US-based research, gardens in low-income neighborhoods are four times as likely as non-low-income gardens to lead to other issues in the neighbourhood

being addressed as a result of the organizing facilitated through the community gardens (Armstrong, 2000).

The City of Saskatoon, through its Neighbourhood Services, supports the development of community gardens on public land if the primary interest in community gardening is community building. Interestingly the City will not provide a water source on land that is not City-owned which has created a challenge for the community gardens that exist on private or non-City land within Saskatoon. The Nutana Community Garden., for example, is administered by the Nutana Community Association but is located on private land within the neighbourhood. Fortunately, the Community Association was able to partner with a local business willing to allow access to their water supply for the community gardeners. A further challenge facing the Nutana Community Garden is that, because it is located on private land, the Community Association needs to confirm its ability to use the vacant lot every year. If a developer leases or buys the land, the community garden will have to move. Another community garden that that is not on City-owned land is the Varsity View Community Garden initiated in 2010 by a small group of community residents who had an existing relationship with Bishop Murray High School. The group proposed and received approval for a community garden on the school site including access to the school's water supply. Although it took significant work from a small number of community members, the community garden now has 89 plots and a waiting list. A large number of individuals with garden plots are first time or new gardeners and organizers say that a spirit of mentorship and learning is developing within the group.

The City of Saskatoon has also developed one allotment garden site in Saskatoon with 86 plots. Here the explicit focus is on food production rather than community building. Individuals or families who pay an annual fee for their plot are often experienced gardeners and produce a significant amount of food.

Benefits associated with community gardens include skills in food production and landscaping, improved access to vegetables and fruit (and thereby better nutrition), and physical activity. Research also shows that there are a number of other benefits depending on the population involved and the type of garden. These benefits include developing a sense of community, stronger social skills, learning how to do community organizing, reduced food costs, and learning about cooking and food preservation (Lautenschlager & Smith, 2007; Salvidar-Tanaka & Krasny, 2004). Salvidar-Tanaka and Krasny (2004) describe community gardens' particular importance for new immigrants in providing space to transform their neighbourhoods by introducing their cultural influences, thereby facilitating attachment to their new community. Twiss et al. (2003) explain that there are certain key elements to the success of community garden projects that should be taken into account when starting a new project that include developing local leadership and volunteer opportunities, partnerships with supportive organizations and opportunities for skill building for participants.

CHEP has played a key role in the development, support and facilitation of community gardens within Saskatoon since 1999. The community gardening programs offered through CHEP are open to the public and include workshops related to organic gardening, food preservation, and cooking. CHEP serves as a central hub for community gardening, supporting efforts to start

new community gardens and to maintain gardens where the needs of gardeners are high. CHEP also links interested gardeners with available gardens and organizes gardeners to provide feedback and recommendations to the City of Saskatoon regarding community gardening.

Along with the mentorship support to develop new community gardens offered by organizations such as CHEP, the development of a new community garden often requires some one-time financial support. In the case of the Varsity View Community Garden, for example, financial support was provided on a one-time basis from Affinity Credit Union and the Varsity View Community Association. The financial costs of maintaining a community garden are usually low, but in some cases there is an annual fee to gardeners. The Community Association may administer the fee or provide support through fundraising efforts and/or direct funds.

In the spring of 2010 a new opportunity to produce food within Saskatoon became available when the City adopted a new policy allowing non-profit organizations to utilize vacant City lots to maintain a garden. Currently there is only one such site and it is maintained by the Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre. Through the support of community members and the University of Saskatchewan, the Food Bank has planted potatoes and other vegetables that will be provided to people who access the Food Bank. Since there are many city-owned vacant lots, this initiative will likely expand in future years. One group that has expressed an interest in accessing City land for food production is We Are Many (WAM), a youth-run arts and environmental organization. WAM's goal is to build garlic self-sufficiency in Saskatoon within two years and then extend the project to other cities throughout Saskatchewan. They chose garlic because it has the potential to be successfully grown on easements and boulevards throughout Saskatoon in sufficient quantities to meet the demand of local grocery stores, the Farmers' Market, restaurants and cafes. Currently most of the garlic consumed in Saskatchewan is produced in China with significant detrimental impacts on the environment. A garlic planting bee was planned for the fall of 2010 in Saskatoon. Due to WAM's work the Provincial Legislature in Regina has agreed to produce garlic on site for its cafeteria.

Patio and rooftop gardens have become increasingly popular throughout North America over the past number of years. Rooted is an organization working to turn unused urban space into urban gardens, thereby contributing to food sustainability. It has already utilized sites on the University of Saskatchewan campus and community-based sites such as apartment buildings for patio and rooftop gardens. Escape Sports, a Saskatoon based outdoor sports store, has 6 "boxes" located on the roof of their store where they grow plants such as tomatoes and peppers that thrive in hot, sunny conditions. The store's owners plan to expand their rooftop gardening project into a greenhouse that would cover half the rooftop and produce even more vegetables that could be given away or sold. In an effort to encourage others to start producing vegetables locally, in their store they sell the specially designed boxes like they use for their project. There is also growing interest in developing living or green roofs which, although they do not always produce food, reduce storm-water runoff, increase energy efficiency and enhance the urban landscape. At present, there are not any fully developed living roofs in Saskatoon, but there are groups that have amended the concept to fit within existing opportunities.

Gardens established in schoolyards and integrated into the curriculum and food services of

participating schools are another interesting example of urban agriculture. Although they have not been extensively evaluated for their educational and nutritional benefits, school gardens have shown some benefits for the school and children who participate in them (Joshi, Azuma, & Feenstra, 2008; Robinson-O'Brien, Story, & Heim, 2009). They allow students in the school to become familiar with the challenges and the rewards of growing food, with the flavours of home-grown vegetables and fruit and, in many cases, with how to prepare the produce. In Saskatoon there are a number of schools partnered with agencies that provide students with an introduction to growing vegetables. For example, a Public Health Nurse with the Saskatoon Health Region works closely with students at St. John Bosco School to support them in planting in the spring, harvesting in fall as well as preparing and eating what they produce. With the development of the Varsity View Community Garden on Bishop Murray High School's site, the school has started to integrate a community gardening component into their curriculum. Little Green Thumbs Saskatchewan is a province-wide program begun in 2007. It is provided by Agriculture in the Classroom Saskatchewan (AITC – SK) and is sponsored by Heifer International, Environment Canada, the Ministry of Environment and others. Little Green Thumbs Saskatchewan aims to provide urban children with a connection to food production and the environment. Specifically it provides teachers with the basic resources to start growing food indoors, begin vermi-composting, as well as mentorship and support through teacher workshops. In Saskatoon, College Park, Father Robinson, Brunskill, St. Michael Community, St. Maria Goretti, Sutherland, St. Peter, and St. Dominic Schools have all participated in the program.

The Earthkeepers Program is a 5-credit program integrated into high school programming with the uniquely broad mandate of challenging students to learn how to lead sustainable lives within a community. In Saskatoon there is an Earthkeepers program at Aden Bowman High School incorporating food production on site. It involves 18 raised garden beds, half of which are managed by the students and half are rented to people in the surrounding community. There is also a food forest on site that has been developed and is maintained by Earthkeepers.

Most forms of local food production require support from various local organizations to succeed. Heifer International, although not directly involved in production, is one such organization that plays a vital role through financial and organizational support to a number of local food production efforts such as the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op and the Muskoday Organic Growers Co-op. The organizational mentoring support Heifer provides to develop the infrastructure needed to sustain the project is as important as their financial support. Affinity Credit Union in Saskatoon is another organization that provides financial support to projects involved in local production including CHEP Good Food Inc. The Saskatoon office of Oxfam Canada also provides support to local food efforts through their involvement with the Saskatoon Food Coalition and other organizations such as the Core Neighbourhood Youth Coop.

Footprint Design, a University of Saskatchewan engineering student group with an interest in environmental sustainability, provides a unique type of support for local food production in Saskatoon. At present it is working on designing and building a solar greenhouse using alternative building techniques. Once built, the intention is to give the greenhouse to Rooted,

another local group working on urban food production. With the knowledge gained from building this first greenhouse, Footprint Design plans to build and sell others as a source of student summer employment.

Food Security & Justice

The Saskatoon Food Charter recognizes food as a basic right in line with the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights to which Canada is a signatory. Under the UN Declaration food needs to be nutritious, affordable, safe, and available to everyone. But, food as a basic right needs to be more than recognized; it also requires action to this right fully realized. Although the following initiatives are working at different levels, all are working towards the fuller realization of food as a right within the Saskatoon region.

Immediate Needs: Emergency Food Responses

When discussing strategies to tackle issues of hunger, many people think of access to emergency food services. And, despite the fact that Canada's GDP has continued to grow over the past number of years, more Canadians than ever are accessing emergency food services or Food Banks across the country (Weimer, 2009). Food banks do not alleviate poverty, nor are they consistent with household and community food security as defined above. Nevertheless, it should be recognized that they serve an important need by assisting people to limit their immediate food insecurity. Saskatoon's largest emergency food organization is the Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre and one of their biggest challenges is providing nutritious food. The Public Health Nutritionists of Saskatchewan Working Group published "The Cost of Healthy Eating in Saskatchewan 2009: Impact on Food Security" which clearly shows the relatively high costs of purchasing nutritious foods and the resulting increased food insecurity faced by low-income citizens in Saskatchewan. So, with the high demand for food hampers and limited budgets, it is very difficult for the Food Bank to provide nutritious food. For example, they decided to provide 1 litre of milk to each child 17 years of age and under, as well as to pregnant and nursing women in their food hampers even though the cost represents nearly 10 per cent of their total operating budget.

Other emergency food resources in Saskatoon include the Friendship Inn, the Salvation Army, and the Saskatchewan Indian & Metis Friendship Centre meal programs, as well as the Saskatoon District Labour Council (SDLC) Snack Program. The goal of the Saskatchewan Indian & Metis Friendship Centre, which provides supper four days a week, is to provide as nutritious a meal as possible. And like the Food Bank, their greatest challenge is the additional cost of providing nutritious food within their limited budget. Funding for the meal program is temporary so there is no guarantee the program will continue despite growing demand. The SDLC has also seen an unfortunate growth in people accessing their Snack Program. Originally initiated by two school teachers for school-age children to maintain good nutrition during the summer months, the snack program offers lunch to children in four public parks. In recent years, the SDLC has expanded the program to include adults many of whom ask for leftover bread or other food items to supplement the food available in their households.

Cooking Together: Participatory Food Initiatives

Another approach to dealing with food insecurity as well as the social isolation faced by people living in poverty is the community kitchen concept. "Community kitchen" is a general term encompassing a variety of community-based cooking programs of which "collective kitchens" are a sub-group (Tarasuk & Reynolds, 1999). Collective kitchens (CKs) are "characterized by the pooling of resources and labour to produce large quantities of food" (Tarasuk & Reynolds, 1999, p. 13). Collective and community kitchens have grown and evolved and there are at least 2500 individual collective and community kitchens across the country (Engler-Stringer & Berenbaum, 2005; Engler-Stringer, 2005). One of the biggest mistakes made in discussions about community kitchens is the assumption that there is a standard model whereas they are actually quite diverse in order to meet the needs of each group of participants such as young mothers, homeless or under-housed men, or seniors living in various degrees of isolation. Community kitchens are a very good example of a place where (ideally) members control what they cook, when they cook, and how much they cook, whether they eat together, and whether they have a strong educational or community organization focus.

Community kitchens have both formal and informal aspects and have been shown to have many beneficial impacts, ranging from social, to learning, to food security and nutritional (Engler-Stringer & Berenbaum, 2006; Engler-Stringer & Berenbaum, 2007; Fano, Tyminski, & Flynn, 2004). They sometimes have financial and/or organizational support, yet they are also spaces where women (and to a lesser degree men) socialize, make friends and find a place in their community. Benefits are limited, however, when the participants are unable to meet regularly or to have enough food to meet the food security needs of everyone.

Within Saskatoon most collective kitchens are organized through three community partners (called the Collective Kitchen Partnership): the Saskatoon Community Clinic, Public Health Services in the Saskatoon Health Region, and CHEP Good Food Inc. The three partners provide leadership training workshops for people interested in leading different cooking groups. They fund start-up costs and provide other basic financial support for collective kitchens. The Partnership also supports a network of collective kitchen leaders so they can meet to discuss common issues, challenges, and strategies.

The Open Door Society is an organization that supports new immigrants and refugees to Saskatoon many of whom are living on very low incomes. When these immigrants and refugees are men arriving on their own and with little to no experience cooking, they must decide whether to eat heavily processed or unhealthy foods that are simple to prepare, or learn to cook nutritious foods. So, the Open Door Society supports collective kitchens within their "For Men Only" programming where men are taught about low-cost nutritious meals and how to cook them.

People interviewed for this study identified the lack of commercial or otherwise well-equipped kitchen facilities in order to host collective or community kitchens as an important barrier to food security for some very vulnerable populations in Saskatoon.

Naming the Issues: Research Initiatives

Although extensive research exists regarding the benefits of increased food security, there are components of the issue that require further exploration to clearly define the problem and reveal opportunities for action. For example, little work has been done regarding food security through a gender-based lens despite recognition that women are often at risk due to low household incomes. The Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence (PWHCE) is an organization whose goal is to improve the health status of Canadian women by conducting research on the social determinants of women's health. Fortunately the PWHCE is presently engaged in a study that includes gender-based analysis of policies related to food security and the differing impacts of these policies based on place of residence: urban, rural or remote. The research presents an opportunity to address a significant need.

Food Security and Health

Starting Young: Infant Feeding

There is significant research documenting the benefits of breastfeeding to the short and long-term health of both the infant and mother (Partyka, Whiting, Grunerud, Archibald, & Quennell, 2010). Moreover, breastfeeding is also recognized as a human right in Canada. Not surprisingly then, the Saskatoon Food Charter states that establishing healthy eating practices begins as early as birth through encouraging breastfeeding and there are a number of important initiatives. Throughout the province, the Ministry of Social Services provides pregnant or breastfeeding women on Social Assistance a $48/month dietary supplement to cover their additional nutritional needs. CHEP Good Food Inc has a program that provides vitamin D drops to low-income mothers who are committed to exclusive breastfeeding of their infants. Breastfeeding Matters, a group of community members and professionals, is involved in a number of initiatives intended to increase the number of infants being breastfed in Saskatoon. Breastfeeding Matters and the Saskatoon Health Region are presently working towards the West Winds Health Clinic in Saskatoon receiving the "Baby Friendly" designation, a first for Canada. The Baby Friendly Initiative is an international program of the World Health Organization and UNICEF intended to encourage breastfeeding within health care systems (World Health Organization, 2010).

But, for breastfeeding to be more broadly supported and accepted, the health benefits of breastfeeding must be more widely recognized and appropriate support for breastfeeding must be in place. For example, the Saskatoon Health Region provides lactation consultants throughout the region, but a number of women have expressed discomfort when accessing this service. Due to the very personal nature of breastfeeding, new mothers often want a trusting relationship with the lactation consultant, but there is limited opportunity to establish this. When services such as lactation consulting are hospital-based, there is a barrier for those women, perhaps from a visible minority, who may not want to give birth in a hospital. Another identified challenge to providing children with human milk is the lack of a human milk bank. For mothers who cannot produce any or enough milk to nourish their child, or for children without an available mother, formula is likely the only option. The success of the human milk bank in Vancouver provides a model for those activists in Saskatoon who want to see the establishment of one here.

Planning for Health: Food and the Built Environment

There is increasing international evidence suggesting that the environments in which people live, work, and play have an important role in determining their health (Li, Harmer, Cardinal, Bosworth, & Johnson-Shelton, 2009; Liese, Weis, Pluto, Smith, & Lawson, 2007), including obesity and dietary patterns among children (Sallis & Glanz, 2006; Townshend & Lake, 2009). Food environments specifically are increasingly being recognized as a critical determinant of community and population health (Glanz, Sallis, Saelens, & Frank, 2005; Kirk, Penney, & McHugh, 2009; Townshend & Lake, 2009). "The food environment can be broadly conceptualized to include any opportunity to obtain food. This definition of the food environment can include physical, socio-cultural, economic and policy factors at both micro- and macro-levels." (Townshend & Lake, 2009, p. 910) Food environments include the accessibility and availability to food as well as marketing and advertising of food and food products (Glanz et al., 2005).

The rising rate of obesity especially among low-income people is an explicit and increasingly critical example of food insecurity negatively impacting health. Traditional approaches to obesity intervention have focused on downstream (educational, behavioural, and pharmacological) interventions which have produced limited success to date (Drewnowski, 2005; Neff et al., 2009). For example, there is growing evidence suggesting there is little benefit in encouraging people to eat healthier food if the stores and restaurants they frequent do not offer healthy choices (Lake & Townshend, 2006). Other evidence indicates that families and individuals prefer community level interventions to target obesity in children as opposed to individual or family level interventions (Sallis & Glanz, 2006). These limitations and preferences highlight the importance of exploring the systemic and upstream influences on obesity such as the environments in which people live. And North American environments generally promote food that is packed with calories (energy-dense food) and offer little incentive for living an active lifestyle (Swinburn, Egger, & Raza, 1999). This is particularly true in neighbourhoods with low income populations and/or a high percentage of certain ethnic minorities (Cummins & Macintyre, 2006; Galvez et al., 2007).

In a systematic review of published literature examining how health disparities relate to built environments, research provided the strongest support for food stores (supermarkets instead of smaller grocery or convenience stores), places to exercise, and safety as potentially influential for disadvantaged groups (Lovasi, Hutson, Guerra, & Neckerman, 2009). In a 2001 study exploring access to food in Saskatoon's core neighbourhoods, the most significant factors that affected food buying patterns included: owning a vehicle, income, and store characteristics including price and convenience (Woods, 2002). A similar study in 2010 reports that the average Saskatoon resident does not have any supermarkets within walking distance of their home, but does have at least three fast food outlets within that same distance (Kershaw, Creighton, Markham, & Marko, 2010). The report indicates that Saskatoon has a food desert in the core and surrounding neighbourhoods. A "food desert" is an area in an affluent country in which "where affordable and healthy food is not available, but unhealthy and highly processed food is." (Caraher & Coveney, 2004, p. 593) The core neighbourhoods have not had a true grocery store in well over ten years.

For several years individuals and organizations active in the core tried to encourage a private corporation to set up a store in the area yet failed to convince them that the inner city was as good an investment as a suburban store. So the activists began working to develop their own community centre in the core called Station 20 West. It will house, among other community services, a medium-sized, full-service, not-for-profit grocery store called the Good Food Junction Co-operative. While waiting for the Good Food Junction to be operational, other community organizations have begun initiatives in an effort to address the increased health risks presented by the existing food desert in Saskatoon. For example, the Good Food Box program originally grew out of the need for vegetable and fruit access in the core neighbourhoods. More recently, SWITCH, a student-led health clinic, has started to operate a food store on Wednesday evenings out of the Westside Community Clinic on 20th Street that provides some basic foods (i.e. fruits, vegetables, milk, eggs, etc) at cost. The challenge facing SWITCH in doing this is that it is a health-clinic and does not have adequate storage for food. Furthermore, as SWITCH is a volunteer-run clinic, the food store is only able to operate one day a week. CHEP is also working to address the existing food desert through a number of their initiatives that have already been discussed. Another example of CHEP's work in this area is their work with a core neighbourhood gas station. The owner expressed an interest in providing a healthy alternative to the high fat, highly processed foods typical of gas stations, but struggled to consistently provide the fresh produce. The partnership with CHEP enables the owner to provide fresh produce at cost to anyone who wishes to buy it.

Human Impact: Food and the Natural Environment

The growing impact of global warming compounded by the effect of modern agricultural practices is changing the natural environment at an increasing rate. Although urban dwellers are somewhat sheltered from these changes, those involved in producing food and traditional practices of procuring food such as hunting are increasingly dealing with challenges. As a result there are a number of groups not only exploring how to adapt to these changes, but working towards limiting the negative impacts of modern agriculture through producing food in a sustainable manner.

High levels of environmental contaminants are being found in traditional foods in various regions across Canada, some of which originate from agriculture, e.g., pesticides. In Saskatchewan, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations is researching how healthy many of the traditional foods consumed by First Nations are. Furthermore, Elders and researchers have noted the changing migratory patterns of animals that have traditionally been reliable forms of food. Although this research is in its early stages, the question of chemicals and environmental contaminants is an important one when exploring the sustainability of producing food locally and mainstream agricultural practices.

Instituting Standards: Institutional Practices

As a major employer within Saskatoon and one with an explicit interest in health, the Saskatoon Health Region (SHR) wants to ensure that healthy food is available to its employees and in all SHR facilities and public programs such as Fitness, Food, Fun; Meals on Wheels; etc. To this

end the SHR has adopted its own Food Charter that sets out how it will enhance food security and has developed a document that outlines programs and projects that support its Charter. This document specifies desired outcomes, demonstrates where programs are in line with the Food Charter's objectives, and outlines opportunities to improve implementation within the SHR. For example, the Change Strategy document from 2009 outlines an initial target of "51% of food is healthy according to Canada's Food Guide" (Saskatoon Health Region, 2009, p. 2).

The SHR is a key partner with CHEP Good Food Inc in some of their community-based programs. It is also important to recognize the regulatory role that the SHR fulfills for businesses and events where food is available to the public, and the importance of its regulatory role to ensure food is safe for consumption. Guided by provincial standards such as the Provincial Public Eating Establishment Regulations, the SHR provides licences and regulations to food retailers and restaurateurs that are intended to ensure the safety of the public from food-borne illnesses. The SHR seems to be working towards becoming representative of the multitude of roles needed from public health professionals and others to contribute to building community food security, given that community food security covers economic, sociological and environmental health realms (Desjardins et al., 2002).

Food Security & Culture

Food provides people with much more than nutrition. Food brings people together in families and other kinship groups, across different communities (such as urban and rural), and across different cultures. Food serves as a common ground for people to find social connection and form community that nourishes beyond solely the physical. In this way, food serves to strengthen our communities.

People in the study talked about the importance of food and culture in developing the local food system. Initiatives mentioned under other categories such as farmers' markets, collective kitchens and community gardens are also pertinent here bringing people together around food and contributing to the culture of our communities. In fact, it can be argued that establishing a strong local food system is creating a new food culture, one that values not just the consumption of food, but also the process and impacts of food production.

Amy Jo Ehman, a Saskatoon writer, is trying to change the Saskatchewan food culture through her writing so that people value local ingredients even though they may cost more a require more effort to obtain than supermarket foods that come from far away. The work being done by Local Bounty to encourage chefs to explore the use of local ingredients is also contributing to changing food culture. Additionally, all of the chefs contacted for this report spoke about the importance of changing the food culture in Saskatoon as part of their focus on local ingredients. They were particularly concerned with shifts in recognizing the value and quality of local foods.

The dominant food culture seems to value quantity over quality, cost cutting wherever possible despite the consequences to people and the planet, and convenience above all else. While counteracting this dominant food culture is not usually the major objective of any of the

organizations or initiatives described in this report, many of the people we spoke to either discussed this challenge directly or at least alluded to it. Thus, food and culture are actually important elements in increasing community food security in Saskatoon through implementation of the Food Charter.

Multiculturalism and food security are also part of this section of the Food Charter. As mentioned above, the Open Door Society provides opportunities through its men's programming for immigrant and refugee men to come together, support each other, and learn to cook. This program not only provides an opportunity for men to learn to cook healthy, affordable food, but also to learn about different cultures through the food they eat. Furthermore, this process of cooking together gives the men an opportunity to build relationships that aim to provide support outside of the program. The Society also has food education programs for immigrant and refugee women, providing them with nutrition information on supermarket foods with which they are not familiar. The women may assume that if the product promotion makes it appear nutritious, then it must be nutritious. The Open Door Society is able to provide information regarding the actual nutritional limitations of heavily processed foods, thereby encouraging healthy eating in the women's families.

Food plays a significant role in the yearly Folk Festival providing Saskatonians the opportunity to learn about each other's cultures through the sharing of food. The reciprocal relationships that form out of this event allow new bonds to form within and across the communities that form Saskatoon.

At a conference held by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations in 2008, delegates identified the teaching of traditional food procurement and preparation practices to First Nations people as a priority. These practices are at risk of being lost because residential schools in the past and increasing urbanization in the present have stripped many First Nations people of their cultural heritage. Furthermore, there was recognition that the conditions of hunting, trapping and gathering have changed and that new skills are needed to procure traditional foods. Opportunities to learn ways to prepare traditional foods, as well as community conversations about hunting and gathering in a modern context are serving to strengthen community and the connections among people.

Food Security & Globalization

The final section of the Saskatoon Food Charter describes the importance of globalization and international agreements for food security locally and globally. If food security is the overall goal, not just for Saskatoon but for all communities, then the practices and policies we implement to secure our own food system must be sustainable and equitable for all. In our current food system, "two-thirds of fruits and vegetables consumed in Canada are imported from 150 countries" (Canadian Cooperative Association, 2008, p. 1). As such, Canada is heavily reliant on the global food system. But, are relations between Canada and its trading partners in that food system sustainable and equitable? Equity within food systems means that trade in food should value the needs of people and the environment in other countries where our food is grown. The inequity of our food system is succinctly captured by the Canadian Community

Economic Development Network, "Canadians enjoy the second cheapest prices for food in the world. Cheap food to the consumer however, also represents a toll on the environment and an exploitation of labour in southern countries where standards are lower." (Edible Strategies Ent. Ltd., 2007, p. 13). Although international trade agreements play a significant role in structuring our food system, there are opportunities at the local level for civic governments, local citizens and institutions to design and support a local, sustainable food system.

Sleight of Hand: Food and Trade

One of the major shifts needed in Canada is in our belief that cheaper food is better for our food security. As mentioned above, Canadians enjoy relatively cheap prices for food, and this is largely a result of international agreements that allow Canadians to benefit from the lower wages paid to workers in foreign countries and in the exploitation of their natural resources. Roberts (2008) describes the present food system and its inequitable benefit to Northern countries; "technology and infrastructure allow Northern farmers to sell cheap grains, meats and dairy products into Southern markets; low-cost imported food keeps poorly paid Southern factory workers alive; a continuous flow of fresh recruits from the countryside to work in Southern factories keeps Southern wages low after workers lost their farms to competition from cheap food imports" (p. 116). Although this would appear to provide increased food security to Canadians through reduced food costs, the long-term sustainability of our own food system, as well as the food systems of those foreign countries, are compromised by these inequitable relationships. Change requires that Canadian and international food systems be socially and ecologically just for all.

The National Farmers' Union is studying how provincial and federal agriculture policies have structured our present export-oriented system. It argues that we need to counterbalance this system by strengthening the local food system and supporting small and medium scale producers whose production isn't export driven. The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) has also expressed an overall interest in limiting the distance between producers and consumers in an effort to increase sustainability of the systems we operate in, as well as to encourage stronger human relationships between producers and consumers. Regarding food security, the CLC argues that this means questioning the present corporate control of the food system, supporting an alternate system that ensures fair labour practices, and moving toward placing power and control in the hands of citizens, not corporate entities.

Ensuring that our food practices do not undermine the food security of other food systems and further inequitable trade practices is complex. However, there are simple steps that citizens and communities can take towards encouraging more equitable food relationships. Dr. Lori Hanson at the University of Saskatchewan has a long history of research related to community building and fair trade, particularly in Nicaragua. She argues that efforts to support local food production in any region or country place power in the hands of people, as opposed to our current system that is structured to take power away. Fair Trade, as defined by the Fairtrade Labeling Organizations International (FLO) is "an alternative approach to conventional trade and is based on a partnership between producers and consumers" (Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International, 2010). Although not explicitly tied to food security, it is designed to address issues

of sustainability, equity and poverty. Nancy Allan, who completed her Master's thesis on Fair Trade and operates a small home-based Fair Trade business in Saskatoon, discusses the need for Canadians to move away from the mentality that "cheaper is better," and acknowledge the power we have as consumers to reform the present economic system. Purchasing Fair Trade products offers one way to ensure consumer power is working towards strengthening a system that values equity and sustainability and that producers receive a fair price for their products.

Another impact of globalization on local producers has been the increasing presence of lower cost product on the market, driving down the value of the product. This has resulted in increasingly difficult economic situations for local farmers and producers to survive. In an effort to respond to this, there has been a growing movement of domestic fair trade initiatives. Similar in principle to Fair Trade as described above, domestic fair trade supports small-scale, family farming throughout North America through ensuring that local producers receive a fair price for their product while guaranteeing fair pay for farm workers and environmentally sustainable farming practices. The Farmer Direct Co-operative Ltd. (FDC), located in Regina was the first business in North America to receive the domestic fair trade certification, as well as organic certification.

Other Themes

Through our discussions with local partners involved in supporting the Saskatoon Food Charter, it became clear that there were other organizations and projects that were also supporting the Charter that did not easily fit in the five core areas.

Teach a Man to Fish: Education

An important component of any work that involves creating change requires an educational component with the public and interested citizens. A number of the organizations already discussed are involved in educational work. For example, We Are Many (WAM) is working on a water-related campaign that advocates for free tap water availability at Saskatoon community events to bring attention to the harms of bottled water on water security. WAM has already had significant success at eliminating bottled water at community events. For example, it hosted its own festival in 2008 with nearly 15,000 people in attendance and no bottled water was available. In 2010 WAM was successful in advocating for tap water availability at the Saskatoon Children's Festival, Jazz Festival and Fringe Festival.

On the University campus, Better than Bottled, a University of Saskatchewan student initiative is working towards implementing sustainable water practices on campus. In order to increase student, faculty, and staff access to clean, safe, public drinking water while on campus, Better than Bottled is working towards the expansion of water fountains and fill stations on campus. It is also working towards limiting, or phasing out the sale of bottled water on the University campuses (a movement that is growing on campuses across Canada), and instead move towards greater access to clean, safe, public drinking water. The group is making progress at drawing attention to the importance of water security, although the cost of installing new water fountains

or fill stations may be significant. The timing of this initiative is particularly important given the barriers to eliminating bottled water on campus, including the contract the University has with Coca-Cola (Dasani bottled water). This contract ended in 2010, but negotiations between the University and Coca-Cola are still on-going at this time (April, 2011). While the negotiations take place, Coca-Cola continues to have exclusive rights to supply cold beverages (excluding dairy and alcohol) on the University of Saskatchewan campus.

Another example of education on the food system is the Kids Kitchen program CHEP has been offering in Catholic Community Schools in partnership with the Catholic Schools Foundation. Additionally, the Collective Kitchen Partnership has been offering a "Grub and Gab" series for a few years where participants in CHEP programming eat a meal together and invite a guest speaker to discuss a food-related topic.

A group called Transition Saskatoon is focused in part on providing skills for a post-petroleum focused world. It is part of a worldwide movement called Transition Towns. One of the focuses of Transition Saskatoon is on food skills. Thus far, it has held a cheese-making workshop and plans to hold workshops on various food preservation skills.

Turning the Tide (R)evolutionary Media is a local small business engaged in education for improved local food security. Turning the Tide is an alternative bookstore and video rental store whose goal is to raise awareness about a number of issues, including food security, by selling books, and renting out films and documentaries on related topics. Furthermore, Turning the Tide sponsors a number of local events related to food security and partners with organizations working towards increased food security, including CHEP Good Food Inc and Rooted.

Last and certainly not least is the work done by the Saskatoon Food Coalition providing information on the food system to the public through events, displays, and flyers.

FOOD SECURITY ELSEWHERE – A BRIEF REVIEW

In order to explore how to further support and implement the Saskatoon Food Charter it is worthwhile to look to how other jurisdictions are confronting these issues. Mirroring the section above, this brief review is separated into the five principles of the Charter and explores the experiences of other centres in supporting the five principles of the Charter, potential projects for Saskatoon partners to grow into, and challenges in meeting these five principles.

Food Security & Production

Urban Production

Urban areas across the country could support thousands of gardens as they did during the First and Second World Wars and the Great Depression. Vacant lots, rooftops, parts of schoolyards, unused areas of parks, and other empty urban lands such as adjacent to industrial areas, all could

be converted to vegetable gardens that could potentially provide for significant amounts of the produce needs of urban dwellers. Cities like Havana already produce up to 80% of urban vegetable and fruit needs within the boundaries of the city, and Canadian cities could follow the Cuban example (Altieri et al., 1999). While growing seasons in Canada are a fraction of what they are in Cuba, there is no reason why cities could not produce a very significant proportion of their own produce needs (Armstrong, 2000).

In fact, according to Mariola (2008) "a rise in the number of urban and community gardens would go a longer way towards a sustainable and resilient agrifood system than an increase in the number of farmers' markets, for it would diminish the presence of market relations in food consumption and shorten the distance between producer and consumer to the shortest possible path" (p.195). This argument implies greater eater/consumer and urban control over food systems, but it does not take into account that under current circumstances for many people (especially people working low-wage jobs) community gardening is inaccessible. Currently, community gardening is accessible to people who have the time, skills, and self-efficacy to become engaged. Under changed economic circumstances where living wage work and social services support for families are available, community gardening could lead to greater social equality. Low socioeconomic status people and other marginalized groups have the potential for greater social power within a system that focuses more energy on community gardens and other forms of urban agriculture. It is also important to note that large-scale community gardens would also need to be accompanied by support for food preservation and storage facilities and equipment that may not be currently accessible to many people, especially low-income, urban people.

In order to overcome some of the barriers presented by community gardening, more direct involvement from government could serve to increase the availability and accessibility of community gardens. As identified in the CHEP Good Food Inc report on Community Gardening, in Edmonton, Alberta, the City has a designated community resource coordinator responsible for community gardens who facilitates the development of new community gardens and works with the local Community Garden Network. Although CHEP is a well-established community partner that fulfills much of the role described in the report, a more consistent source of funding for this role would further support the development of new community gardens throughout the City (CHEP Good Food Inc., 2009).

It should also be noted that throughout the literature and in other jurisdictions, the use of City-owned land for food production is more strongly encouraged than in Saskatoon. Muller, Tagtow, Roberts and MacDougall (2009) report that "local governments are responding [to the rising interest in community gardens] by evaluating their zoning and land use policies to help ease any existing restrictions to grow and sell food from urban gardens and farms" (p. 231). For example, in Manitoba the Landless Farmers' Collective (LFC) has partnered with the City of Winnipeg to produce fruits and vegetables on City land. This partnership began in 2008 and has been entered into with such enthusiasm that land surrounding one of Winnipeg's largest recreation buildings is now farmed by the LFC (Heinrichs, 2010). The City of Saskatoon appears to have begun to explore the possibilities of city-owned land being utilized for gardening. With the new policy passed by the City in the spring of 2010, not-for-profit

organizations are able to produce vegetables on city-owned vacant lots. The District of Saanich in BC has gone one step further by offering incentives to developers who create community gardens on their site in an effort to increase community gardens on privately owned land (Enns, Rose, de Vries, & Hayes, 2008).

Mariola (2008), argues that "local food systems remain embedded in the same environmentally unsustainable industrial infrastructure as long distance foods, but the fault(line) lies with industrialism itself, not simply the food system" (p. 196). Modeling needs to be done to explore a series of food system variables through holistic energy measurement including the type of fuel used in transport vehicles, greater railway transport, distribution companies that would pick food up at individual farms and bring it to a central location, local food stores that would specialize in regional products, and the energy consequences of greater food preservation.

Mariola (2008) provides a series of examples for the problems of the current 'local food system' design. He describes one study that modeled the fuel costs for transportation and greenhouse gas emissions for three different hypothetical food systems in Iowa to look at their relative contributions to climate change (Pirog, 2001). The authors modeled a 'conventional' system most like the one that is currently dominant using national supply chains and large semi-trailer trucks for transport, a 'regional' system using existing Iowa infrastructure where a cooperating network of Iowa farmers would supply produce to Iowa retailers and wholesalers using large semi-trailer and mid-size trucks, and a 'local' system where farmers would use small light trucks to market directly to consumers through CSA projects, farmers' markets and other local institutions. Their data showed that while the 'local' system model would significantly reduce fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions over the 'conventional' model system, the 'regional' model system used the least fuel and contributed the least to pollution, due to its use of larger and fewer trucks on the road, and the pooling of farmer produce. Locally, Dr. Joann Jaffe, a researcher from the University of Regina, is working with some computer scientists to determine the possibilities of conducting research on the local food system in Saskatchewan using computer modeling similar to the modeling described in the study above.

Mariola's work speaks to a commonly identified need among retailers, restauranteurs, and local producers, namely, a more developed local infrastructure. Specifically, Roberts (2008) describes the need for both hard and soft infrastructure. "Hard infrastructure includes local warehouses, canners, freezers, brewers, and slaughterhouses…Soft infrastructure includes listservs/mailing lists, food e-Bays, food policy councils that link farmers, customers and well-wishers" (p. 27).

Chefs' procurement programs, local food guides and local food tourism initiatives all play a role in educating the public about small-scale farming. Furthermore they encourage people to develop relationships with food producers with the intention of contributing to a shift in public perception of the importance of local farmers and local food. In Saskatchewan, Local Bounty (2009) (described above) connects chefs with Saskatchewan farmers, encourages them to use Saskatchewan products in their restaurants, and thereby encourages the restaurant-frequenting public to buy those same products. Local food guides in other communities are published by a government agency or sometimes by a university extension division and list local producers, what they produce and the methods they use (pesticide-free, etc). Saskatchewan, or more locally

Saskatoon, could benefit from a local food guide. In addition, local food tourism organizations across Canada and the US offer farm tours where people pay to visit a farm, taste its products, and learn about steps farms are taking to be sustainable in their production. There is potential for this type of tourism in Saskatchewan.

An approach that could be useful in facilitating the transition of small farms into sustainable enterprises—at the same time educating large institutions about the importance of food system sustainability—is the example shown by Local Food Plus (2009) in Toronto. Local Food Plus is a certifying organization for farms located within a defined region around Toronto, but which is very different from conventional organic certification (Friedmann, 2007). Rather than setting out specific criteria farmers have to fulfill from the beginning in order to be certified, the certification is a continuous improvement model with requirements for biodiversity, labour, animal welfare and energy use that increase yearly. The certifying body is a non-profit organization that provides marketing support for certified farmers, and educates the public about sustainable farming. According to research conducted by Higgins, Dibden, and Cocklin (2008), "certification schemes can play an important role in the development of alternative agrifood networks particularly where government funding to cover the costs of training and auditing is involved" (p. 25). Saskatoon could benefit from starting a Local Food Plus chapter which would begin to certify farms located near the city and that meet required criteria.

Similar in intent to certification schemes like Local Food Plus, is a process of labelling food with geographic indicators to support local production. According to the Canadian Community Economic Development Network, "geographic indicators protect locally produced products that show very specific origin." Although widely used and successful within European food systems, geographic indicators are a relatively new concept in Canada. Thus far only the Government of Quebec has passed a bill to establish a system similar to geographic indicators, but use of the system is reported to be limited to date (Edible Strategies Ent. Ltd., 2007). Many Canadians have expressed an interest in having product information and labelling that is more specific than what is currently available, i.e., just the country of origin (Infact Research and Consulting Inc., 2008), and geographic indicators would serve this purpose.

Supporting Production

One of the challenges underlying sustainable local production is the lack of support for local producers. This lack of support includes the high costs of entering farming, lack of available mentorship programs, limited processing facilities for small and medium scale producers, and a lack of a consistent market for producers. There are a variety of creative initiatives that are working to increase the support for new and established producers. In California a group of public and private grant makers formed a group called the Funders for Sustainable Food Systems (FSFS) that provides funding for projects that aim to increase access to locally-produced healthy food (Edible Strategies Ent. Ltd., 2007). New farmers can access grants such as those offered by FSFS to assist in covering some of their start-up costs. In Ontario, a tool to assist new farmers in establishing themselves is FarmLINK.net, a website that aims to bring "together new farmers who are looking for land or mentorship with farm owners who have land available or expertise to share" (FarmLINK.net, 2010). Closely linked to FarmLINK.net, is an

organization called FarmStart that offers an incubator program. The New Farms Incubator Program is based on a similar program in Vermont, USA that is intended to encourage and support new farmers, as well as explore new, alternative, and innovative business ideas (FarmStart, 2010). Also based in Ontario, Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training (CRAFT) provides opportunities for people to apprentice as local organic farmers with the objective of increasing organic farming within Ontario.

Although apprenticeship arrangements do exist in Saskatchewan (see the Little Urban Garden CSA experience above), they appear to be informal and there are limited organizations working to facilitate connections for people interested in farming or producing locally. One such example includes EarthCare Connections based in Humboldt, SK. Closely linked with Genesis Land Conservancy, these organizations work to support new farmers through holding land in trust for sustainable agriculture as well as supporting new farmers to connect with established farmers.

Efforts to expand a consistent market for local producers also serve to increase local production and ensure a consistent livelihood for local producers. Included in these efforts are practices such as increasing institutional procurement as seen in Nova Scotia where a government program encourages provincial health care and justice institutions to purchase food form local sources: "the program currently gets 90% of processed dairy products such as butter and yogurt, 60% of fresh produce and up to 80% of fresh produce from storage, and 60% of beef, chicken and pork from local sources" (Canadian Cooperative Association, 2008, p. 6). The City of Toronto has a similar program whereby relevant municipal departments strive to purchase 50% of their food from local producers (Canadian Cooperative Association, 2008). Although the Saskatoon Health Region's food charter is a sign of moving this direction, a great opportunity exists for many other government institutions to support local producers through procurement initiatives.

Food Security & Justice

Recently, a study was conducted in Toronto that pointed to what some community organizations already feared, that programs such as community kitchens and community gardening do not reach people who are most vulnerable to food insecurity (Kirkpatrick & Tarasuk, 2009). The authors found that rates of usage of community-based food programs was extremely low amongst people in Toronto living below Canada's Low-Income Cut-Off, and they concluded that the programs are not reaching those who would most benefit from them. This limited reach is likely because of life circumstances and other factors that make participation difficult under very challenging financial circumstances. Other research specifically on Good Food Box programs supports this conclusion (Johnston & Baker, 2005). Kirkpatrick and Tarasuk (2009) stated that while rates of community-based food program participation was low, "the use of other resource augmentation strategies such as delaying payments of bills or rent and the termination of telephone and other services was relatively common. This is worrisome given that such strategies can only compound the vulnerability of food insecure families by causing them to incur debts, risk eviction, exhaust social support networks and become more socially isolated" (p. 138).

Overall, there is significant literature pointing to the problem of lack of participation in community food security initiatives such as community-supported agriculture, farmers' markets and other programs mentioned above by the most vulnerable members of society (Allen, 2008; Jarosz, 2008). White, middle-class people are generally overly represented as participants. These studies confirm the limits of population-based health interventions that do not build in sensitivity to the needs of the most vulnerable: "it is important to recognize that though a rising tide may lift all boats, and population-based public health interventions may improve conditions for all, they can simultaneously *increase* health disparities" (Neff et al., 2009, p. 286). Authors argue that, in order to truly address food insecurity, significant policy changes need to be made at various levels of government.

The literature addressing this issue reports two common strategies that are pursued by municipalities. One strategy is to ensure that farmers' markets are geographically accessible to vulnerable members of society. In Winnipeg this has meant locating the farmers' market in the North End of the city, a lower income area of the city. Similarly, Saskatoon's farmers' market is located on the edge of the Riversdale neighbourhood, one of Saskatoon's core low-income neighbourhoods. In fact research has shown increased sustainability of farmers' markets if they are located on the edges of low-income neighbourhoods where they are seen as accessible to people of all incomes (Shak, Mikkelsen, & Chehimi, 2010). Although this strategy does not address all the barriers present to low-income people accessing farmers' markets, it is an effective strategy for addressing some transportation challenges. A second strategy that was recently implemented with great success is the use of food vouchers to access the farmers' markets in BC, as mentioned above. Although this project was not extended beyond its pilot phase, it was extremely successful and well-received by participants and market vendors alike. It has significant potential to increase accessibility to farmers' markets as well as support local farmers.

Food deserts, as experienced in the core neighbourhoods of Saskatoon, present further barriers to accessing healthy, nutritious food. In False Creek North in Vancouver, City of Vancouver planners ensured residents had access to food shopping within walking distance through the allocation of retail space specifically for a grocery store (Enns et al., 2008). Most community or development plans merely allocate land for retail use with no specific retail plan. In the US city of Philadelphia, another interesting program called the Fresh Food Financing initiative has been undertaken to provide access to capital to grocery stores willing to open in low-income inner city neighbourhoods. Further US federal funding for a similar initiative has been recently provided for grocery stores with a desire to open in food desert neighbourhoods across the United States.

To overcome these barriers and others that exist in accessing local food, it is essential that conversations occur regarding the role of a sustainable food system within society. Within these conversations efforts must be made to ensure that the work to develop a sustainable food system is conducted in a democratic and inclusive manner. Numerous authors have expressed concern about the language used in discussing local food systems, about shifts in food activism, and about who is being excluded from discussions (Allen, 2008; Harrison, 2008; Roff, 2007; Selfa & Qazi, 2005). First, Selfa and Qazi (2005) found that, not only did producers and consumers define 'local' differently, but there were also significant differences in interpretation

of the term within each group. Depending on the group the authors were interviewing, different markers of "local" were used: rationality, provincial/state defined boundaries, and particular geographical landmarks. As a result, the authors highlighted the importance of avoiding assumptions, but instead taking care with the language used to avoid misinterpretation.

Allen (2008) cautions those involved in studying the food system and presenting alternatives to the current one:

> alternative agrifood efforts may only create marginal, safe spaces for the privileged that may simply serve as a bleeder valve for the dominant agrifood system. Privileged people may participate and be "protected," and therefore fail to agitate for a better food system, leaving the vast majority of the world's population to cope with the problems wrought by the conventional agrifood system. (p. 159).

She argues that there needs to be an explicit focus on social justice, including justice for women and other vulnerable groups including workers in the industrial food system. The latter often live in poverty, have dangerous working conditions and, depending on their legal status, may not be protected by Canadian law. In this way, those who are most marginalized in society can be included in food system activism (Allen, 2008).

Roff (2007) and Harrison (2008) both express concern about the 'neoliberalization' of food activism. By this they mean shifting "the responsibility for social reforms from the state and manufacturers to individual consumers, bringing with it important social justice implications" (Roff, 2007, p. 511). For Roff, current food activism often has a significant focus on consumer choice which simply "opens new spaces for profit without seriously threatening contemporary market structures or agro-ecological practices" (p.511). Often the new spaces are for convenience and processed foods while what is needed for healthy people and environments are fewer convenience and processed foods and, indeed, fewer food products available overall.

Roff (2007) explains that, at least in North America, protests and demonstrations over the injustices of the current food system have been replaced by encouraging individuals to choose more environmentally friendly or more justice-oriented approaches to food and agriculture. While encouraging consumers to make better choices is one piece of food activism, Roff argues that the market cannot change the way the market operates and by uncritically adopting neoliberal ideologies current movements risk reproducing the structures they seek to change. The author explains that without a broader societal focus to food activism we miss how many social problems are very much linked to the problems with the food system, including the deskilling of labour, the lack of living wages for many, and longer work days. When we focus on individual choice we lose the opportunity to see those links. Therefore, Roff argues that a critical challenge facing alternative food movements is how to forge new identities that allow people to see themselves as more than individuals but as members of a collective society. This is where the collective work of groups such as Food Policy Councils or producer associations can have a significant impact, where people can learn from each other and recognize their collective power.

Food Security & Health

As mentioned above, food insecurity is detrimental to health. While strengthening a local food system can increase community food security, preliminary research has also shown health benefits to eating primarily locally produced foods, largely due to increased reliance on vegetables and fruit, at least during the Summer and Fall seasons, and decreased consumption of heavily processed foods (Rose et al., 2008). This same research as well as dietetics' professional organizations (Gerald & Harmon, 2007; Webber & Dollahite, 2008) have recommended that nutrition and public health officials educate themselves about the local food system in order to facilitate promoting healthy sustainable food choices.

Hamm (2008) argues that it is increasingly clear that public health dietary guidelines cannot be met without a simultaneous focus on sustainable agriculture and food production. He talks about the importance of diverse family farms, sustainable farming practices, and the linking of viable rural and urban communities as vital to public health. He explains that food choice need to be triaged using three questions: "(1) Can it be sourced locally? (2) If not, can a local substitute suffice? (3) If not, can a more distant source be used that incorporates the same environmental, social, and economic traits desired in the local?" (p. 174). What is most fascinating and unusual about Hamm's (2008) argument is the link he makes between the development of sustainable agriculture, sustainable rural communities and diets that meet dietary guidelines for public health. In other words, shifting from a focus on the food supply to a focus on enhancing sustainability of the food system with greater localization of the food source provides a myriad of opportunities linking the realms of public health, sustainable agriculture, environmental stewardship, and economic development.

One of the challenges when exploring ways to address food insecurity is that it crosses numerous professional and disciplinary boundaries, most obviously beyond public health into agriculture. When asked about their focus, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture stated that their present focus is on agriculture as a commodity for export, although they are aware of the growing interest in local food. MacRae and the Toronto Food Policy Council (1999) argue that this commodity focus is a problem for the Canadian food and agriculture system; "policy is developed along commodity lines, not for food systems." (p. 188). Muller et al. (2009) argue that public health should be the driving force behind food system policy; "of the myriad of policies that impact food systems, very few have an explicit objective of improving the public's health"(p. 226), and that food policy councils are "perhaps the most effective method for initiating comprehensive food system policy enhancements" (p. 237). MacRae and the Toronto Food Policy Council (1999) explain that responsibilities for the various aspects of the food system are contained within separate departments that cause them to be "fragmented, so the negative consequences for other policy areas and jurisdictions of an intervention are not necessarily well thought through" (p. 189). The argument is that to have a coherent, healthy, environmentally sustainable food system in Canada a new policy-making process should occur whereby we begin by setting a large scale policy framework consistent with human and environmental health, and from there develop more specific policies towards the food system that are in line with the larger policy framework (MacRae & Toronto Food Policy Council, 1999). The authors describe this as applying "systems thinking to the analysis of problems and

design of solutions". Interestingly, the UK government has recently published a document that advocates for something quite similar to MacRae and the Toronto Food Policy Council; although in the case of the UK they are specifically focusing on negative environmental impacts associated with the current food system approach (The Strategy Unit, 2008).

MacRae and the Toronto Food Policy Council (1999) explain that in order to have a socially and environmentally responsible food policy system in Canada, the policy-making process must be opened up to include people not traditionally involved in this type of process (similar to the 1970s People's Food Commission and the current People's Food Policy Project). Groups like small family farmers, environmentalists, rural advocates, and low-income urbanites should be included. Specifically, they argue that the model of the multisectoral municipal or regional food policy council (of which they are a prime example) could be instrumental to the type of policy-making they advocate (MacRae & Toronto Food Policy Council, 1999). These types of food policy councils, because of their work at the local or regional level, and because of their inclusion of non-traditional voices, bring important perspectives and resources for generating and implementing policy (Muller et al., 2009).

Food Secure Saskatchewan (FSS) is one local organization that is focused on these discussions across professional and disciplinary lines. Food policy councils and other organizations similar to FSS face challenges to funding, staffing and government support (Muller et al., 2009). There are a few examples of organizations who have managed to overcome some of these barriers, including Food Matters Manitoba (an organization with a similar mandate to FSS) that serves as a coalition of local food organizations that have proven essential to the work of increasing food security throughout Manitoba. The Toronto Food Policy Council represents another positive example of how policy councils can broaden the traditional approach to food policy, and have even successfully made agricultural policy a municipal issue (Friedmann, 2007).

Food Security & Culture

As stated above, the work of strengthening the local food system needs to involve a truly diverse group of people and interests. This should not be limited to health or social service professionals and those actively involved in production, but also those interested in entering production and populations facing increased vulnerability. As noted in our overview of programs and organizations involved in food security, there are a number of programs and organizations working with new immigrants and refugees to increase their food security. The potential to expand these programs into further food security efforts is great. Although organizations such as the International Women of Saskatoon have partnered with CHEP and the Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre in the past, there are other examples of new immigrants and refugees efforts to increase food security in across North America. Similar to the programs that are presently organized by the Open Door Society and the International Women of Saskatoon, community farms or gardens can serve to bridge cultural differences, develop new skills, build confidence, and develop communities for newcomers to Saskatoon. If fostered, these gardens could even serve as a source of income for newcomers, some of whom face limited employment opportunities when initially arriving in Canada.

Throughout the world indigenous people face an increased risk of food insecurity and Canada is no exception (Kuhnlein et al., 2006). Despite, and perhaps because of this increased risk, many indigenous Canadians have a wealth of knowledge regarding sustainable food production and procurement within Canada that local food systems can learn from. According to Kuhnlein et al. (2006) this knowledge is often overlooked and undervalued despite the great value it can have for the health of industrialized countries. A study conducted by Kuhnlein et al. (2006) provides an extensive list of intervention ideas from Indigenous Peoples' throughout the world regarding improving food systems for health. These ideas include everything from embracing traditional food strategies of accessing wild plant/animals to general community projects including learning from elders integrating traditional food knowledge across disciplines. The involvement of those communities who face increased food insecurity in developing strategies to address shortcomings of the food system is essential if the inequities of the food system are to be truly addressed.

Food Security & Globalization

As discussed above, the challenge for local governments in addressing globalization within a food security context is that the majority of international trade agreements are signed by the federal government. Although international trade agreements are out of the jurisdiction of municipal and local governments, there are creative ways that local governments can start to work towards more sustainable and equitable practices. For example, Vancouver has signed an Ethical Purchasing Policy that "demonstrates [the City of Vancouver's] commitment to sustainability by seeking to ensure safe and healthy workplaces for the people who make products for the City of Vancouver" (City of Vancouver, 2005, p. 1). Although not specifically focused on food security issues, the Ethical Purchasing Policy is a step in the direction of developing sustainable and equitable relationships in the international market.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Articulated throughout this report are challenges facing further implementation of the Saskatoon Food Charter, as well as opportunities within current implementation efforts. The diversity of organizations and groups working towards the principles articulated in the Saskatoon Food Charter provide many examples of how local efforts can truly impact a global problem. Furthermore, the multiplicity of groups involved in strengthening local food security provides many opportunities for citizens to be involved in an equally diverse number of ways. However, the challenges facing further implementation of the Saskatoon Food Charter are real, and without a concerted effort and coming together of diverse groups and organizations, those challenges can seem overwhelming. What follows is an effort to break down the many possible areas for action into a strategic agenda for action. The recommendations presented are not intended to be exhaustive in scope, but are rather concepts and ideas that resonated throughout discussions with local groups and organizations, and within the literature reviewed. These recommendations are presented in a successive manner, but are intended to build synergistically on the accomplishments of one another. Where it seems logical, local groups or organizations are also identified that are strategically located to play a key role in implementing the recommendation.

Immediate Recommendations (within 1-2 years)

- *Conduct a Local Food Assessment.* Although there is a small body of Saskatoon-based research indicating the need for increased food security and outlining potential strategies to increase local food security, a local food assessment can serve to develop local indicators of need and assist in strategically implementing initiatives to increase food security. The Provincial Health Services Authority in British Columbia has developed a publicly available Community Food Assessment Guide (see http://www.phsa.ca) that has been implemented with great success. The goal of the local food assessment is not only to develop a community-centred action plan, but also to engage community partners who will be essential to acting on the identified strategies. The City of Saskatoon can serve as a key player in bringing various stakeholders together to conduct a Saskatoon focused food assessment.

- *City Land for Growing.* The policy the City of Saskatoon passed in the spring of 2010 expanding food production on vacant city lots is a great first step in increasing local food production. Other opportunities include utilizing the property surrounding city-owned buildings and facilities for growing fruit trees and other food and increasing use of boulevards and easements for food production. There are local community groups interested in planting and producing food on these sites. At present the City already maintains gardens surrounding city-owned buildings, and there are significant opportunities to integrate food production into the primarily aesthetic gardens, and the food could be utilized by local organizations and City facilities.

- *City of Saskatoon Food Directory.* As mentioned above, the Saskatchewan Organic Directorate maintains a province-wide directory of organic and natural food production (see http://www.organicfarmdirectory.ca/). Many local governments across Canada have taken first steps in supporting local food production by funding or producing a guide for citizens and visitors as to where to access local food suppliers. Prince George and the City of Richmond are prime examples of where directories have expanded to include full-scale public education campaigns aiming to increase support for local food production (Enns et al., 2008).

- *Food Charter Animator with the City of Saskatoon.* Given the potential role the City of Saskatoon can play in increasing local food security, and the number of recommendations outlined in this report, a designated position to oversee the fuller implementation of the food charter would strengthen the City's ability to implement new projects and policies that increase food security. A City of Saskatoon position whose mandate will be to work towards comprehensive food policy for the city, would improve the City's capacity to improve local food security and be a first step in implementing a number of the listed recommendations.

- *School Opportunities.* The school boards and many individual schools in Saskatoon have strong existing relationships with local food security partners such as CHEP and the

Saskatoon Health Region. To continue to strengthen the schools' role in local food security, the School Boards can adopt their own food charters that outline goals and principles for expanding the roles of schools in supporting food security. The Saskatoon Health Region's Food Charter represents an example for school boards to review and build upon. A first step in this process, as recommended by CHEP and SOD (Bromm & McRae, 2009), is to increase the organic products available within schools, as well as educate students about local and organic products.

- *Organic Education.* Despite the rise in popularity of organic products, there is a lot of misinformation about the underlying principles behind organic production. It is important for local institutions to understand organic certification and what is required of organic producers. In the joint report from SOD and CHEP they recommend creating and distributing, "targeted organic resource materials describing organic production and certification for institutions and local producers not certified" (Bromm & McRae, 2009, p. 40).

Short-term recommendations (within 5 years)

- *Expand Land Available for Food Production.* Although there are various approaches that can be taken to increase the land available for food production within the City of Saskatoon, one of the most sustainable and reliable approaches is through the use of zoning bylaws and planning documents. As described by Enns et al. (2008), "zoning by-laws provide front-line tools for local governments to promote aspects of food security by determining how communities will be developed" (p. 12). Ensuring that land is available in every community for community gardens, and building this stipulation into the City's zoning requirements will ensure that opportunities for local food production exist into the future. Another strategy is to adjust building codes to ensure that new buildings are created with the capacity to support rooftop growing. Protection of agricultural lands adjacent to the City is another important strategy. If the Saskatoon's Planning Department can be engaged in creative discussions with various stakeholders, creative ideas will likely emerge to increase the amount of land available for food production within and near Saskatoon.

- *Eliminate and Prevent Food Deserts.* The City of Saskatoon can play a key role in eliminating and preventing the reoccurrence of food deserts within the City. In order to eliminate the present food desert, community partners have joined together to develop the Good Food Junction as a part of Station 20 West. Community support for the Good Food Junction continues to grow and it continues to present a real solution to the existing food desert. In order to prevent a future food desert, the City of Saskatoon Planning Department can play a central role in ensuring retail grocery stores exist throughout all Saskatoon neighbourhoods. Shak, Mikkelsen, & Chehimi (2010) outline a variety of ways to encourage grocery retailers from offering incentives (i.e., land, tax exemptions, etc.), to utilizing zoning bylaws to ensure land is protected for retail grocery stores.

- *"Buy Local" and "Healthy Food" Policies*. A common strategy to support local food production is through the provision of a consistent market. The City of Saskatoon has a real opportunity to provide a portion of this market through adopting a "buy local" policy for the programs and buildings the City manages. At the same time, a large number of public institutions rely on sponsorship from corporations in order to deliver their programming or maintain their facilities. Unfortunately with this corporate sponsorship often comes the presence of unhealthy or "junk" food. The removal of unhealthy foods, or at the very least the guaranteed presence of healthy food options within public institutions can have a significant impact on the long-term health of the Saskatoon population. In order to follow these recommendations, exploring how the Saskatoon Health Region is implementing this aspect of their own Food Charter may be a logical starting point. Municipal government examples also exist in places such as Toronto and San Francisco.

- *Ethical Purchasing*. In an effort to address the inequitable and unjust global food system at a local level, a starting point is to adopt a similar "ethical purchasing policy" as the City of Vancouver. Although not explicitly linked to food, this policy is a real and significant step that can be adopted and successfully implemented with its focus on Fair Trade products and adhering to the International Labour Organization's Core Labour Conventions.

- *Develop a Food Policy Council*. The potential represented by Food Policy Councils is discussed earlier in this report and there is a real opportunity for a Food Policy Council to be formed in Saskatoon. Many researchers suggest this process can begin by holding round table discussions between local stakeholders (i.e. institution representatives, grain processors, meat processors, as well as market gardeners, and people from various vulnerable populations, etc.) (Bromm & McRae, 2009; Desjardins et al., 2002; McCullum, Desjardins, Kraak, Ladipo, & Costello, 2005). Many of these stakeholders already meet around other existing tables such as Food Secure Saskatchewan or the Saskatoon Food Coalition, but by initiating or facilitating the development of a Food Policy Council, the City of Saskatoon can provide the Food Council with a clear focus. Muller et al. (2009) state that Policy Food Councils can "be established via legislation, an executive order, resolution or proclamation, or by action of nongovernmental organizations" (p. 237). A food policy council that has representatives across disciplines can start to develop solutions to the complex and dynamic problems present in the present food system (McCullum et al., 2005; Desjardins et al., 2002).

- *Geographic Indicators*. There is a growing interest among Canadians to know more specifically where a product is produced (Infact Research and Consulting Inc., 2008). Although the Saskatchewan Made Program is helpful for identifying Saskatchewan made products, there is an opportunity to develop even more geographically sensitive indicators. For example, the Saskatchewan Made logo could be changed slightly to identify where in Saskatchewan a product is made. This presents an opportunity for Saskatoon and other centres throughout the province to promote themselves and their unique products, while building on an existing program.

- *Public Education.* As identified by a number of local stakeholders, the public's understanding of why a local food system is important, and how to sustain it, is still growing. In an effort to increase the public's knowledge of the importance of local food production and community sustainability, a public campaign linking community sustainability to a local food system is a common first step taken by local governments and community groups (Edible Strategies Ent. Ltd., 2007; McCullum et al., 2005). Some education campaigns have also linked community sustainability to health, broadening the scope and increasing campaign partners (Cabinet Office, 2008).

- *Linking Emergency Food with Local Production.* McCullum et al. (2005), argue that to ensure that local food remains accessible to lower-income citizens, connections between local producers with emergency food programs need to established. The Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre's Potato Patch is one example of this already occurring. Further efforts should be made to link emergency food programs with local producers, and provide those accessing emergency food programs with the opportunity to produce their own food.

- *Farmers' Market Vouchers.* As mentioned above, and piloted within British Columbia, one way to increase access to farmers' markets for low-income citizens is to link the farmers' market with the food allowance provided by social assistance programs. This increased accessibility has shown to not only increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables for low-income citizens (Shak et al., 2010), but it also serves to support local producers.

- *Local Food Storage.* One of the most common challenges presented by local producers and retailers is the lack of storage facilities for local products. There is existing interest from the Saskatchewan Vegetable Growers Association (SVGA) and other local stakeholders in solving the lack of a storage facility (Bromm & McRae, 2009). The City of Saskatoon could take the lead in facilitating a discussion between producers, CHEP, SOD, SVGA, and others interested in developing a local storage facility within Saskatoon. Any analysis of the cost of developing or retrofitting a storage facility must also recognize the increased economic benefits to Saskatoon if such a facility were to exist in the jobs that a local storage facility would create. As argued by Hamm (2009), "it is clear that expanding the production and distribution of healthy foods, especially a marked increase in consumption of fruits and vegetables, presents significant opportunities to grow businesses and jobs" (p. 246).

- *A Local Food Producer Association.* One approach for local producers to strengthen their collective voice is through forming an association that can serve to represent their collective needs. In the 2009 study undertaken by CHEP and SOD (Bromm & McRae, 2009) 14 of the 15 producers surveyed stated an interest in joining a producers' group or association. It would be strategic to initiate such an association with small scale producers in order to ensure the costs of joining are not a significant barrier to small and medium scale producers.

Medium to Long-term Recommendations (within 5-10 years)

- *Support for Youth.* In order for long-term sustainability for the local food system to be a reality, both urban and rural youth need to be engaged in learning about ecologically sustainable food production. Although programs do exist through the school systems within Saskatoon to introduce students to food production and the principles of environmental sustainability, the expansion of these programs through building on existing partnerships between the schools, the SHR, the City, and community-based organizations such as CHEP would go a long way to fostering interest and knowledge of a sustainable food system.

- *Expand the Farmers' Market.* The establishment of the permanent site of the Farmer's Market has had a significant positive impact on the local food system. Given the growing interest in local food and farmers' markets, exploring the sustainability of building a second Farmers' Market in a different neighbourhood would serve to increase geographic accessibility to the Market, as well as expand the local food market.

- *Develop and Strengthen the Local Food Infrastructure.* One of the most frequent barriers to expanding the local food system identified in discussions with local producers and consumers, as well as in the literature (Bromm & McRae, 2009; Edible Strategies Ent. Ltd., 2007), is the lack of a local food system infrastructure. The need for local food storage is discussed above, and the other two key gaps are the lack of a central local food distributor and the need for local food processors.
    a. *Food Distribution* – One of the most significant barriers identified by Saskatoon community institutions in incorporating more local food into their facilities is a lack of a central organization to contact for local products. Local chefs also identified this challenge in entering the local food market and the multiple suppliers they need to contact. A local food distribution company, with the infrastructure to store and deliver local food, would serve to expand the market available to local producers. As also recommended in the SOD and CHEP report, "set up one location or association that would be the "go to" place to buy local organic products within Saskatoon" (Bromm & McRae, 2009, p. 40)
    b. *Food Processing* – Although this issue faces all types of local producers, local meat producers appear to be most adversely impacted by the lack of local abattoirs and butchers. In order for meat to be sold across provincial lines or exported, processing facilities require Federal inspection. The majority of provinces across Canada have set their own processing standards to mirror the Federal standards. Unfortunately this has resulted in eliminating a number of local processing facilities due to the high costs required to meet the Federal standards, and thereby limited the ability for small and medium scale meat farmers to sell their product locally. The Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture is aware of this issue, and with some advocacy from a coordinated group of stakeholders, may be willing to explore solutions to this dilemma.

- *Support for New Farmers***.** To sustain a local food system requires sustaining and supporting local farmers. There are a significant number of unique challenges facing individuals and families interested in entering the farming field including a lack of mentorship programs, the costs of purchasing land, and the limited pay for farmers and agricultural workers. As identified above, formal mentorship programs exist across Canada, and similar programs in Saskatchewan would introduce people interested in farming to the realities of managing a farm in a supportive manner. Other ways to support new farmers include scholarships for food production-related studies and improved farm succession programs (Edible Strategies Ent. Ltd., 2007). An alternate approach to supporting farmers is through the Alternative Land Use Services program that is being piloted in Manitoba. This program is a voluntary, incentive-based, private land conservation program that pays landowners and farmers to maintain and enhance the ecological aspects of their land. Furthermore, the program can serve to educate Canadians about the importance of sustainable land use for the environment.

- *Expand Food Charters*. The Saskatoon Health Region's Food Charter represents an example that should be embraced and expanded upon by provincial departments throughout Saskatchewan. Provincially run institutions, as well as provincially regulated programs that are required to utilize local food, present opportunities to support increased food security and strengthen the local food system.

- *Develop a Human Milk Bank*. Given the significant health benefits of breastfeeding for children, it seems logical to increase efforts to facilitate access to human milk. This means not only ensuring breastfeeding is accepted in public spaces, but also facilitating access to human milk for children who do not have access from their caregiver. Although a human milk bank did exist in Saskatoon at one point, at present the B.C. Women's Milk Bank, located in Vancouver, is the only human milk bank in Canada and provides an example from which Saskatoon can learn.

- *Index Social Support Programs*. Increasing rates of obesity are disproportionately impacting low-income citizens in part due to their increased food insecurity and the increased cost of healthy foods. In order to start to address this issue, the food allowances provided by the Saskatchewan government in programs such as the Social Assistance Program should be indexed with the costs of living and healthy eating. The Saskatoon Health Region has recently released a report entitled "The Cost of Healthy Eating in Saskatchewan 2009" which provides excellent evidence regarding the real costs associated with eating healthy foods, and could serve as a starting point for re-examining the limited funds provided to citizens on Social Assistance.

- *Policies Focusing on Health*. As discussed above, food systems are complex, crossing jurisdictions and disciplinary boundaries, and having profound impacts on the environment and health. One approach to ensuring that food production policies are

grounded in their impact on citizens is to evaluate food and agriculture policy through a health lens. This not only serves to explore health impacts on citizens, but also ensures that environmentally sustainable aspects of food production are explored as sustainable food production is key to health. As presented by Hamm (2009), "health has to extend in both directions from people to the families and communities in which they live, on the one hand, and to the plants, animals, and soil on which they rely on the other" (p. 247).

- *Make Indigenous Food Security a Priority*. Aboriginal Canadians face an increased risk of food insecurity. One approach to addressing this issue is to make a concerted effort to support indigenous populations to develop strong local and indigenous food supplies. There are some examples of indigenous communities in Saskatchewan becoming leaders in developing strong local food systems, and bringing political attention and support to these projects would further the health and well-being of all Canadians.

- *Utilize Gender Based Analysis in Research*. There is a lack of food security research with an explicit focus on gender and the increased risks facing women. The Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence (PWHCE) is in the process of conducting this type of research in Saskatchewan, exploring the experiences of women in urban, northern and remote communities. Based on the reputation of PWHCE for conducting solid research, following the recommenda-tions that arise from this study would start to address the gender inequity that exists related to food security in Saskatchewan. Further areas for gender analysis include exploring farm life and the real economic contribution provided by farm-women to keep many farms going (Edible Strategies Ent. Ltd., 2007).

- *Technology for Small-Scale Farming & Processing*. As the majority of processing and manufacturing is conducted on a large scale, there is need for technology to support small and medium sized sustainable production and processing (Edible Strategies Ent. Ltd., 2007). Support for a business with a focus on developing specialized technology would not only improve local food production, but would strengthen the local food system.

- *Ethnic Food Products & Businesses*. According to Canadian Community Economic Development Network (Edible Strategies Ent. Ltd., 2007), some ethno-cultural groups and different age and income cohorts create specialty markets, and hence, an important development opportunity. Support for food businesses of various types that involve and/or serve these ethno-cultural groups could enhance creativity and diversity in the local food system.

Saskatoon Food Charter

Adopted in Principle by Saskatoon City Council, 2002

Canada stands committed to the United Nations Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights specifying the right of everyone to adequate food, and endorses a food security action plan stating "the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger" and "food security exists when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (Canada's Action Plan for Food Security, 1998)

To meet this national commitment, and to make food security work in our community, the City of Saskatoon and other local organizations support the following elements as the basis for a Saskatoon Food Charter.

Food Security and Production

- Food is an integral part of the economy of Saskatoon and the surrounding area. A commitment to building bridges between urban and rural communities on food security will strengthen the food sector's self reliance, growth and development.

- Local agriculture is important to producers and consumers alike. Urban and rural food security initiatives will preserve local agricultural production, and build on the mutual interdependence of producers and consumers. The Farmers' Market and the Good Food Box serve as viable models of this interaction with local farmers being able to market their products directly, and consumers being able to access nutritious, wholesome food.

- Urban agriculture can be advanced through the establishment of community gardens that contribute directly to the economic, environment and social life of city residents.

- Food must be produced in a manner that is environmentally sustainable, safe for consumption and socially just.

Food Security and Justice

- Food is more than a commodity. It is a basic right. Every Saskatoon resident should have access to an adequate supply of nutritious, affordable and safe food without social and economic barriers. In Saskatoon, we must work with those communities most affected by lack of access to nutritious, affordable and safe food.

Food Security and Health

- Food security contributes to the physical, mental, spiritual and emotional well-being of residents.

- Nutrition education and consumption of wholesome, healthy foods are important factors in determining the overall positive health of the city's population, and this begins with the promotion of healthy eating practices — as early as birth — with breast feeding.

Food Security and Culture

- Food brings people together in the celebration of family and community, strengthening links between diverse cultures and urban and rural communities, The preparing, eating and sharing of food engages individuals and families in a social and community fellowship that balances physical and spiritual needs.

- Food is a social good that sustains and supports us and our communities.

Food Security and Globalization

- Any international agreements entered into by our governments must respect the full realization of people's right to adequate, nutritious, accessible, affordable, safe food at home and internationally. National, provincial and local governments must guarantee the right of communities and individuals to food security through supporting viable, sustainable, agricultural production and an equitable income distribution,

The fulfillment of a Saskatoon Food Charter relies on citizens participating directly in and promoting food security measures in their homes, their work places, their community, and in this process strengthening citizen involvement and concern.

Therefore, to develop and promote food security on our city, Saskatoon City Council will:

- Champion the right of all residents to adequate amounts of nutritious, safe, accessible, culturally acceptable food.
- Advocate for income, employment, housing, and transportation policies that support secure and dignified access to food.
- Ensure the safety of food and drinking water.
- Ensure convenient access to an affordable range of nutritious foods in city facilities.
- Adopt and promote food-purchasing practices that serve as a model of health, social and environmental responsibility and that support the local rural economy
- Promote partnerships and programs that support rural-urban food links and the availability of locally grown, healthy foods through the Farmers' Market, Good Food Box and other rural-urban initiatives.
- Protect local agricultural lands.
- Encourage community gardens, urban agriculture and the recycling of organic materials that nurture soil fertility.
- Support training and income generating programs that promote food security within a community economic development model.
- Support nutrition education through promotion of skills-based programs for the community and in schools
- Promote a yearly civic report card on how Saskatoon is achieving food security.
- Foster a civic culture that inspires support for healthy food for all.

These objectives will be achieved by working in partnership with community based organizations, community associations, Aboriginal peoples, resident groups, business organizations, trade unions, educational and health institutions and other levels of government.

This proposal for a Saskatoon Food Charter was developed through the Saskatoon Food Coalition with the involvement of the following groups: Saskatoon Farmers' Market, Oxfam, CHEP, Good Food Box, Community First, Saskatoon Friendship Inn, United Way, Core Neighborhood Youth Co-op, National Farmers Union, Quint Development Corporation, Saskatchewan Child Nutrition Network, Saskatchewan Food Security Network, Saskatoon Food Bank, Inner City Ministry, Organic Farmers Network and Saskatoon District Health.

Appendix B - Local Organizations

The following list of local organizations is not exhaustive in its presentation of Saskatoon-based organizations working towards further implementation of the Saskatoon Food Charter, but instead this list in intended to provider readers with a sense of the breadth and diversity of work being undertaken related to local food security. For the purposes of the report we have also divided the organizations by the primary area of the food charter we believe their work addresses, but we recognize that many of them could just as easily fit within one or more other areas of the Charter.

Saskatoon Food Charter Principle	Local Organizations Identified
Food Security & Production	• Little Urban Garden CSA • Pine View Farms CSA • Keith Neu's CSA • Steep Hill Co-op • Souleio • Saskatoon Co-op • Weczeria • Truffles Bistro • Wanuskewin Heritage Park • Local Bounty • Saskatoon Farmers' Market • CHEP Good Food Inc. • Saskatoon Health Region Food Charter • CHOICES • University of Saskatchewan Horticulture Club • Saskatchewan Organic Directorate • National Farmers' Union • Beyond Factory Farming • City Park Community Garden • Riversdale/King George Community Garden • Nutana Community Garden • Varsity View Community Garden • Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre • We Are Many (WAM) • Rooted

	• Escape Sports • Little Green Thumbs Saskatchewan • Heifer International • Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op • Muskoday Organic Growers Co-op • Affinity Credit Union • Oxfam Canada • Footprint Design
Food Security & Justice	• Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre • Public Health Nutritionists of Saskatchewan Working Group • Friendship Inn • Salvation Army • Saskatchewan Indian & Metis Friendship Centre • Saskatoon District Labour Council • Saskatoon Community Clinic • Public Health Services, Saskatoon Health Region • CHEP Good Food Box Inc. • Open Door Society • Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence (PWHCE)
Food Security & Health	• Breastfeeding Matters • West Winds Health Clinic • Good Food Junction • SWITCH • Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations • Saskatoon Health Region
Food Security & Culture	• Open Door Society • Local Bounty • Saskatoon Folk Festival • Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations
Food Security & Globalization	• National Farmers' Union • Canadian Labour Congress
Other	• We Are Many (WAM) • Better than Bottled • Transition Saskatoon • Turning the Tide (R)evolutionary Media

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